

Shadhiliyyah Darqawiyyah Path Notes and Text

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The Golden Chain of the Shadhiliyyah

The Golden Chain of the Shadhiliyyah

This spiritual succession or tradition is often represented as a tree, whose roots are in revelation and whose twigs, leaves, and flowers correspond to the spiritual methods or 'paths' (turuq), founded by the great spiritual master. The branches of the tree represent the principal lines of succession, and are sometimes to be interpreted historically, sometimes only symbolically. On the root of the tree one can read the name Allah; above it, on the trunk, is the name of the Archangel Gabriel (Jibril), who, in the Islamic perspective is the divine instrument of revelation, and above this is the name of Muhammad. At that point the trunk divides into two branches, which bear the names respectively of the first and fourth caliphs (Abu Bakr and Ali), since they were the first two mediators and masters of the Sufi tradition.

These two branches divide into many twigs, which bear the names of the earliest Sufis such as Hasan al-Basri, Habib al-'Ajami and Sari as-Saqati. Following these come the names of the greatest spiritual masters of the first Islamic centuries such as Junayd, the great teacher of Sufi metaphysics, Dhu'n-Nun al-Misri, the lover, and Abu Yazid al-Bistami, the absorbed in God. All of these masters lived in the Islamic east, although Sufi mysticism appeared as the 'inner dimension' of Islam wherever Islam prevailed. From about the fourth Islamic century onwards (the ninth century A.D.), the blossoms of mysticism also appeared in the Far West, firstly in Spain and immediately thereafter in the Maghrib, where the name Abu Madyan stands at the origin of a whole segment of new twigs and leaves. This name appears at the top of the tree at about the same level as other famous names from which henceforth almost all subsequent spiritual orders spring.

The Spiritual Succession Abu Madyan

For it was at that time-the twelfth century A.D.-that there appeared 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani in the Near East (his influence was to sweep across the whole Islamic world); Mu'in ad-din Chishti in North India and, a little later, Jalal ad-din Rumi in Asia Minor. From this time onwards the Sufi tradition became organized in the form of spiritual orders or brotherhoods that took the name of their founders.

Abu Madyan Shu'ayb was born in Seville of Arab parents in 1126. He was orphaned at a tender age, and was apprenticed to learn the weaver's craft. He fled from his brother's house, however, with a view to quenching his thirst for knowledge. After much wandering, he finally reached Fez, where he took instruction from several of the masters of 'outward' and 'inward' science, while he made a living from weaving. It was at this time that the works of al-Ghazali reached Fez. The scholar Abu'l-Hasan ibn Harzihim (Harazem in Moroccan dialect) condemned them publicly. During the following night he dreamt that the author had complained about him to the Prophet and the first four Caliphs and that he had been sentenced to so many blows with a whip. He awoke and found whip-marks on his body. He withdrew his condemnation and immersed himself in the writings he had proscribed. Thanks to Ibn Harzihim, Abu Madyan became acquainted not only with al-Ghazali's Revivification of the Religious Sciences, but also with the works of al-Muhasibi and other Sufi masters.....

Abu Madyan died at 1198 at 'Ubbad near Tlemsen, not far from the Moroccan border, His grave which a mosque was built, has remained a leading place of pilgrimage . Text available link below to purchase for futher reading **The Way of Abu Madyan- Doctrinal and Poetic Works of Abu Madyan Shu'ayb ibn al-Husayn al-Ansari** <http://www.fonsvitae.com/abumadyan.html>

Two of Abu Madyan's indirect disciples were to a lasting influence throughout the spiritual world of Islam. The first was Arab Muhyid din ibn Arabi was born in 1165 in Murcia Spain and migrated via Fez, Bujaya and Tunisia to the Islamic east. Because of his unsurpassed metaphysical expositions he was called 'the Great al-akbar' (ash-shaykh al-Abkar). The other was Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili, the founder of spiritual order (tariqah) bearing his name, Shadhiliyyah.

Muhyid-din Ibn Arabi learns about Abu Madyan

Muhyid-din Ibn Arabi grew up in Seville, when Abu Madyan, as an old man, still in Bujaya. Ibn Arabi wrote One day the master (Abu Yaqub ben Yakhlaf al-Qumi al-Abbasi who had been a companion of Abu Madyan) mounted his horse, and bade me and one of my companions follow him to Muntabar , a mountain that was about an hour's ride from Seville. As soon as the city gate was opened, my companion and I set out on foot. My companion carried in his hand a copy of al-**Qushayris's Epistle** , of which as I have said I knew nothing. **al-Qushayris's Epistle- Sufi Book of Spiritual Ascent: (Al-Risala Al-Qushayriya)**
<http://www.onlineislamicstore.com/b8040.html>

We climbed the mountain and at the top we found our master , who with a servant, had gone ahead of us. He tethered his horse, and we entered a mosque at the top of the mountain in order to pray. After the prayer, we sat with our backs towards the prayer-niche (mihrab). The master handed me Qushayri's Epistle and told me to read from it. I was unable, however, to utter a single word. My awe of him was so great that the book even fell from my hands. Then he told my companion to read it, and he expounded on what was read until it was time for the afternoon prayer, which we said. Then the master said: 'Let us now return to town. He mounted his horse, and I ran alongside him, holding on to his stirrup. Along the way he talked to me of the virtues and miracles of Abu Madyan. I was all ears, and forgot myself entirely, keeping my eyes fixed on his face the whole time. Suddenly he looked at me and smiled and, spurring his horse, made me run even more quickly in order to keep up with him. I succeeded in doing so. Finally he stopped, and said to me: 'Look and see what thou hast left behind thee.' I looked back and saw that the way along which we had come was full of thorn bushes that reached as high as my tunic, and that the ground was also covered with thorns. He said: 'Look at thy feet!' I looked at them and saw on them no trace of the thorns. 'Look at thy garments!' On them too I found no trace. Then he said: 'That comes from the grace engendered by our talking about Abu Madyan-may God be pleased with him-so persevere, my son, on the spiritual path!' Thereupon he spurred his horse and left me behind . . . (Ruh al-Quds fi munasahat al-nafs by Muhyidd-in Ibn Arabi) Ibn Society for further reading
<http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/index.html>

Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili

more on the life At the beginning of the thirteenth century of the Christian era, about twenty years after Muhyid-din Ibn 'Arabi had left Fez for the east, the Moroccan Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn 'Abdallah, a scion of the Hasanid branch of the Fatimids, who later achieved fame under the name of Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili, also migrated to the east in order to seek the spiritual pole of his time. In Baghdad a Sufi informed him that this pole was to be found in his own homeland, on Mount al-'Alam in the Rif mountains. He therefore returned home, and found in the place described a disciple of Abu Madyan, namely the spiritual master "Abd as-Salam ibn Mashish:

Abdas-Salam ibn Mashish

more on the life As I approached his place of refuge, which was a cave near the top of the mountain, I made a halt at a spring which gushed forth a little beneath it. I washed myself with the intention of casting off all my previous knowledge and actions, then, as one completely poor, I made my way up to the cave. He came out towards me, and when he saw me, he said: 'Welcome, "All, son of "Abdallah, son of 'abd al-Jabbar . . .' and he named all my ancestors right back to the Prophet, whom God bless and greet. Then he said: 'O, "Ali, thou comest up to me here as one poor in knowing and doing to seek from me the riches of this world and the next.' I was smitten with fear out of awe for him. Then I remained with him for a number of days, until God opened my inward eye and I beheld wonders and things that far exceeded the ordinary realm, and I experienced the goodness of God's grace . . . One day, as I sat by my master, I said inwardly to myself:

'Who knows, perhaps my master knows the Supreme Name of God.' At that moment the young son of the master spoke from the depths of the cave: 'O Abu'l-Hasan, it is not a question of knowing the Supreme Name of God, it is a question of being the Supreme Name.' Thereupon the Shaykh said: 'My young son has seen through thee and recognized thee!' (al-Anwar al-Qudusiya fi tariq ash-shadhiliya Muhammad Zafir al-Madani)

'Abdas-salam ibn Mashish was murdered in 1228. His tomb on Mount al-'Alam, is a place of pilgrimage to this day.

Only one text has come down to us from Ibn Mashish, a metaphysical paraphrase of a widely known prayer, in which the believer calls on God to bless the Prophet as if to thank him for having received Islam through him. called As-Salatul-Mashishiyyah Ibn Mashish sees in the historical Muhammad an expression of the one Spirit from which all revelation comes and which is the eternal mediator between the ungraspable Godhead and the world. This is the Logos, the first manifestation of God and, as such.

His universal symbol as well as His highest veil. By the very fact that in this way the Absolute reveals itself in a relative and multiple fashion, it also conceals itself. This eternal mediator is called the 'Muhammadan Spirit' (ar-Ruh al-Muhammad), not because it is embodied only in Muhammad-for all God's messengers and prophets manifest it-but because in the Islamic perspective Muhammad is its most immediate expression. Divine Truth, the Sufis say, is in itself unlimited and inexhaustible, so that every religious form in which it deigns to clothe itself for the salvation of men can be no more than one possible form amongst others. Sufi mysticism is predominantly founded on gnosis, and this finds expression in the saying of Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili: 'Know and be as thou wilt, he once said, and meant by this that the man who has realized what he is before God can do nothing else but act rightly. He taught his disciples to look on the world with the eye of eternity:

'Attribute the actions of creatures to God as Agent; this will bring no harm to thee; whereas it will bring harm to thee if thou regardest creatures as the authors of their actions.' The spiritual attitude corresponding to this angle of vision is that of 'vacare Deo', unconditional self-abandonment to God: The servant will not attain to God as long as he harbours any desire or ulterior motive. If thou wouldst please God, renounce thyself and thine environment and thy power over it. But this abandonment is not mere in-action: each moment is a sword, if thou cuttest not with it, it will cut thee (i.e. cause that moment to be lost for the remembrance of God). (al-Anwar al-Qudusiya fi tariq ash-shadhiliya Muhammad Zafir al-Madani)

As-Salatul-Mashishiyyah

<http://sufi.forumup.co.uk/viewtopic.php?t=123&mforum=sufi>

Shaykh Jazuli -author of Dalail al Khayrat

toward the end of the fifteenth century and beginning of the sixteenth, Muahmmad Abu Abdullah al-Jazuli a man from the far south of Morocco, founded a Shadhili order. The order later played an important role in the defence of the Sus against the Portuguese, which is why the Saadians brought the body of the founder to Marrakesh in order to inter it there. Al-Jazuli is famous throughout Morocco to this day for his work 'The proofs of Goodness' (dalail al-Khayrat), a collection of blessings on the Prophet in the form of a litany in which Muhammad (peace be upon him) the receptacle of revelation, appears as the summation of all positive and God reflecting aspects creation. From the spiritual posterity of Al-Jazuli several spiritual orders emerged which still exist in Morocco today. The most popular is undoubtedly the one found in Meknes towards the end of the sixteenth century by the Sharif Muhammad Ben Isa al-Mukhtari. **Biographical Note of Shaykh Jazuli**
<http://www.deenislam.co.uk/dalail/d11.htm>

Full Dalail al Khayrat online and free <http://www.deenislam.co.uk/dalail.htm>

Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili inaugurated a spiritual method for the acquiring of spiritual poverty and for the practising of it in the midst of worldly cares. Amongst the disciples that came to him during his lifelong

peregrination from the Islamic West to the Islamic East, there were rich and poor, educated and uneducated, government ministers and day labourers.

His first successor was Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mursi, who lived in Egypt, and the one after that was the famous Ahmad ibn Ata'illah of Alexandria, whose 'Spiritual Aphorisms' (Hikam) became the breviary of almost everyone who followed the Sufi path, whether in the Far West (Morocco) or the Far East (Java and Sumatra). Ibn Ata'illah died in 1309. In addition to the Shadhili line of spiritual masters who-like Ahmad az-Zarruq al-Bamussi, bom in Fez in 1441 and died in Tripoli in 1493- expounded Sufi doctrine with logical precision, there were always spiritual personalities who broke every rational framework, as if they incorporated some secret essence of the doctrine which transcended ordinary reason. One such was the master Ali as-Sanhaji, who lived in Fez in the first half of the sixteenth century.

As-saqalli

The link with the Islamic east was maintained by the pilgrims who travelled to Mecca. And thus it occurred that eastern spiritual orders like the Qadiriyya, the Khalwatiyya and the Naqshbandiyya spread to the Maghrib. In the middle of the eighteenth century a Fez man, from the noble family of the Saqalli brought the Naqshbandi spiritual method from Egypt to Fez.

Shaykh Ahmad at-Tijani

Towards the end of the eighteenth century Mulay Ahmad at-Tijani, who had studied in Fez and then lived for a long time in the east where he had contacts with the Khalwatiyya, founded a new order which henceforth was to bear his name. His doctrine and his method held the balance between the Sufi tradition and the generally accepted theology. For this reason his order always lived on the best terms with the ruling house. The principal centre of the order is 'Ayn Madi in the south of Algeria, but the sepulchral mosque of the founder is in Fez, in the al-Blida district, where it is easily recognizable by its richly decorated doorway. Inside it is completely covered with blue and green arabesque mosaics. For a long time the order dominated the caravan routes through southern Algeria to the Sudan. It is well represented in Black Africa, and one can often meet Sudanese Muslims who have come to Fez to visit the tomb of the founder of the order.

other Tijani links

<http://www.tijaniyya.com/tariqa.htm>

http://home.earthlink.net/%7Ehalimcisse/sh_ahmad_tijani.html

Shaykh al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi

The pure Shadhili tradition, which is representative of the earliest form of Sufism, was revived at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century by Mulay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi. His spiritual radiance extended well beyond the Maghrib. He was descended from a Hasanid family that lived amongst the Banu Zerwal, in the hills to the north-east of Fez. As a young man he studied in Fez, and it was here too that he met his spiritual master, the Idrisid 'Alt al-Jamal, who roughly rebuffed him several times before accepting him as his disciple. In one of his letters, Mulay al-'Arabi tells how his master tested him by ordering him, a young scholar of noble lineage, to carry a load of fresh fruit through the town:

The first lesson that my master gave me was as follows:

he ordered me to carry two baskets full of fresh through the town. I carried them in my hands, and did not wish, as the others told me, to put them on my shoulders, for that was unwelcomed to me, and consticted my soul, so that it became agitated and fearful a d grieved beyond measure till I began to weep And, by God, I still had to weep for all the shame, humillation, and scorn that I had to undergo as a result. never before had my soul had to suffer such a thing, so I was not conscious of its pride and cowardice.

I had not known whether it was proud or not, since no professor, amongst all those that I had frequented, had ever taught me about my soul. While I was in this state, my master, who perceived my pride and my inner distress, came up to me, took the two baskets from my hands, and placed them on my shoulders with the words: 'Distinguish thus between good and evil'.

Thereby he opened the door for me and led me on the right way, for I learned to discriminate between the proud and the humble, the good and the bad, the wise and the foolish, the orthodox and the heretical, between those who know and translate their knowledge into deeds, and those who do not. From that moment no orthodox person ever overpowered me with his orthodoxy, no heretic with his heresy, no scholar with his knowledge, no pious man with his piety, and no fasting man with his asceticism. For my master, may God have mercy on him, had taught me to distinguish truth from vanity, and wheat from chaff. (Rasil al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi)

Letters of a Sufi Master The Shaykh ad-Darqawi sections of this book are available online from here.
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/ABewley/Darqawi.html>

also the book can be purchased from this link
<http://www.fonsvitae.com/LETTERS.HTML>

One of the effects of Divine Bounty, Grace, and Geerosity is that one finds the Master who can grant spiritual education; without Divine Grace no one would find or recognize him, since, according to the saying of the saint Abu'l Abbas al-Mursi (may God be pleased with him) : 'It is more difficult to know a saint than to know God/ Again, in the Hikam of Ibn 'Ata'illah, it is said: 'Exalted be He who makes His saints known only in order to make Himself known and who leads towards them those whom He wishes to lead towards Himself.'

learn more about and purchase this book **The Subtle Blessings in the Saintly Lives of Abu al-Abbas al-Mursi and His Master Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili**
<http://www.fonsvitae.com/shadhili.html>

The heart of man cannot attach itself to the Divine Essence unless his ego has been effaced, extinguished, destroyed, annihilated ... As the saint Abu Madyan has said: 'Whoever does not die, does not see God.' A the masters of our way have taught the same. And take care that you do not think that it is the things of the body and the soul that veil God from us. By God, what veils Him is nothing other than illusion, and illusion is vain. As the saint Ibn 'Ata'illah has said: 'God did not veil Himself from thee by some reality coexisting with Him, since there is no reality other than He. What veils Him from thee is naught but the illusion that some- thing outside Him could possess any reality.' . . .

Know that the faqir can only kill his soul when he has been able to se(its form, and he will only see its form when he has separated himself from the world, from his companions, from his friends, and from his habits. One faqir said to me: 'My wife has got the better of me.' To which I answered: 'It is not she but your own soul that has got the better of you; we have no other enemy; if thou couldst dominate thy soul, thou would dominate the whole world-not merely thy wife.'

. . . The soul is something immense; it is the whole cosmos since it is a copy of it. Everything that is in the cosmos is in the soul and everything that is in the soul is in the cosmos. Therefore, whoever masters his soul masters the world, and whoever is mastered by his soul is mastered by the world. . . .

Spiritual intuition is very subtle. It can only be fixed spatially by concrete symbols and temporally by interior prayer (dhikr), holy company, and the breaking of habits. . . .All things are hidden in their opposites-gain in loss, gift in refusal, honour in humiliation, wealth in poverty, strength in weakness, abundance in restriction, rising up in falling down, life in death, victory in defeat, power in powerlessness, and so on. Therefore, if a man wish to find, let him be content to lose; if he wish a gift, let him be content with refusal; he who desires honour must accept humiliation, and he who desires wealth must be satisfied with poverty; let him who wishes to be strong be content to be weak; let him who wishes abundance be resignec to restriction; he who wishes to

be raised up must allow himself to be cast down; he who desires life must accept death; he who wishes to conquer must be content with impotence . . . (Rasa'il)

Shaykh Ahmed Al-alawi

Ahmed al-'Alawi is Ahmed ibn Mustafa ibn 'Aliwa, Abu al-'Abbas al-'Alawi, born in Mostaghanem, Algeria, in 1291/1874. He was a Sufi, Maliki scholar, Koranic exegete, poet, and the sheikh and renewer of the Shadhili tariqa, of which he founded the 'Alawi-Darqawi order that bears his name. His teaching stressed the threefold nature of the Muslim religion (din) as mentioned in the Gabriel hadith: Islam, represented by one's inward and outward submission to the rules of Sacred Law; true faith (iman), in the tenets of faith of Ahl al-Sunna; and the perfection of faith (ihsan), in the knowledge of Allah which the way of Sufism provides the means to.

He authored works in each of these spheres, though his most important legacy lay in the spiritual way he founded, which emphasized knowledge of Allah (ma'rifa) through the practice of solitary retreat (khalwa) under the supervision of sheikh, and the invocation (dhikr) of the Supreme Name. Europeans visited the sheikh, but some who met him later wrote works that tried to assimilate him to a sort of perennialist philosophy that would consider all religious traditions as valid and acceptable reflections but a single truth, substituting traditional spirituality versus modern materialism for Islam versus unbelief.

The sheikh's own works emphatically deny their philosophy, and the reason Allah afflicted them with it would seem to be that they did not remain with the sheikh long enough to absorb his state or become as he was, a follower of the way of the prophets and purified ones, rather taking their affiliation with him as a means to legitimize opinions they had from the first and were unwilling to ever relinquish, remaking the master, as it were, in their own image.

The true measure of a spiritual way, however, does not lie in books produced by writers, in the wrong or in the right, but in hearts it opens to knowledge of divine realities conveyed by prophetic revelation, and in the Sheikh Ahmed al-'Alawi, whose order has spread to the farthest reaches of the Muslim world, certainly stands as one of the greatest Sufi masters of Islamic history. He died in Mostaghanem in 1353/1934.

(<http://www.deenislam.co.uk/mix/shadhili.htm> - The Golden Chain of the Shadhiliyyah)

The Life of the Shaikh Ahmad Al-Alawi By Himself Translation & commentary

by Martin Lings in his book A Sufi Saint of the twentieth century - Shaikh Ahmad Al-Alawi - his Spiritual heritage and Legacy.

the full book can be purchased from this link
<http://www.fonsvita.com/sufisaint.html>

(Chapter, Seen from within)

<http://www.tasawuf.ws/biography/autobiography.html>

Shaykh Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish , the Shaykh of Shaykh Abul Hassan Shadhili

This now is some account of the life and wisdom of the Master, the mawlay, Shaykh Muhammad `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish whose full name was ibn Mansur ibn Ibrahim al-Hasani al-Idrisi, ash-sharif of the Bani `Arus of the Jabal `Alam, to the south-east of Tetuan in the Maghrib.

Very little is recorded of the early life of Ibn Mashish except that it is said that he entered the Path of the People of Allah while he was still a child, and that his first teacher was the Shaykh `Abdu 'r-Rahman al-Madani az-Zayyat who, in his presence, lived in al-Madina al-Munawwarah, the City of the Prophet, may

prayers and peace be upon him, but who would travel to instruct his follower in a matter of but one hour, returning then to his dwelling-place in al-Madina.

It was said that while `Abdu 's-Salam, may Allah be pleased with him, was being instructed on the Path that he would be in frequent prayer, above the number required for religious observance, and at times, when he had finished his praying, he would find his food prepared and laid out for him to eat. One night, however, when he felt distrust towards this food, his Master Sidi `Abdu 'r-Rahman al-Madani appeared before him and said, "Eat of this food without fear, for you are always under the Protection of Allah." From the very beginning of his entering onto the Path of Allah until his last moment, Sidi `Abdu's-Salam had deep humility, and no one visited him without becoming aware of this.

Then after some years he took the hand of Sidi Abu Madyan Shu`ayb ibn al-Husayn al-Ghawth, receiving all the holy knowledge from this great Master.

After leaving his Master Abu Madyan, he, may Allah be pleased with him, returned to his own country where he lived amongst his people as a member of the shurafa, those who are dedicated and devoted to upholding the Religion of Islam, untouched by connection to worldly positions. He was said to be a strict follower of the Qur'an and the Sunna and was deeply rooted in the Law of Islam (ash-shari`a), and once, on being asked to recommend spiritual practices for a seeker, said, "Am I a Prophet? Perform the obligations of the Law and avoid sin. Keep your heart aloof from all temporal attachments. Accept, and be content with, everything that Allah sends to you and above everything else put the Love of Allah."

They said that, "As a young Shaykh Ibn-Mashish's intention was to safeguard the purity of the Religion in a sea pervaded by Berber clans devoted to the practice of magic and suchlike things. Sidi ibn Mashish never encouraged insurrection, and always condemned those who took part in political uprising under the pretext of religious activities, so that his teaching was always towards peace and against all acts of aggression. He said, may Allah be pleased with him, "Let your heart attach itself to the Creator instead of attaching itself to the Creation. Purify your heart of doubt and vain thoughts by the Water of Certainty, and say: 'Do not drown me without having obedience to Allah in sight.' Never bare yourself but where you are certain not to meet revolt against Allah." And his actions always confirmed his words.

He would also say, "Pray to Allah ceaselessly, and do not speak of anything else, and preserve your hearts from the longing to see people at your feet. The Love of Allah is the only pole around which good deeds turn. Let your tongues speak of nothing but Allah, instead of occupying themselves with the things of this world."

Four fundamental themes ran through his Teachings: The Oneness of Existence (al-wahdat al-wujud) which he said could be realized only through asceticism, Fear of Allah and His Judgements (al-hawf bi 'llah), the belief that Allah is everywhere and that it is necessary to see His Face in everything that He has created, and fourthly, that only through the drowning in the Ocean of the Unity (`awnu fi bahri al-wahadati) can the seeker cast off and leave behind his own existence and attributes to be merged and absorbed into Allah and His Attributes.

Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam said, "Love (al-mahabba) comes from the way in which Allah takes the heart which He loves, in unveiling to it (something) of the Light of His Beauty, and the Holiness of His Majesty. The Wine (sharab al-mahabba) brings about the blending (mazj) of the Divine Qualities with the human qualities, Characteristics with characteristics, Lights with lights, Names with names, Qualities with qualities and Actions with actions. Allah extends the seeing of whom He wishes. The Wine (al-sharab) waters the hearts, the arteries and the veins." By Wine (the Arabic word is drink) Sidi Ibn al-Mashish meant the Highest Essence (ad-dhat al-`aliyya).

He said, may Allah be pleased with him, "O Allah! the strongest of what they ask You is the subjugation of the Creation to them, and they are pleased with You by that. I ask You to hand the Creation to me so that I have no shelter nor refuge except You."

One of the Shaykhs who was one of the Knowers of the People of Allah of the Maghrib, Sidi `Abdu 'r-Rahman al-Fasi, told of how Sidi Ibn Mashish visited him in a dream and said to him, "My son, this Path of ours is only obtained by Abasement and something of having little of this world."

Later in his life `Abdu 's-Salam retired to a cave on the top of the mountain known as Jabal `Alam, which is situated in the middle of a valley surrounded on all sides by the Atlas mountains in the Habt region of the Maghrib.

Although he lived his entire life as a recluse from the world of everyday life, he was well known to the Folk of Allah for his deep piety, sincerity and devotion to his Lord, and it was he whom Allah, the All-Mighty, chose to be the only Master endowed with His perfect and complete Knowledge (ma`rifa), and who could pass this Knowledge to a successor, Abu 'l-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli, who was to found the great school of the Shadhdhuliyya Way which prevails in many parts of the world and especially in the West, and which is blessed by Allah to this day.

Several accounts relate to the meeting between the Master `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish and his student and successor Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli. Although Abu al-Hasan was born in Gumara, a small village in the Rif mountains of the Maghrib close to the Jabal al-`Alam where his future Master and Guide lived, he did not find him until he had travelled for some time to the East. There he studied in Baghdad with the Shaykh Abu Fath al-Wasiti, a student of Sidi Ahmad ar-Rifa'i who was one of the Qutbs of his time.

After a few months Abu al-Hasan's Shaykh, Sidi Abu Fath, said to him, "You have come here seeking for the Pole (Qutb) of Islam, but you have left him in the Maghrib." When Abu al-Hasan asked him, "Where will I find him, in which part of the Maghrib?" he was told, "You will find him there where you see a Light which rises up from the direction of the Maghrib, and this will be the Pole of Islam. If you follow that light you will reach your goal."

So Abu al-Hasan returned to his own country of the Maghrib and found the Light of the holy mountain of Jabal `Alam, as he had been told. He set out on the steep ascent to the top of the mountain, having first washed himself and made ablution (wudu) at a spring at the foot of the mountain, known to this day as `ayn ash-Shadhdhuli. When he reached the top of the mountain he found the Shaykh reciting from al-Qur'an al-Karim with one of his sons.

As they recited together the holy Words, Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli saw that their bodies began to sway from side to side, but in truth it was not their bodies which were moving thus, but the whole mountain which was swaying from side to side in accompaniment with their recitation. From this sign he knew that this was truly the Qutb for whom he was searching.

He went forward in reverence and awe to meet his Master, who greeted him with the words, "Have you made ablution (wudu)?" When Abu al-Hasan answered him saying, "Yes," he was told, "You cannot come to us in a state of impurity. Return and make wudu." So Abu al-Hasan returned to the bottom of the mountain, remade his ablution and climbed again to its top, and having reached the presence of the Shaykh, asked him if he would accept him as his student.

The Shaykh replied, "I told you to return when you had purified yourself with the ablution." Once again Abu al-Hasan returned to the bottom of the mountain with the question for his rejection turning in his heart, until he was shown what was necessary for him to do, because he came to realize the meaning of this initial trial and test, and the depth of the purification which it was necessary for him to make before he could enter into the Path of Allah with this holy Shaykh.

This time, as he made his ablution, he emptied himself of everything that he knew, or thought he knew, or that he had learned and taken in from other teachers, and he destroyed all his attributes, pictures, and prejudices, until he knew that he was left with only a vast space of nothingness inside him which was waiting to be filled. He was now totally surrendered to whatever this Master, whom he desired with all his being, would send him.

He climbed once more to the top of the mountain, but before he reached its summit he was met by the Master who greeted him by pronouncing his full line of descent back to the Prophet Muhammad, may prayers and peace be upon him.

The Shaykh now embraced him with the deep Love of acceptance. He could find no words with which to return the greeting, but the Master said to him, "If you wish to fetch water, you take an empty bucket to the well to do so. A full bucket has no room for water." With these words he took his beloved student by the hand and filled him to overflowing with the holy Water.

Afterwards Abu al-Hasan said: "Allah! I have washed myself of my knowledge and my actions so that I do not recognize any knowledge or action except what comes to me by the hand of this Shaykh."

The knowledge of this ablution has become the habitual practice (sunna) for all those of this holy Path who have followed after him, because it is the only way to reach the knowledge of the Reality, and the Light from that meeting continues to pour out without ceasing to both the East and the West.

While he was living with his Master, `Abdu 'Salam ibn Mashish, on the holy mountain, many wonderful signs from Allah came to Abu al-Hasan, through this holy Guide. One such sign was that on the night of his arrival on the mountain he was sleeping at the entrance of the cave where his Master lived. He dreamt that he was asking the Shaykh to grant him certain wishes, one of them being that Allah, the Mighty and Supreme, would incline the hearts of His creatures in favor towards him. Then he wished to ask his Master if it was necessary for him to live in solitude, or in the desert, in order for him to be in the right station (maqam) to perform his religious tasks, or whether he should return to the towns and inhabited places to seek out the company of scholars and virtuous people. While he was turning these things in his heart he heard the Shaykh praying fervently and calling out, "O Allah! People ask You to make their relations with other people easy, but I ask You to make them difficult, so that I may always seek refuge and protection in You alone."

The next morning when Abu al-Hasan asked his Master about this state, he replied, "I complain to Allah of the contentment which submission and abandonment to the Will of Allah brings." When he saw the astonishment on his student's face at hearing his words, he added, "Because I fear that the sweetness of such an existence would make me neglectful of my duty towards Allah."

Then Abu al-Hasan said, "This is the Pole of Islam. This is the Sea which overflows." He knew then that his Master had taken hold of his whole heart, and he was thereby completely illumined.

Then one day, as he sat in the presence of his Master who had his young son on his knees playing and enjoying himself, the thought came to him to ask him about the Greatest Name of Allah. He, may Allah be pleased with him, said that at that moment the child who sat on his father's knees put his hands on his shoulders and shook him, saying, "O Abu al-Hasan, you want to ask about the Greatest Name of Allah. It is of no importance to ask about the Greatest Name of Allah. It is important that you should be the Greatest Name of Allah-that the Secret of Allah should live in your heart." When his son had finished speaking, the Master smiled and said, "Such a one has answered you for me."

Abu al-Hasan remained with `Abdu 's-Salam's presence for the time that Allah, the All-Mighty, willed that he should, and when he was about to leave him to continue on his journey, his Master counselled him saying, "O `Ali. Allah! Allah! When you are amongst the people, refrain from mentioning the Secret. Remove your heart from their presences. It is for you to provide for your needs, and to observe what is prescribed by the Law (ash-shari`a). Thus you will attain the highest rank of holiness. I adjure you, by Allah, to this. You are under obligation to give to Allah that which is owed to Him, and He will do the rest, and will protect you. Say, "O Allah! Deliver me from their mentioning, and of accidents which should befall me because of them. Protect me against their wickedness, and by Your Kindness enable me to avoid their snares, for You are powerful over everything."

`Abdu 's-Salam also counselled his beloved student saying, "Do not take for friends those who seek your friendship. These are cheap people. Do not take in friendship those who prefer their own self to you, and do

not take for friends those who prefer you to themselves, because their sincerity is only based on appearances. But take those friends who when they make mention of anything say, 'Allah!' They should be humble towards Allah and none other but Him."

Ibn Mashish, may Allah be pleased with him, also said, "Guide the people to Allah, and do not guide them to anything but Him, for he who guides you to the world has cheated you, and he who guides you to work has made you suffer. But he who guides you to Allah has counselled you well."

It was said that when Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam prayed, the Saints of Islam prayed behind him and on all sides, both men and women.

It was recorded that once when Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhuli, desiring spiritual progress, asked his Master to petition Allah in his favor, he, may Allah be pleased with him, answered, "Allah is with you, O Abu al-Hasan, and if He is with you, which needs other than that can you have?"

A man once asked Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam for permission to take part in Jihad. He, may Allah be pleased with him, answered him with Allah's Words to His Prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him, "Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, ask not leave of thee that they may struggle with their possessions and their selves. And Allah knows those who fear Him."

He, may Allah protect his secret, said once to his beloved student Abu al-Hasan, "If you wish to fight your soul, examine it, let it take hold of the fear of sin, and imprison it in Allah's possession wherever you are."

In order to know the Spirit of our Master Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish, may Allah have mercy upon him, it is necessary for us to look into his Al-Wazifa since it is the only piece of writing from his hand which is available for us to study. It was revealed to him, he said, in a dream from the Prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him, himself. For `Abdu 's-Salam's heart, may Allah be pleased with him, was chosen to contain this revelation and to transmit it to all the followers who were to come from him. In this holy revelation the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, showed him that his Secret, prayers and peace be upon him, was the key to the Door of the Knowledge of Allah, Mighty and Supreme is He. Therefore Ibn Mashish said, "This is the Secret which Allah preserves and guards. How mighty is he among the Prophets who is a picture and example of the Existence of Allah."

The Knower of Allah, the Qutb of this time, may Allah benefit us through him, Sidi Shaykh Muhammad Said al-Jamal ar-Rifa`i, has written a Commentary on this Wazifa of `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish, which reveals many of its hidden meanings for its readers. It is from this Commentary that we now include some excerpts, which can, if Allah wills, guide us into this Knowledge which was granted to our Master Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish, may Allah protect his secret. He said, according to the words revealed to him by his Beloved Prophet, and may Allah hallow his Secret:

"O Allah! Send Your Blessings and send Peace in all the affairs
Of the revealed and the Hidden,
upon the one from whom the Secrets
Which were hidden in his lofty Essence,
Were cleft asunder by becoming revealed."
And we do not know what befits him of respect and might."

"And the Lights which were hidden
in the sky of his lofty Qualities,
Burst asunder into full moons,
and in him the Truths ascended, from him to Him;
And the Knowledge of Adam descended through him,
and upon him,
The One who unites all things.
This is the Preserved Secret
which none of us creatures knew before,

And which no one who comes after him can obtain,
In spite of his instinctive yearning for witnessing it.
O Allah! he is Your Secret which unites all secrets.
And the Gardens of the World of the Kingdom
and the World of Dominion,
Enjoying the flowers of his glowing Beauty.
And the reservoirs
which are distinguishing signs of Omnipotence,
Pour forth in profusion the lights of his dazzling Secret."

In his Commentary on these lines, the Shaykh Muhammad Said al-Jamal ar-Rifa`i, our Master says: The World of Omnipotence is the Presence of the Secrets which manifest the Essence freed of all incidents and choice. Briefly, an analogy can be made. The World of the Kingdom (al-mulk) and the World of Dominion (al-malakut) shine out through him, the Prophet, may prayers and peace be upon him, like spacious gardens on high. Another indication of this is the use of the word 'garden' for both these Worlds. His Beauty, prayers and peace be upon him, is like the plants in gardens... and the World of Omnipotence is like a sea on the two shores of which are gardens that are watered from its reservoirs.

The World of the Kingdom is the world of the presences, of bodies which produce manifest deeds and actions, so that everything which is known through the senses is from this Presence.

The World of Dominion is the Presence of souls, and it is the World of Manifestation of the Qualities of Beauty (jamal) and Majesty (jalal). Also everything that is known by the White Mind and by true understanding is from this Presence.

The Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, embellishes the World of the Kingdom and the World of Dominion just as flowers beautify gardens... so that these two Worlds are enhanced by his Beauty, may prayers and peace be upon him.

The Commentary continues: He, my Master, increased the honoring and glorifying and ascended from the station (maqam) of the 'special' to the station of the 'general' and said:

"And there is nothing that is not dependent upon him.
And which is not tended by his all-pervading Secret."

"For `Abdu 's-Salam was shown that there is nothing that is not founded upon him and linked to him, prayers and peace be upon him, and that this is from the Grace of Existence... because he is the Spring of all things and their Mother."

"And there does not exist anything which is not cared for
By his all-embracing Secret which is the Protector of all things.

If there were not his Intercession in every ascent and descent,
Those interceded for, as it is said, would disappear."

In his Commentary the Master explains that these words mean: They would be destroyed, and no trace of them would remain... especially in respect to the travelling to Allah, Most High. It means that there is no possibility for the traveller to witness the Reality, Praised and Exalted is He, except through his, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, mirror.

As regards the station of his Secret, prayers and peace be upon him, there is no hope of anyone knowing It, in his presence, because the difference between the station of his Secret and that of his Soul, prayers and peace be upon him, his Intellect, his Heart, his Self, is that the station of his Secret is the Muhammadan Reality which is Divine Light. And it is not possible for either the intellect or the consciousness of the created being, even the Perfect One, to know and understand if he is in his presence. But if he destroys everything, then he can reach It.

Know, and may Allah protect you, that when He, Glory be to Him and Exalted is He, created the Muhammadan Reality, He put into It for His Creation all that He had apportioned from the abundance of the Hidden and Revealed Knowledge, the Secrets and Revelations, the Lights and the Truths, in all their Decrees and necessities.

Then Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him, ascends until now in the witnessing of Divine Completion which cannot be reached by anyone save him, and this Perfection never passes away throughout all Eternity. Then Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam said: "And give him a new creation unceasingly."

The Shaykh's Commentary explains: In these words, `Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam asked that the 'unending succession' may be in like measure to the new creations which will never be interrupted, either in this world or in the Hereafter, as Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, says: "What, were We wearied by the first creation? No indeed: But they are in uncertainty as to the new creation." (50:15).

All existing things, in their manifest and in their hidden state, in their displayed and in their innermost existence, do not remain for two moments in the same state, because the time for their existence is also the time for their passing away. This refers to relative existence and non-existence, but not to true Existence, because there are manifest Realities in every rank according to its measure.

Then the unveiling of the revelation continued as `Abdu 's Salam said:

"O Allah! he is Your Secret that unites all secrets,
And Your Light which encompasses all lights.
And Your Guide who leads through You.
So that no one reaches (to You),
but to his unassailable Presence."

The Shaykh, may Allah benefit us through him, says in explaining these words: Know that the Muhammadam Inheritor is the Secret of Allah which unites all secrets, and his Light contains all lights... as my Master `Abdu'l-Ghani an-Nabulsi, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Know that the possessor of the Muhammadan Inheritance is the Seal of the Saints of his time, just as the Prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him, is the Seal of the Prophets, and there will be no Prophet after him, but in every Time of Allah there are Saints of Allah, Praised and Glorified is He, as numerous as there were nabi before."

There is a hadith of the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, in which he said, "The Knower of this Community is like any of the Prophets of the Children of Isra'il." Then as Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "The Muhammad Inheritor, who is Your Guide, leads through You, in as much as he is the manifestation of Your Highest Essence and of Your Splendid Attributes. For that reason his Guidance is complete, his words and his actions and all his doings. According to the measure that he follows the noble Law (ash-shari`a) and in the measure of his Love, and to the extent that he is drowned in the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, he can take from this noble Secret. Through this, when he destroys everything that he has, he then gives yearning for another to remember Allah when His Name is mentioned. What I mean is that what is behind this presence cannot be revealed to every traveller, because the presence of the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, or the Guide, may Allah be pleased with him, is the Veil which prevents anyone from knowing what is behind it, unless he is annihilated and returned to non-being, and to be completely like the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, or like his Guide. For the return to non-being is only for the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, but as for the Creation, it is returned through him."

Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam then called to his beloved God saying:

"O Allah! join me to him through his spiritual Line,
And make his praised and noble descent true through me."

Here, as the Commentary explains in the Shaykh's words, may Allah benefit us through him: No one knows the Secret of the Line of the Love except the lovers of Allah who contain It. After this bond has been reached, the seeker gains that from which the eyes of the Creation are veiled. For he becomes of the Family of Allah because He, Glory be to Him, brings the Line of the Love down upon His lovers who are His Family...

Know that from the heart of every person who is connected to this noble Line gush forth springs of Wisdom and Knowledge, through which each follower is guided, because he is connected to the Line of the Messenger of Allah, may prayers and peace be upon him.

Then, in asking for the realization of this noble descent, there are numerous signs, one of them being that the setting for his Muhammadan manners, prayers and peace be upon him, and the rules of the praised and noble shari`a cannot be perfected except through realization, which for the Knower of Allah is the complete Knowing and the highest degree of asking.

However, he who claims to be connected to this spiritual Line, the Line of the Love of Allah, Praised and Glorified is He, but who does not practice the rules of the shari`a, is like a liar who sees a mirage in the desert and says that it is water.

As some people said, "Do not obey anyone except Him, then you will make His Love manifest. By my life! This is a wonderful example, because if your love is righteous, then you obey because the lover obeys the one he loves."

Another sign is that every one of his noble manners, and every rule of his sublime shari`a, contains secrets and realities which not all creatures can contain. Therefore it is necessary to ask for the realization of the rules of the honored shari`a, and the glorification of the Books of the Reality, and their People...

Sidi Ibn Mashish then asked Allah:

"And let me know him,
with a knowledge by which I can see his Face,
And through which I can become his manifestation."

By this supplication (du`a), as the Shaykh, may Allah benefit us by him, explains, he meant: Let me know him through tasting, feeling and seeing, in everything that manifests of Your ancient eternal Beauty, and this is the supplication from the sublimity of the yearning (himma) where the Prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him, said, "Allah provides for the slave according to his yearning (himma), in as much as he asks for the ascent from the knowledge of certitude (ilm al-yaqin) to the eye of certitude (aynu l-yaqin), because the existence of things, from the Muhammadan Light and their appearances, and the Ahmadan Beauty is a realized and established knowing, which is the knowledge of certainty (ilm al-yaqin).

Concerning the eye of certitude (ayn al-yaqin), it is the attaining or unveiling of revelation and eye-witnessing, and especially on the horizons of vision or as far as the Eye can see. Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, says, "We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves, until it is clear to them that it is the Truth. Suffice it not as to thy Lord, that He is witness over everything?" (41:53).

The Commentary then continues: This is the case of those who are drowned in the Ocean of the Love, as my Master Abu l-`Abbas al-Mursi, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "By Allah! if the Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace be upon him, were to be veiled from me for the twinkling of an eye, I would not count myself to be a Muslim." He meant that Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, had united His slave with his Prophet in the Unity of the Essence, the Essential Union, in which neither in the fana nor in the baqa of Abu `Abbas was there any possibility of separation, unbinding or dissolution from the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him.

This state cannot be known, in any way at all, by the intellect, but only by travelling through the hand of a complete Guide.

The Master, Ibn al-Mashish, may Allah be pleased with him, then said, as he travelled deeper and deeper into the Ocean of the Unity of the Reality of his beloved Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him:

"I drink directly from it,

From the watering-places of the Bounty,
Through this Knowing, lead me on his firm Path,
On his Straight Path, to his presence which is linked
To Your Holy Presence which shines
With the revelations of his human virtues."

As our Shaykh, and Master says: These words are a call from the traveller's heart saying, "May You be the Traveller with me, and the One Who takes me by the hand on his firm Path, which is his living and clear Way, which is the Way of the highest Proximity, the Way of his noble shari`a, which is free from all faults and errors." As the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, said, "I leave you a pure white shari`a whose night is like its day." (Hadith Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim). This means that any presence which reaches to his Presence is purified and freed from all false connection and false contact to his Presence.

From this is known that he, may prayers and peace be upon him, has many Presences, and that the one which is here required is that which is linked to the Holy Presence. This is the one in which every traveller seeks refuge in Allah, and through which he witnesses the connection of the Muhammadan Presence to the Holy Presence in all its meanings.

Sidi ibn Mashish then continued his supplication by asking his Beloved God:

"And plunge me into the Ocean of Oneness,
Which encompasses every totality
Made up of its individual parts,
And of every individual part.
And pull me back from the morass of the Unity
Into the freedom of Diversity (at-tafrid)
beyond freedom or limitation."

In his Commentary, the Master explains this by saying: In this Sidi Ibn al-Mashish was asking for the annihilation (fana') in the Ocean of Oneness, which is equivalent to the manifestation of the Essence, wherein there is no trace left of the influence of the Names, or the Qualities, or of anything of individual appearances.

As this Presence completely encompasses all things, and as things are never empty, whether they are complex or simple, because the Essence is in everything, therefore he says, "Which encompasses every totality, made up of its individual parts." This he said in order that it may be known that in the Unity everything is an independent ocean. He used the word 'ocean' in the plural form in the Arabic language, so that we may know that every person to whom the One is revealed in his rank, falls down into the Eye of the Unity. It then becomes possible for all restraint to be thrown away, and for all the veils to be lifted from the Face of the Secrets. This can be either through belief or in actions. But the trusting traveller does not need to fear the Revelations, because they are the Source of belief and of all evidence.

He, may Allah benefit us by him, continues: Know that the 'morass of tawhid' applies to many things, and also states which hold the traveller back, preventing him from reaching the Unity. Other aspects of this morass, for example, are scholastic religious dogmas and the calls of the self and of desire for independence. These are the most harmful impediments that can befall the traveller on his Way, and which present a barrier against his attachment to his Lord, as our Master `Abdu 's-Salam Ibn Mashish says.

The freedom of diversity (at-tafrid) is the second separation, not the first, of which the Master gives proof by his words: "Which is beyond either freedom or limitation." There are three stations, and there is no fourth. The first is that of the first separation, which is the station of alterities and is referred to as al maqam al aghyar, the station of dissimilarities or contrasts, and of how they manifest themselves. They stop the traveller if he believes in them, and gives them an existence other than true existence. These make limitation.

The second station is that of the first Union, which is the witnessing of the many in the One, but here the vision is cut off from the complete Union by the necessity for the Names and Qualities, actions and Commands. This is the station of freedom.

The third station is that of the second separation, which is the witnessing of the One in the many, and the descent of Existence in all its ranks. He who owns this station gives the one with Truth his Truth, and the one with Equity his equity, and this is necessary because it is the complete Perfection, and the perfect Completion. The actions of the person in this station take place at the perfect moment, in the perfect time, and therefore he lacks nothing, nor is he lacking in anything, for the perfect completion of every action and every state.

After this our Master Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish, may Allah be pleased with him, then asked for the fourth station, the Union of the Union, as he said:

"And drown me in the Spring of the Sea of Oneness,
Through the witnessing, until I do not see, and I do not hear,
And I do not sense, nor feel, except through It,
While descending and ascending,
as it is and never ceases to exist."

Then, in his explanation the Shaykh says: My Master requested the fourth station which is the Union of the Union. He asked for the complete and perfect drowning in the Spring of the Essential Oneness, and the state of the Reality of the Order.

"And make the Great Veil the life of my Spirit by revelation
And by eye-witnessing,
since the Order from You is Mercy and Love."

Sidi ibn Mashish continued with his supplication, and commenting on this the Shaykh said: Here the Great Veil, being the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, Sidi Ibn Mashish was asking to be united to him in the complete bond of Love and surrender through which he, prayers and peace be upon him, might be the life of his Spirit so as to receive Revelation and Witnessing. His words: "Since the Order is like this-a Mercy from You, and Love," mean that Allah, Praised and Glorified is He, because of His Generosity, His Excellence, His Mercy and His Benevolence, in the Reality of the Order, made the Muhammadan Presence, the Spirit of all the spirits. But this no one understands except those who know Allah, and they are the Masters of Eye-Witnessing and inner Revelation.

Then Sidi Ibn Mashish said about this Union without end which he asked for:

"O Allah! make his Spirit the Secret of my Reality
By tasting and by state. And his Reality,
The Unifier of all my worlds,
In the abodes of Knowledge
In this world and in the Next.
And make this true to me
In accordance with what is with You,
By the realization of the First Truth and the Last
And the Revealed and the Hidden.
O first One, there is nothing before You,
O Last One there is nothing after You,
O Revealed One there is nothing above You.
O Hidden One, there is nothing beneath You."

Here `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish, may Allah hallow his secret, was asking that the Prophet's Reality might be the Gatherer of all his worlds, both on the outside and the inside, so that he would not be dependent upon anything else but him, and so that he might follow him in everything that he ordered, avoiding the things that he forbids. He requested that his Reality might not remain either as nafs or heart or soul, but that it might become the Soul of the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, and its Secret. He asked that he might attain this by tasting and by state, and not by knowledge, nor through imaginings, nor thought (hayal). For it should

be known that the Muhammadan Spirit, as in Sufi usage, means the Holy Spirit (ar-ruh al-quds) upon which all the universes are founded, and not only all the universes, but also all things. Also, all possible Decrees are based upon his mirror just as snow is built up from its mirror, which is water. Then the meaning of his words, "And O Allah! make the noble Muhammadan Reality true to me in accordance with what is the Order concerning this, with You", refers to the First Contact of the Day when Allah, the All-Mighty, asked, "Am I not your Lord?"

Then know, that these four noble Names are the pillars of existence, and if the traveller realizes them, then he falls into the station of the Eye of the Witnessing.

Therefore my Master requested help through them, for he meant that You are the First Truth, which existed before my realization of Your Existence in me, or of any knowledge of You, and You are 'O Last One' in respect of my complete annihilation in You. There is my annihilation a second time, after which He does not leave any trace of myself, and there is no more humanity. 'O Revealed One' means that there is no manifestation above Your Manifestation, wherever You are manifest to me through the appearance of everything. This is where You become my Witnessing after You were my Absence. I witness You through everything, but You are Greater than all the witnessing. 'O Hidden One' which means that under Your hiddenness there is nothing, and behind Your Secret there is no other Secret.

For this therefore the Master Ibn Mashish asked his Lord:

"And strengthen me, through You, and for You...
And unite me with You.
And take away Your Veil from my eye,
And place a barrier between everything which is not You."

This meant that the Master Ibn Maskish asked his Lord for the strength of witnessing and for protection from the tawhid of the descent of desires and forced intentions, as Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli said, "We do not ask You to remove what You want, but we ask You to help us with Your Spirit, in what You want, as You helped Your Prophets and Messengers, and especially the truthful ones of Your Creation, because You have power over everything... And unite me with You, which is the Unity through drowning, and permanent witnessing. Lift me up beyond the witnessing of things which are other-than-You. Lift me up beyond becoming intimate with creatures and multiplicity, and of the manifestation of the Divine Qualities in this world.

It was necessary for him to see only with the pure Eye of his heart, therefore he said: "Destroy Your Veil both from my outer eyes and from my inner Eyes, so that my eye returns to be a real Eye, and withdraw the blindness from it, which is the reason for the Veil. Empty your heart from things that are other-than-God, and He will fill it with Divine Knowledge (ma`rifa) and Secrets."

Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam then asked:

"And make me of the leaders of Your Goodness and Caring.
O Lord, give us from You a Mercy
And provide for us uprightness in our conduct.
Make us of those who are rightly guided through You,
And of those who guide.
Until no slightest glance falls on anything that is not You;
Until no desire guides us, except to You."

Sidi Ibn Mashish ended his Wazifa with an Invocation:

"Verily Allah and His angels

Send their prayers upon the Prophet.
O you who believe! Send your Prayers upon him,
And greet him with your deep peace.
O Allah! Send our prayers upon him from us,
The most befitting prayers,
And greet him with the complete peace.
For surely we cannot estimate his great value
And we do not know what befits him
Of respect and glorification."

"The prayers of Allah, Exalted is He, and His Peace, and His Greetings, and His Mercy, and His Blessings be upon our Master Muhammad, Your slave, your Prophet and Your Messenger, the unlettered Prophet. And upon his Family and Companions, of even and uneven numbers, and upon the numbered complete and blessed Words of our Lord."

Although Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish left only the Wazifa as a written legacy, this is more than enough holy Food for the thirsty and hungry traveller on the Path of Allah. In it are hidden many holy jewels of the deep Secret Knowledge.

From this we can see that what Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, gave him, in his heart, was a deep Spring of the Water of the Spirit coming directly from the Spirit of the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him. This Spring which came through Sidi ibn Mashish, still flows out in profusion to all who follow in his way which, through his successor and inheritor, became known as the Way of Ash-Shadhdhuli.

As our Guide of this Way, the Qutb, the Shaykh Muhammad al-Jamal ar-Rifa`i says about it: "It is not like any other Sufi Way. If you know the meaning of the Arabic word shadhdh which means isolated, alone, singular and extraordinary, and the li which means, for Me, then you can feel some of its meaning.

The Way of `Abdu 's-Salam Ibn Mashish was to be special only for Him (for Me). There is no Shaykh in this Way, there is only Allah. Through the Spirit, which is linked, without beginning and without end, to the Spirit of the Prophet, the one who truly follows, and obeys from the Reality, can find himself inside the real Garden of the Heart of his Beloved, until when he walks and continues in this Way, he can reach to be He - to be the Reality without any doubts.

The Ghawth Shaykh Abul Hasan al-Shadhili

Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli

This now is something of the story of the life and sayings of the Shaykh and Master Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli, whose full name was `Ali ibn `Abdullah ibn `Abdu 'l-Jabbar, who, on his father's side, descended from the Fatimid-Hasanid line, and on his mother's side from the Fatimid-Husaynid line.

He was born in the year 593 A.H./1196 C.E., in the mountain village of Ghumara in the Rif area of the northern Atlas mountains of the Maghrib. The Berber tribe to which he belonged had virtually separated itself from the rest of the Maghrib by refusing to accept the Religion of Islam, which was otherwise universally followed in this region. Sidi Abu Madyan had tried to teach and guide this tribe to the Truth, but they had preferred to live in their state of spiritual ignorance, relying mostly upon witchcraft, magic and idols for their form of worship.

There is little recorded about the very early life of `Ali ibn `Abdu 'l-Jabbar, but it is assumed that whilst he was still very young he would have been taught the basic rites of the Religion because he and his family were of the shurafa, that is, people who are related in the body to the Prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him. These are people who are untouched by the desire for worldly power and office or for material gains. Therefore, it could be expected that he would have studied, first of all, at the famous madrasa of

Qurrawiyyin in Fez (Fas) which had been founded by the great grandson of Sayyidina al-Hasan, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him.

His first Shaykh and Master was Sidi `Abdullah ibn Harazim, a follower of Sidi Abu Madyan, may Allah have mercy on them both, through whose guidance he entered the Path of Allah, the Way of Tasawwuf. It was also through him that he was later moved to find the Qutb of his time.

It is known that in the year 615 A.H., at the age of twenty-five, he travelled to the East and notably to al-`Iraq, searching for the Master who possessed the complete knowledge of the Path of the Truth of Allah, Praised and Exalted is He. There he was led to the Shaykh Abu al-Fath al-Wasiti who was the inheritor of the holy and renown Shaykh and waliy of Allah, Sidi Ahmad ar-Rifa'i, may Allah be pleased with him, who had founded and guided one of the first and largest tariq in the Way of Allah in the southern marshes of `Iraq. Here `Ali `Abdu 'l-Jabbar remained for a short time, until it became clear to the heart of the Shaykh Abu al-Fath that this follower could only be satisfied by the deepest Spring of the Knowledge (al-ma`rifa). Therefore he said to him, "You have come here seeking for the Pole (Qutb) of Islam, but you have left him in the Maghrib."

In this way the murid `Ali ibn `Abdu 'l-Jabbar returned to his own country, until he was led to his true Master, Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish on the mountain of Jabal `Alam in the Habt region of the Maghrib. The account of the first meeting between them has been given in the previous chapter in the story of the life of `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish, but one of the Knowers of Allah, referring to such a meeting said: "Know that in his beginning, the first of what the seeker of this Path needs is that he casts himself on the Shaykh who is a Knower of Allah, skilled in the journey of descent and ascent. Before him he is like the corpse in the hands of the one who is washing it. He does not resist the Shaykh when he understands something to be lacking, even if it is not in the Law (ash-shari`a), as the Shaykh Sidi `Abdu 'l-Qadir al-Jilani, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "If I am a rebel in the judgement of the shari`a, I am obedient in the knowledge of the Reality." Therefore he must wash himself of all other knowledge and actions, and turn in repentance (tawba) from his bad deeds. As one of the Knowers of this Path said, "The tawba of the act of rebellion is one tawba, but the tawba of the act of obedience is a thousand."

Another of the Knowers said, "Make ablution with the Water of the Unseen, if you carry the Secret. For with this he clings to him and keeps him company until the Shaykh is dearer to him than himself, his property and his children. Until if he commanded him to do the impossible, which cannot be thought of in the mind, he would do it without weariness or turning away."

In this way, everything that Allah revealed to them of the outside and the inside knowledge passed between the Shaykh `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish and his follower, until `Ali ibn Abdu'l-Jabbar became the true inheritor of his Master.

After a period of time, as Allah willed, Sidi `Abdu as-Salam told his beloved son and follower to proceed to Ifriqiya, now known as Tunisia, where he should settle in the village of Shadhila until Allah would send His Order for him to move to the city of Tunis, where he would meet with certain difficulty and opposition. He was told nevertheless that he should remain in Tunis, until the coming of an event which would permit him to leave this city and to travel to the East where, as his Master said, "You will become the Qutb of your time."

Before leaving Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam's presence, his young inheritor asked him for parting words of guidance, so that he might receive from him his message of the Order which Allah, Exalted is He, intended for him at that moment. His Master, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "O `Ali, Allah is Allah, and the people are the people. Therefore, let Allah's remembrance live every moment in your heart. Leave behind all dependence on people, and keep your heart from inclining towards them. Perform your duties and Allah's Guidance will always be with you. Do not refer to people unless Allah, the All-Mighty, orders you to do so. He has perfected for you your authority and friendship (walaya) with Him. Say, "O Allah! I ask Your Mercy that I do not incline or yearn for people. Protect me from their evils, and provide for me by not seeking help from them. Set me apart from them, for Thou art powerful over everything."

Then `Ali ibn `Abdu 'l-Jabbar set out for the village of Shadhila, between Qayrawan and Tunis where, rather than looking for a place to lodge, he retreated to a cave on the mountain of Jabal Zaghwan, accompanied by his spiritual brother and companion, one of the Knowers of Allah (ahli al-kashf), `Abdullah ibn Salama al-Habibi. Here they both lived for a period of time, as Allah, the All-mighty, willed of them. `Ali ibn `Abdu 'l-Jabbar chose this seclusion because he had not yet received permission from Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, to guide others, and he recognized that a period of retreat from the world was necessary for him, so as to strengthen his heart. He was shown that he still needed to concentrate on the inner battle (jihad) with his self, which he had embarked upon with his beloved holy Master Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish. This he must do until he was certain that he had emptied himself entirely of everything that was not for Allah, and he had effaced himself in Him.

It was a very holy period of asceticism, seclusion and spiritual practices during which the depth of his self-denial was accompanied by the manifestation of many spiritual gifts (karamat) from Allah, some of which were recorded by his companion, Abu Muhammad al-Habibi, who said, "One day on Mount Zaghwan, the Shaykh was reciting from the surat al-An`am until he reached the Words of Allah: 'Remind hereby, lest a soul should be given up to destruction for what it has earned. Apart from Allah it has no protector and no intercessor; though it offer any equivalent it shall not be accepted from it.' (6:69). (It, referring to the self of the human being.) At this point the Shaykh became absent as he repeated this aya again and again until his whole body was shaken by the Word of his Lord, and as often as he leaned to one side, so the mountain leaned in like manner, and this continued until his Spirit returned to his body, when the mountain also became still."

This same companion also recorded: After forty days of his keeping company with Sidi `Ali ibn `Abdu 'l-Jabbar, feeding on nothing but herbs of the fields and laurel leaves until the sides of his two cheeks began to pain him, he, may Allah be pleased with him, said to him, "O `Abdullah, is it that you wish for food?" He replied, "O my Master, my looking at you enables me to do without it." The Shaykh then said, "Tomorrow, if Allah wills, we shall go down to Shadhila and some Gift from Allah will come to us on our way."

`Abdullah al-Habibi continued: So the next morning we descended, and while we were walking through a valley the Shaykh said to me, "O `Abdullah, if I should leave this road do not follow me." Then he became absent from the world, and he left the way until he was some distance from me. Then I saw four birds, about the size of a stork, come down from the sky and fly over his head. Each one of them came and spoke with him and then flew away. Amongst them were birds about the size of swallows which surrounded him between the earth and the horizon, hovering in circles about him. When they had disappeared from sight, he returned to me saying, "O `Abdullah, did you see anything." I told him of what I had seen and he said, "The four birds were some of the angels of the fourth Heaven who came to question me about Knowledge, and about this I spoke with them. The birds resembling swallows were the spirits of the Saints which came to receive a blessing from our arrival."

It is recorded that Sidi `Ali ibn `Abdu 'l-Jabbar said: In the beginning of my travelling with the Path of Allah I was wont to pursue the science of alchemy, and I would make petition to Allah about it. I was told, "Alchemy is in your urine. Put into it whatever you wish and it will become what you desire." So I heated a pickaxe, quenched it therewith, and it turned to gold. Then my presence of mind came back to me and I said, "O lord, I asked Thee for a certain thing but I did not attain it except by the use of unclean devices, and this is not lawful." Then I was told, "O `Ali, the world is full of impurity, and if you desire it, you will not attain it except by impurity." I replied, "O my Lord, deliver me from it." I was told, "Heat the pickaxe and it will return to iron." I heated it, and it returned to iron."

After that he learnt that the basis of the search for, and the realization of the Truth of the knowledge of all sciences coming from Allah, Most High, lies in the truthfulness of the seeker's intention. About this he, may Allah be pleased with him, told the following story: While I was in the Maghrib, a certain man came to me and said, "I have been told that you possess a knowledge of alchemy-so teach me." He replied, "I will teach it to you without omitting a single particle, if you are able to receive it."

"By Allah I am able to receive it," the man replied. So I said to him, "Eliminate creatures from your heart, and stop desiring that your Lord give you other than what He had previously ordained for you." He replied, "I am not able to do that." I said, "Did I not tell you that you would not be able to receive it?" Then he left me.

He, may Allah be pleased with him, told of another story: While I was wandering one night in the beginning of my travelling on the Path, I slept in a place where there were many wild animals. These began to growl at me, so I went and sat down on a high hill and said, by Allah, I will pray to His Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, for has he not said, "Whoever sends blessings upon me, by that act the blessing of Allah, the All-Mighty, will be upon him tenfold, and if the blessing of Allah is upon me, I shall pass the night under His Protection." So I did this and feared nothing. When the dawn appeared, I went to a pool of water to make the ablution for the morning prayer (al-fajr), and there was a mass of reeds from which partridges broke forth with a great fluttering of wings. Fright overtook me and I turned back. Then I heard a voice say, "O `Ali, when you passed the night under the Care of Allah amongst the growling animals, you did not fear, but when you arose today under your own care, the fluttering of partridge feathers has made you afraid."

It was at this time that he was given his title (nisba) of ash-Shadhdhuli. He was shown that this name was not due to the fact that he was an inhabitant of the village of Shadhila, but that Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, said to him, "O `Ali, you are ash-Shadhdhuli with a tashdid on the dhal, meaning one who is set apart (shadhdhu-li) for Me."

Shortly after this the Order came to his heart, "Go down to the people. They will benefit by you." When he heard these words he said, "O my Lord and Sustainer, relieve me of their company." Then he was told, "Go down `Ali. Peace will be with you." He said, "Will You leave me to the people to eat from their money?" He was told, "Spend as you like, O `Ali, for I am your Financier. Spend as you like from your pocket, or from the Unseen."

So it was that about the year 640 A.H./1242 C.E., the Shaykh ash-Shadhdhuli went down to Tunisa and found lodgings near the al-Balat (the Tiled Mosque) where he began calling people to Allah, and teaching them His religion, receiving help and support from the Sultan Abu Zakariyya. The Shadhdhuliyya Order was first founded there around forty of his students who were known as the forty friends (al-awliya' al-arba'un), and soon a great number of people from all walks of life began to come to him for inspiration and guidance, as the word spread of the great learning, purity of heart and wisdom of the holy Shaykh.

Tunis in those days was a big city and a centre of commerce and trade as well as a gathering place for those seeking both religious and secular learning. Many people who were already following the religion of Islam were seeking something purer, more complete, and at the same time, simpler than what was being taught in the institutions of religious learning. They were also looking for a message which would speak to the hearts of city-dwellers whose everyday life and occupations were an important matter for them. Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli's Teachings gave these people exactly what everybody was looking for.

Someone has said, looking at the outside of Sidi Abu al-Hasan's message, and referring to some of his letters to his followers, "This correspondence shows not only that Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli had a deep knowledge of the Sufi Teaching of the eastern doctors, but also a personal experience of spiritual realities. If he knew how to inspire his followers it was not so much that he taught them a simple Sufism, but because he had the qualities of a spiritual Master as is revealed in his letters. He certainly formed no intellectual system, but he had qualities of spiritual discernment, and he knew how to extract from his own experiences what was valuable for others."

In the same manner, another person has said, "It is a fact of basic importance that the Shadhdhuliyya was born out of an urban surrounding, not necessarily in revolt against it, but as an outcome of the existing patterns of political, religious and economic life."

It was also Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli's message to his followers to encourage them, unlike many of the shaykhs before him and after his time, not to abandon their professions and trades which they had been following before coming to the Path, and to dress themselves in the same way as all the people with whom he,

may Allah be pleased with him, taught them to mix. It is said, in fact, that he did not like to take any student into his Way who did not have a trade or profession. This was from the outer face of his Way, and it was as though it was the outer key to the door of his Path which attracted many of those who would have turned away from a more obviously ascetic Master.

From the inner face of his Way, and for those who were searching with the inner Eye, Abu al-Hasan's presence and Teachings carried a certain power of the Spirit which was the Gift which Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, had bestowed upon him, and which came to him as the inheritor of the Spirit of his Father, the Guide Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish, Allah's mercy upon him. It was known that the Love from his eyes was enough to bring the wandering perplexed seeker into the Net of Allah. This was a special Gift from Allah, Most High, for His beloved slave. It is the same Gift of the bestowing of the Essence of the deep Secret Love of Allah coming from the Prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him, and which has been passed down through this Shadhdhuliyya Line to this moment. May Allah be praised and thanked in everything.

It was this relationship, springing from the deep Secret Love of the Essence, which revealed to the orthodox Muslims the elite bond between the Master and his followers-the Shaykh with his beloveds. Although it had always existed, it was through Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli, may Allah protect his secret, that it took on a new spiritual depth. This added depth came from the tasting of the true meaning of the annihilation (fana') in the Shaykh, who is the living Spirit of the Prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him, in his time. It is he who guides Allah's lover from his perfect annihilation of himself in himself, to the perfect annihilation of himself in Allah, Most High, followed by the perfect subsistence (baqa') in his Spirit.

Abu al-Hasan, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Real truthfulness (sidq) and piety (taqwa) are experiencing with the Master what you desire. Allah Praised and Exalted is He has said, "He who comes with the Truth and believes it to be the Truth, they are the godfearing. They have with their Lord what they desire."(39:34). This can be found only with the true Master, he who gives the right intention to the student's heart. The real intention means the absence of everything except the act intended upon undertaking, and its perfection is a holding fast to it until its completion."

This teaching and its practices seemed to the orthodox believers to threaten the whole structure of Islam as they knew it. But Sidi Abu al-Hasan, like his Master Sidi ibn Mashish and his Master Muhyi-id-din ibn al-`Arabi before him, considered that only the knowledge acquired through tasting could be true Knowledge. In this way he was indicating that the knowledge of the inner Sufi Path was of a degree above that of the jurists and the people of the outside Law (ash-shari'a).

In fact a certain person of the government of the Maghrib went to Sidi Abu al-Hasan and said to him, "I do not see that you perform any great religious works. So tell me how it is that you have reached such an elevated place amongst the people that they regard you so highly?"

He, may Allah be pleased with him, replied, "I have a single work that Allah, the All-Mighty, has prescribed to His People, and to which I cleave."

"What is that?" he asked.

I replied, "Withdrawal from you, and your world. Allah, Most High, has said: So turn thou from him who turns away from Our remembrance and desires only the present life." (53:29).

Sidi Abu al-Hasan then said, "Vision of the Truth came upon me and would not leave me, and it was stronger than I could bear, so I asked Allah, the All-Mighty, to set a veil between me and It. Then a voice called out to me saying, 'If you besought Him as only His Prophets and Saints and Muhammad His Beloved know how to beseech Him, yet would He not veil you from It. But ask Him to strengthen you for It.' So I asked for strength, and He strengthened me, Praise be to Allah."

One day when one of his followers asked him, may Allah be pleased with him, to speak about Union and Separation, he said, "My son, when you want that in which there is no censure, Union is witnessed in your Secret, and Separation exists in your tongue." In other words, the beloved of Allah is he who travels through things, recognizing them and their Orders, and seeing the Face of Allah in everything. The knower, as Sidi Abu al-Hasan indicated, is he who travels joyfully and happily obtaining the good of all things, and because

he trusts in Allah, the evil of things passes him by. But he who does not know and does not trust, travels through things fearfully, anxious, restrained and imprisoned, and so he attracts their evils, and their good misses him." Has not Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, said, "Are they equal, those who know and those who do not know?"(39:9).

Sidi Abu al-Hasan said, "Know that the Secret of all the ranks is gathered together in a rank, and it is the noblest, the highest, the greatest and the most immense. It is that your inward is truly with Allah and your outward with the Creation by Allah. When your outward is with the Creation and your inward is with Allah, then all your states are pure, from the side of the outward. So the Creation does not reject you. From the inward side there is no intermediary between you and Allah."

For that he, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Make us Your slaves in all states, and teach us knowledge from You by which we may become perfect both in our life and in our death."

Again and again he, may Allah hallow his secret, returned to this Truth of the relationship between the Knowledge of Allah and the state of being His slave. He said, "Allah, Praised and Mighty is He, has said, "Only those of His servants who have knowledge fear Allah."(35:2).

Then Sidi Abu al-Hasan also said, "The slave of this world is a prisoner, the slave of the Hereafter is a hireling, but the slave of Allah is an `amir."

He, may Allah be pleased with him, counselled his beloveds as he said to them, "If you desire to look towards Allah with the eyes of faith and firm belief at all times, then be thankful for His favors, and be content with His Decrees. Whatever favor you have is from Allah. Then, whenever evil touches you, call upon Him. If you desire it to turn away from you, or yourself to turn away from it, worship Allah lovingly, not bargaining with Him, but knowingly, with due respect and modesty."

A Knower who understood Sidi Abu al-Hasan's Secret said: "Allah made selves incline to freedom and to love it, and He made them flee from bondsmanship and hate it. Whoever is a knower and who entrusts himself to a Knower, only finds ease in bondsmanship. He who is ignorant, or who entrusts himself to one who is ignorant, only finds ease in freedom." For which he said, "Only the giving of the Perfect is perfect."

It was in this way that Sidi Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli taught his followers and students and always reminded them, "Whatever Allah has willed will be, and whatever He has not willed is not. There is no strength and power except with Allah."

However the Master's presence, and his continually growing influence amongst all manner of people in Tunis, began to stir up envy and apprehension in the heart of a certain lawyer (faqih) known as Abu 'l-Qasim ibn Bara. This person tried to bring legal charges against him, and when this proved unsuccessful, he then sought to get the Sultan Abu Zakariyya's ear by declaring that Abu al-Hasan was a fraud and an imposter who claimed to be of the Fatimid line. He also charged Sidi Abu al-Hasan of being a potential agitator who was stirring up trouble amongst the people against Abu Zakariyya's rule and authority.

Although the Sultan was generally speaking a just man, the charge of possible insurrection to his rule brought apprehension to his heart, so he called a gathering of the `ulama and fuqaha to question the Shaykh about his belief and intentions, while he himself sat listening, but hidden from sight behind a screen. The outcome of this meeting was that none of the charges brought by Ibn al-Bara' were in any way proved to exist, and the Sultan said to him, "This man is one of the greatest Saints, and you have no power over him." He therefore dismissed all those who had been gathered together to question Abu al-Hasan, except the Shaykh himself whom he still retained in his presence. Then Abu al-Hasan asked of him only to be allowed to have a jug of water to make ablution, a carpet for praying, and to be able to speak to one of his muridun who was anxiously waiting outside. He, may Allah be pleased with him, said to the Sultan, "By Allah, were it not that my Way teaches us to act in accordance with the Law (ash-shari`a) I would surely walk out from here, or there." As he said this, he pointed to one wall of the room, and then another which immediately opened for him. He told his student to inform all his followers that he would be absent from them for that day, but that, if Allah willed, he would pray the night prayer together with them.

After he had finished his prayer, Abu al-Hasan was about to make a du`a to Allah, the All-Mighty, asking him to bring some judgement upon Ibn al-Bara' and the Sultan for their opposition to him, but then he heard the words. "Truly Allah will not be pleased with you if you ask Him in anger towards a fellow creature." So he offered up the following du`a, which later became a part of his well-known Invocation of the Earth (Hizb al-Barr): "O You Whose Throne is spread over the heavens and the earth, the preservation of which is no burden, the Sublime, the All-Mighty (2:256), I ask You for faith in Your Care, a faith by which my heart will remain undisturbed from anxiety for my sustenance, and from fear of creatures. Draw me near to You in a way that tears away the veils as You did with Ibrahim, Your Friend and Messenger, who spoke to You and thereby did not need to ask You, for You kept him safe from the fire of his enemy. How can anyone be in need of a veil to shroud him from the harm of his enemies when You have made him not to be in need of the help of Friends? I pray that You will conceal me in Your Nearness until I cannot see or feel the nearness nor the distance of any other thing. You have the power over everything." (2:19).

One of Sidi Abu al-Hasan's students told about a certain incident relating to this lawyer, Ibn al-Bara: One day the Shaykh met Ibn al-Bara and greeted him, but he turned away from him and did not return his salutation. Shortly afterwards the canon lawyer, Abu `Abdullah ibn Abi 'l-Husayn, the Sultan's chamberlain, passed by. When he saw the Shaykh, he dismounted from his she-mule and hastened towards him greeting him by kissing his hands, weeping and begging him for his intercession on his behalf. So the Shaykh interceded for him and then continued on his way.

When Abu al-Hasan entered his house he said, "Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, has just revealed to me concerning these two men, for I have been told, 'O `Ali, the marking (wasm) of a person (`abd) with ill-fortune is in accordance with the fore-knowledge of Allah, and he is blind to it, though he be very learned, and the marking of a person with good fortune is according to the fore-knowledge of Allah, and it comes to him, do what he may.'"

On another occasion he, may Allah be pleased with him, told of an incident, once more involving Ibn al-Bara', which he recounted saying: I came upon a group of jurists among the companions of the Chief Qadi of Tunis, Ibn al-Bara, a man with whom Allah, the All-Mighty, was not well-pleased, and I greeted them and they turned away from me. That was a painful experience. Then I heard the voice saying to me: "O `Ali, indeed you have exaggerated your own importance and overestimated your worth, since you were sensitive to their turning away from you. But who are they when they turn towards you, and how is it when they turn their back? If you were one helped by Allah, you would be distracted through your turning to Allah from their turning away from you. If you were under right guidance, you would be distracted through Allah's turning to you from your turning towards Him."

In His Wisdom, Allah, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, sent Ibn al-Bara as a deep blessing for Abu al-Hasan at a time when he, may Allah be pleased with him, was testing him and teaching him the deep Knowledge of His Path. He said, I heard someone say, "He who is sensitive to the first shock of misfortune is not patient. He who burdens himself with trouble has not resigned his affair to Allah. He who asks is not content with Allah. He who manages his own affairs has not committed them to Allah. He who calls for help has not trusted. These are five things, and how great is your need to be attentive to these five!" Say: "My Lord, I stand in need of the good that You have sent down to me. So increase for me Your Bounty and Beneficence, and make me one of those who are thankful for Your Favors."

Shortly after this, Abu al-Hasan decided to leave Tunis to make the Pilgrimage (Hajj) if Allah willed, and for this purpose he set out with his followers to the East. When the Sultan Zakariyya heard of this he was very troubled and sent a message begging the Shaykh to remain in Tunis. But he, may Allah be pleased with him, said to him. "I am not leaving except with the intention of making the Hajj if Allah, Exalted is He, wills, but when He, Most High, will have fulfilled for me my intention I shall, if He wills, return again."

Accordingly, Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli, together with some of his followers, journeyed to Egypt, arriving in Iskandariya (Alexandria) where they were greeted with being detained in the military camp by an order of the Sultan of Egypt. This was because Ibn al-Bara had sent a message warning the Sultan that the Shaykh was a dangerous man who would stir up trouble in his country. However, Allah, the All-Mighty, intervened,

bringing proof to him and all those around him, that the Shaykh, far from being a troublemaker, was a person of great spiritual power, intent only to make peace for all the people wherever Allah, the All-Mighty, sent him to be.

One of his students who was accompanying Abu al-Hasan said that he did not hear the Shaykh pray against Ibn al-Bara, and he did not even mention him in any way until they were by `Arafat, and this was on the Pilgrimage after leaving Egypt, when he said, "Say Amin to my du`a, for just now I have been commanded to pray against Ibn al-Bara." Then he said, "O Allah, lengthen his life, make his knowledge to be of no avail to him. Bring him tribulation through his offspring. Assign him, at the end of his life, to be a slave of oppression." And to Allah belongs the Order before and after (30:4).

Then after a few days Sidi Abu al-Hasan was able to leave Egypt with his followers, and to fulfill the Pilgrimage, after which he returned to Tunis. There he remained for a number of years until one day Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, brought him the young man who was to become his successor and the inheritor of his station and his holy line. This was Abu 'l-'Abbas al-Mursi. As soon as the Shaykh looked at the face of this young man from Spain, he said, "Truly no one has brought me back to Tunis except this person."

Soon after this, Abu al-Hasan was given the Order to move to Egypt, which would be his final home, about which he, may Allah be pleased with him, said: I saw the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him in a dream and he said to me, "Ya `Ali, go to Egypt and raise up forty true followers (siddiqun) there." It was summer time and intensely hot and I said, "Ya Rasul Allah, the heat is very great." He said, "Lo, the clouds will give you shade." I said, "I fear thirst." He replied, "Lo, the sky will rain for you every day." He promised me many miraculous gifts (karamat) on my journey. So I instructed my followers to prepare to depart to Egypt."

One of the gifts which he had been promised and was shown was that he had become the Qutb of his time. So it was that in the year 646 A.H./1246 C.E., when he was fifty years old, Sidi Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli entered Egypt and took up his residence in al-Iskandariya where he lived for the rest of his life. He set himself up with his family and followers in one of the great towers rising from the walls surrounding the city. The tower was well equipped for this purpose since it comprised several stories which provided accommodation for his family, a Mosque, a zawiya for his students where the Shaykh gave teachings, and rooms for other guests.

Meanwhile in Ifriqiya his Spirit was kept alive by a small group of his students with whom he kept up correspondence. Two of them wrote a book about the life of their Master. One of these two students, Muhammad ibn as-Sabbagh was the author of *The Pearl of the Secrets and the Treasure of the Righteous* (Durrat al-Asrar wa Tuhafat al Abrar), the source book for the greater part of the life and sayings of his Master Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli.

Sidi Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli, may Allah have mercy upon him, was the founder of what became a great Sufi Order, and which is still one of the biggest of the Sufi Orders to this day. Yet he left no manual of instruction for his students, no handbook of practices, and no treatise to follow. He used to say, "My companions are my books." What do exist however are several Litanies which he composed including his Litany of the Ocean (Hizb al-Bahr), Litany of the Light (Hizb an-Nur) and Litany of Victory (Hizb al-Fath) which he used to like to recite, and which he urged his students to learn by heart, and to make their recitation a regular part of their spiritual practices. In the same way as the Wazifa of Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish is known to carry many unseen blessings, so are the Litanies of Sidi Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli. It is recommended by our Shaykh, Sidi Muhammad al-Jamal ar-Rifa`i, that these should be read and recited by his followers in this holy Way, so that our souls may be purified by them, and that our spirits may find inspiration and benefit from them, with the lifting of veils from our hearts. One of the Knowers of Allah said about the Way which our Master Abu al-Hasan set out for his followers: This Path of ours is the pure Shadhdhuli Path. Its seeker must be based on its 'Imam. He is the Pole of the Poles (Qutb al-Aqtab), Abu al-Hasan who when he first met his Shaykh said, "O Allah! I have washed myself of my knowledge and my actions so that I do not possess any knowledge or action except what comes to me from this Shaykh." This example became a condition for the follower of the Path, that he should leave his own knowledge of existence, and judge by that

of the existence of the Shaykh, without turning away or dissatisfaction." It was also said, "One of this Shadhdhuli Path is approached, and he does not go to anyone. He is needed and does not need anyone. He is always desired by everyone but does not desire anyone, except the One, the Unique, the Self-Subsisting (samad)." Another of them said about the Way of Abu al-Hasan, "Know that this annihilation (fana') to which the people of the Shadhdhuli Path refer, is like death, no more no less. The dead, annihilated one in Allah, only dies by the self which emerges and enters by the mouth, and no more, because he is like a corpse in the Essence without Attributes." And this is what our Master Sidi `Abdu 's-Salam ibn Mashish, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, "Drown me in the Spring of the Sea of Oneness, until I only see, only hear, only find and only feel by It." Abu al-Hasan said, "When Allah wishes him to reach Him, He eases it in this way: He makes manifest to him some of the Sublime Attributes and Holy Qualities whose Divine Nature hid his own attributes and qualities from the soul of the slave. This serves as a sign that Allah loves him, as the Prophet, may prayers and peace be upon him, said in the hadith al-qudsi from his Lord: When I love him I am the hearing by which he hears, and the sight by which he sees, and the hand by which he strikes, and the foot whereon he walks." For he, may Allah have mercy upon him said, "If He did not love you, He would not make you to witness the Unity. The sign of His Love for His beloveds is that He puts the love of His remembrance in our hearts." Then Abu al-Hasan said, in speaking about the meaning of the quality of dhikr, "It is that you are making mention with the tongue and gazing with the heart.

" The remembrance of Allah (dhikr), as he, may Allah be pleased with him, said, is one of the essential means of walking with success and fulfillment on His Path. Therefore he counselled his students: "Know that it is important for the student of the Sufi Path for reaching the goal of attaining Union (wusul) with Allah, to ask Allah's help, and to sit upon the carpet of truthfulness (sidq), contemplating him by truthful dhikr. Also one's heart must be bound to the practice of pure bondsmanship (`ubudiya) so as to reach the knowledge of Allah (ma`rifa). Then continue in remembrance, thankfulness, watchfulness (muraqab), repentance and seeking forgiveness." When Sidi Abu al-Hasan spoke about his Path, the Shadhdhuliyya Way, he said, "Its confirmation is Sainthood (wilaya)." By this he meant the witnessing of the knowledge of the Love of the Essence, through tasting and sincerity (ikhlas). And he said, "The People of this Path seek the benefit of evil just as they seek the benefit of good." In the same way he said, and may Allah protect his secret, "O Allah! People are sentenced to abasement until they become mighty, and they are sentenced to loss until they find. The one who has no abasement becomes the one who has no might, and the one who has no loss becomes the one who does not find. The one who lays claim to finding without loss is a liar." In one of the prayers which he, may Allah be pleased with him, liked to use, he said: "My God, if I ask You for help, I have asked for something beside You. If I ask for what You have guaranteed me, I show suspicion of You. If my heart rests in anything but You, I have been guilty Of the sin of associating something with You. Your Attributes in their Majesty are above contingency. How then can I be with You? They are beyond the reach of causes, How then can I be near You? They are exalted beyond the dust of earth, How then can my stay be other than You?" He, may Allah be pleased with him, also said that so long as the seeker stops with his own attributes, he is still with his self (nafs), and one of the attributes of the self is the desire to have vision and eye-witnessing of Allah. He said, "The desire for Union with God is one of the things that most effectually separates from Him." And he said, "Scrupulousness has to do with what goes out and enters here (he pointed to his mouth) and with the heart, that there should enter it nothing except what Allah and His Messenger love." Then he followed that, and said, "Whenever the spirit is abundantly watered with the showers of sciences, and the self (nafs) is firmly rooted in good works, then all good results. But whenever the self has power over the spirit, then drought and sterility result, the Order is overturned and every evil befalls. So take heed of the guidance of the Book of Allah and the healing words of His Messenger, prayers and peace be upon him, for you will never cease to enjoy the good as long as you love these two the most. But evil has already come to him who turns away from them." The People of the Truth upon hearing vain talk, turn from it (28:55), and upon hearing the Truth welcome it. Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, says, "Whoever performs a good deed, for him will We increase it with goodness." (42:23). Then he, may Allah be pleased with him, added to that, "Make us Your slaves in all Your Revelations (tajalliyat) so that we do not become too proud for Your bondsmanship (`ibada) in Your Revelations." One of his followers said about the nature of Sidi Abu al-Hasan's Teachings: Listen to these words of a Discourse coming from Allah in the Unseen through our Shaykh: "The Cup of Allah is full of the knowledge (ma`rifa) of the Truth (al-Haqq), whose clear Water is given to whom He wishes of His chosen slaves amongst the Creation. Sometimes it is in a material image, sometimes as meaning (malnawiya), sometimes as knowledge (`ilmiya). In its material picture it is bestowed for bodies and selves (anfus). In the

form of meaning it is for hearts and minds, and in the form of knowledge it is for spirits (arhah) and for the Secret of the Secret Selves (asarar). Sometimes a group of Lovers will come together and they are given to drink from a single Cup, or it may be that they are given to drink from many Cups. Sometimes a person is given to drink from a Cup, and more than one Cup. It may be that the drinks will vary according to the number of Cups. Or it may be that the drinking from any one Cup will vary, even though a great number of lovers drink from the same Cup." When he, may Allah have mercy upon him, was questioned another time about Love he said, "Love is granted by Allah to the heart of His slave, and it is that which distracts him from everything else other than Him, so that he will see his Spirit enfolded in His Presence, and his Secret Heart overwhelmed in contemplation of Him. Thus the slave asks for more, and more is given, so that he enters into the sweetest of joys in the Union of his spirit with Him. He is dressed in garments fitting for him who sits in proximity to him, and he reaches to the knowledge of the Hidden Reality and the Revealed faces of Allah."

For that reason, it is said that the Saints are the Brides of Allah. The same questioner said to the Shaykh, "Now that I have come to know of Love, tell me what the Drink (sharab) of Love is, what the Cup of Love is, who is the Bearer of the Cup (saqi), what the meaning of tasting (dhawq) is, what the drinking (shurb) is, what the quenching of thirst (riyy) is, what intoxication (sukr) is and what sobriety (sahw) is?" He, may Allah hallow his Secret, replied, "The Drink is the Light radiating from the Beauty of the Beloved. The Cup is the Essence of the Subtlety of the Mercy which is in the tasting of the heart. The Cupbearer is he who is the Friend of the Greatest of the Chosen Ones and the Righteous among His slaves. He is Allah, the One Who knows the capacities and capabilities of His Friends. If that Beauty is revealed to a person, and he enjoys it even for one breath or two, and then the veil covers it again, he becomes the yearning taster. If he continues drinking for an hour or more, he is the drinker. If this state continues and lasts until his very veins and all his members become filled with the treasures of the Lights of Allah, then this is known as the quenching of thirst. When a person is absent from his senses and his mind has left him, so that he does not know what he says or what is said, that is known as intoxication. Sometimes when the Cups go round, the states differ, and the knower is returned back to remembrance (dhikr) and religious duties of the Law (ash-shari`a), or to subsistence (baqa') after intoxication, and that is the time of their sobriety. This is when their vision is strengthened and enlarged and their actions are increased." Allah Praised and Exalted is He, has said, "These are of the Party of Allah ... and lo, is it not those of the Party of Allah who are the victorious ones." (58:22). When Abu al-Hasan, may Allah have mercy upon him, once became ill in Qayrawan, as he said: The Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, came to me in a dream and said, "Cleanse your garments of all impurities and then with every breath you breathe you will enjoy Allah's Help." I asked, "What are my garments, Oh Rasul Allah?" He said, "Allah has clothed you with the robe of knowledge (ma`rifa), with the robe of Love (mahabba), with the robe of Unity (tawhid), with the robe of Faith (iman), and with the robe of Surrender (islam). Whoever has spiritual knowledge, for him everything becomes of little importance. Whoever loves Allah, for him all things become easy. Whoever affirms the Oneness of Allah, nothing is associated with Him. Whoever has faith in Allah is safe (amina) from everything. Whoever is surrendered to Allah does not disobey Him, and if he does so, he returns repentant, asking to be forgiven, and finding forgiveness." As he, may Allah be pleased with him, said: I knew then the meaning of the Words of Allah, "Your robe, cleanse." (74:4). Another time he, may Allah be pleased with him, was explaining the meaning of the Prophet's saying, prayers and peace be upon him, Prayer is the link of union (silsila) of the slave to his Lord, and he said: "The sign of Union is the outpouring of Mercy with the manifestations of Love. The manifestations of Love are the removal of the Veil and the happiness in communion." On another occasion he said: I saw Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, may Allah be pleased with him, in a dream and he asked me, "Do you know what the sign is for the love of the world leaving the heart?" I replied, "No." He said, "Forsaking it upon finding it, and finding relief upon losing it." He, may Allah be pleased with him, then said, "The practices (awrad) of the faithful (saddiqun) are fasting, prayer, recitation of dhikr, reading of Qur'an, guarding of the private parts, the turning of the lower self from desires, enjoining what is halal, and forbidding what is prohibited, according to four principles, which are: abstinence from worldly things, trust in Allah, submission to Allah's Decrees, and patience in His testing. Sincere love is built on four corner-stones, the first one being faith, then comes the belief in the Oneness of Allah, thirdly comes right intention, and fourthly high himma. Also if a person does not have four virtues in himself, let him abandon hope of happiness, these virtues being: knowledge (ilm), scrupulousness (wara), fear of Allah (hayba), and humility towards the slaves of Allah. The principles, corner-stones and virtues are all necessary for the seeker.

" Sidi Abu al-Hasan also said, "The bondsmanship (‘ibada) of those who are trustworthy consists of twenty things: eat, drink, clothe yourselves, travel, marry, settle down, do everything that Allah has commanded. Do not be neglectful but serve Allah. Do not associate anyone or anything with Him. Be thankful to Him. Avoid injuring others, and spend generously. This is one-half. The other is performing prescribed duties, avoiding what is unlawful and being content with whatever Allah decrees. Truly serving Him consists in reflecting upon His Orders and thoroughly understanding the Religion (ad-din). The best kind of service is asceticism towards the world which comes from an absolute trust in Allah. This is the bondsmanship of the best of the believers. If you are ill, seek for a remedy. Listen carefully to the Knowers and choose the holy ones from amongst them, the true Guides, who put their trust in Allah."

When Sidi Abu al-Hasan had once asked his own Master, Sidi Ibn Mashish, concerning the Well, or Spring (wird) of the People of the Reality, he said that Sidi ‘Abdu ‘s-Salam, may Allah be pleased with him, had replied, "It is essential for you to have destroyed passion and desires (hawa) and to love the Friend of Allah (al-waliy). The sure sign of Love is that the lover is occupied with nothing except his Beloved." By this question he, Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli was in truth asking about the holy bond between Master and student. The answer came to him, without any doubt, that only in the total surrender of the student's complete being could he receive the perfect blessings which Allah had set aside for him. Therefore Sidi Abu al-Hasan himself said, "If anyone is satisfied by his possessions he is poor; if anyone is satisfied by his high reputation he is to be despised, if anyone is satisfied with his kinsmen he is worthy of contempt and if anyone is satisfied with Allah he is truly rich." Then he, may Allah be pleased with him, added, "The sign of commitment (tafwid) is a lack of distress when distasteful things befall." In addition to his verbal Teachings Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli also kept an extensive correspondence going with his followers, especially those who had remained behind in Tunis. In particular, many letters passed between him and Shaykh Abu al-Hasan as-Saqalli, and also with his companion and friend of the cave of Jabal Zaghwan, the Shaykh ‘Abdu ‘s-Salama al-Habibi, who had remained in Ifriqiyya keeping up a zawiya for the muridun of the village of Masruqin. As was said, "These letters are considered to be of great importance for an understanding of his Way, since his love and compassion for all his followers was well-known. He considered it to be a duty for the Shaykh, as the Father (rabib), to know his beloveds intimately, and to help them wherever they might be."

Abu al-Hasan's follower, Ibn Sabbagh, recorded many stories about the karamat (gifts or spiritual attainment) of Sidi Abu al-Hasan, a number of them having been related to him by the follower, Abu ‘l-‘Aza‘im Madi who kept company with the Master in the latter part of his life in Egypt. One such story is as follows, as Abu ‘l-‘Azaim Madi said: The Shaykh sent me from Iskandariyya to Dumyat for something that he needed. There was a man with us of the people of Dumyat who asked the Shaykh's permission to accompany me and to travel with me, and permission was granted him for this. On approaching the Gate of the Lotus Tree (one of the Gates of Iskandariyya), the man took out some money to buy bread and condiments. I said to him, "You do not need anything." He said to me, "We shall find the shop of a certain person in the desert." He mentioned the shop of a man from Halwan in Iskandariyya. I said to him, "It is better, if Allah wills, to do as I say." Now I had been accustomed, whenever I travelled, to take no provision of food with me, but when I became hungry I would hear the voice of the Shaykh saying to me, "O Madi, go over to your right and you will find something to eat."

In like manner, when I was thirsty I would find fresh water and cooked food. We left Iskandariyya and walked, hastening on our journey until the day was well advanced. Then my travelling companion said, "O Madi, give me something to eat for I am hungry." Immediately I heard the Shaykh's voice saying to me, "O Madi, your guest is hungry. Go over to your right and you will find wherewith to feed him." I went over to the right-hand side of the road and we found a pot full of sweet cakes perfumed with musk and rose-water, and we ate them until we were filled. The man was amazed and wept at what he saw. I asked him, "Which of the two is more tasty, this food or that in the shop of the man from Halwan of whom you spoke?" The man said, "By Allah, I have certainly not seen the like of this before, and such as this has never been made in the palace of a king." The man wanted to gather up the remnants of the holy food, but I prevented him from doing this, and I left them as they were. When we had walked on a short distance we became thirsty. Instantly my beloved Shaykh's voice came to me saying, "O Madi, go over to your right-hand and you will find water."

Thereupon we found in the sand a pool of fresh water, from which we drank, and beside which we rested for a while. On arising we found not a drop of water to be seen. Thereupon the man said, "Where is the water which was here in this place?" I said, "I know nothing about it." Then the man said, "By Allah, this Shaykh is truly endowed with great powers. By Allah, I will not return to my people until I shall have obtained what this Master has obtained, or I will die in Allah." So he left his fur-lined cloak with me and walked off into the desert exclaiming, Allah! Allah! Abu 'l-'Azaim Madi continued: When I had finished my journey and returned to my Master, he said to me, "O Madi, you have lost your guest." I said to him, "You are the one who has lost him whom you fed with the sweet cakes in the desert, and whose thirst you quenched with the water in the sand." Then he, may Allah be pleased with him, said to me, "He has passed along with those who are betaking themselves to Allah." Abu 'l-'Aza'im Madi also related: One day the Shaykh was talking to his assembly of followers on the subject of asceticism (az-zuhd) regarding worldly goods. In the group assembled to listen to him was a poor man wearing worn out clothes while his teacher wore fine-looking garments. The poor man said, "How is it that the Shaykh talks about asceticism while wearing these clothes? I am the ascetic with regard to worldly goods." Our Master Abu al-Hasan said, "O you disputer, your clothes are the garments of worldly desire (raghba ad-dunya) which are crying out with the tongue of effort and poverty, but our garments cry out with the tongue of abstinence (ta' affuf) and sufficiency (ghina). As soon as he heard these words, the poor man stood up before all those assembled, and said, "I, by Allah, the Mighty, am the one who says likewise in my heart, and I ask for forgiveness of Allah, and turn to Him in repentance." Then the Master told Madi to clothe the poor man in fine garments. It was related that when Sidi Abu 'l-'Abbas' son, who was called Ahmad Shahabu-id-din, reached puberty, his mother said to Sidi Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli, "O my Master, my son Ahmad has come to manhood.

" Then he, may Allah be pleased with him, said to her, "Bring him to me so that I may give him my final injunction, and teach him those rights of Allah which are required of him." So his mother brought her son to the Shaykh's presence. He, may Allah be pleased with him, looked intently at the young boy, for a moment, then he turned his eyes away from him. Then he said to him, "Arise, O my son, may Allah always guide you", and he made du'a to Allah for him. When the youth had left the Shaykh's presence, his mother said to the Master, "Sidi, indeed I did not hear you give him your final message, or even address a word to him." He, may Allah be pleased with him, said to her, "When he was sitting in front of me, Allah allowed me to see the outcome of his life, and I found nothing in his actions against which to warn or counsel him, so I felt ashamed before Allah to speak to him.

" There is also a story about the Master Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli, which was related by a man named Abu 'Ali 'Umar whose father told him that two of his friends had told him of how Sidi Abu al-Hasan had drawn near to them one night while they were in a small fort. Abu 'Ali 'Umar said: We had ten sheep which we had received on credit for the purpose of making a profit from them. We had killed one of the choicest of our small flock for the Shaykh, who asked us, "Why have you done this?" We said to him, "This is for the blessing, if Allah wills.

" One of the two men said to the Shaykh, "By it (the blessing) will a thousand measures of grain be stored up for us?" He said, "And by it a thousand measures of grain, if Allah wills." They then told of how, after only a short time, they had acquired a thousand sheep and had stored up a thousand measures of grain. Abu Ali 'Umar added: I was present at the time of their counting, and I ate of their offspring. Finally, many stories are told about the Battle of al-Mansurah in the year 1250 C.E., when the Crusader King Louis of France invaded Egypt, and in which the Shaykh took part fighting in the front line with his followers. When Sidi Abu al-Hasan and many of his beloveds, as well as his friends amongst the 'ulama and the awliya, heard that the Muslim community was under attack, they immediately made their way to al-Mansurah to join in the battle for Victory or Paradise (an-nasr aw al-janna), knowing full well that Paradise is under the shadow of the sword. On the day of the battle the Shaykh mounted his best horse, one of his followers then handing him his sword. When he clasped it in his right hand he asked for another, and with one in each hand he rode out into battle. When he was asked afterwards how he could fight so marvelously, because at that time his eyesight was very weak, he pointed to his heart saying, "If the Eye of the heart sees clearly, what is the need for the eyes of the body?" The Master Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli had made it his custom that every other year he would travel to Mecca for the Pilgrimage. Likewise in the year 656 A.H./1258 C.E., the very year in which a few weeks earlier the Mongol ruler Hulugu Jenghiz Khan had sacked Baghdad, he made preparations to go on the

Pilgrimage as usual. However, this time he asked that a pickaxe, shovel, and a shroud should be included in their baggage. As was his custom he set out on the southern route, known as the spice route, overland to Damanhur, then via Qahira, up the Nile to 'Idfu in Upper Egypt. From there he would cross the Red Sea to Jiddah, and finally make the two-day camel ride to Mecca. At Damanhur, a young boy, who was a student of the Qur'an, begged his mother to let him go with the Shaykh and his party to make the Pilgrimage. His mother, who was a widow, earnestly requested the Shaykh for her son that he be allowed to travel with his party, to which he replied, "We will look after him as far as Humaythira.

" And so it happened. It was related that Abu al-Hasan, may Allah have mercy upon him, had said, "When I entered the land of Egypt and established my dwelling there, I prayed to Allah, the Most High, saying: Ya Rabb, have You caused me to dwell in the land of the Copts, to be buried amongst them, until my flesh becomes mingled with their flesh and my bones with theirs? A reply then came to me: No `Ali, you will be buried in a land which Allah has never oppressed." It is also recorded that in the year of his death Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli was heard to say, "Once when I fell ill, I said: Allah, O Allah, when will the encounter with You take place? I was told: Ya `Ali, when you reach Humaythira, then the encounter will come." He said, may Allah have mercy upon him, "I saw as if I were buried at the base of a mountain before a well containing a little salty water, which became more abundant and sweet." And he said to his beloveds, "This year I shall perform the Pilgrimage of substitution (hajjat an-niyaba).

" One of Abu al-Hasan's followers recorded what happened: Soon after entering the desert of `Aydhab, both the young boy and the Shaykh fell ill, the boy dying the day before we reached the watering-place of Humaythira. The followers wanted to bury the youth where he had died, but the Shaykh said, "Carry him to Humaythira." When we arrived at this resting-place we washed the boy, and the Shaykh prayed over him before we buried him. That evening the Shaykh, who was also very sick, called his companions around him and spoke to us, counselling us to recite his Litany of the Sea (Hizb al-Bakhr) often, and he said, "Teach it to your children for the Greatest Name of Allah (al-ismu 'l-`azam) is in it." Then he talked privately to Sidi Abu al-`Abbas al-Mursi, giving him his orders as his successor with his special blessing. He, may Allah have mercy upon him, said to his followers, "When I am dead, look to Abu al-`Abbas al-Mursi for he is the Caliph (Khalifa) to come after me. He will have an exalted station amongst you for he is one of the Doors (abwab) of Allah, Praised and Exalted is He." Later that evening he called for a jar of water to be filled from the well of Humaythira. When he was told, "Ya Sidi, its water is salty and bitter, but the water we have is fresh and sweet," he replied, "Give me some of it for my intention is not what you think." When we brought him the well-water he drank a little of it, rinsed his mouth with it and spat into the jar. Then he said, "Pour the water into the well.

" Immediately the well-water turned sweet and fresh to taste, and it was abundant enough to refresh all the travellers who stopped to replenish themselves at this place. His followers said, "The Shaykh passed the night in holy preparation and discourse with his Beloved God, continually mentioning His Name until the dawn came when he was still." Thus the words of Sidi Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli became true, because he had said, "This year I shall perform the Pilgrimage of substitution." By this he informed his followers of the hadith of the Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, "If anyone leaves his home for the purpose of performing the Pilgrimage and dies before accomplishing it, Allah deputizes an angel to take his place in performing the Hajj each year until the Day of Resurrection (yawm al-qiyama)." Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli, the Beloved and Friend of Allah, had asked Him to allow him to die in a place without sin, and in this Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, granted him his wish. He, may Allah have mercy upon him, had told his son-in-law and successor, Abu al-`Abbas al-Mursi, that he should give his body to a veiled man on horseback who would appear, wash him and bury him, leaving then by a path up a steep hill where Abu al-`Abbas should not follow him. Everything happened as Abu al-Hasan, may Allah protect his secret, had said.

However, Abu al-`Abbas did follow the veiled horseman up the hill, and he saw his face, which was that of Abu al-Hasan himself, who told him to return to the valley again. Then the veiled man disappeared. From this sign Abu al-`Abbas understood that, in fact, it was the Prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him, himself who had appeared in the face of his Master. There is now said to be a handsome Mosque at the tomb which is visited by pilgrims every year going and returning from Mecca. From the hill above the Mosque the beloveds of the Way of Allah can see the light shining from the tomb of the Prophet, may prayers and peace be

upon him, lying to the East across the Red Sea. Our Shaykh and Master, `Ali ibn `Abdullah Abu al-Hasan, the founder of this great Shadhdhuliyya Way, left behind him, as he did for many people of his time, so also for us today, a spiritual Path within the Religion of Islam, which gives to those who follow it in sincerity and humility, deep meaning and purpose to our lives in this material world. It is the Straight Path to God, so that the Order which he founded still lives and flourishes in many parts of the world, and especially in the West. There is the well-known saying amongst the People of Allah, "The Last Days will fall on the Shadhdhuliyya Path.

" Above everything else, the Master Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli left the transmission of the Highest Essence (ad-dhat al-laliya) to all his successors, the Guides who inherit from him, and who have kept the Spirit of the Prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him, alive in every time. With the complete and perfect annihilation (fana'), and the complete and perfect return to subsistence (baqa') in and through the presence of the Master, the follower of this Path can receive the knowledge of this highest Essence, which is that of the Spirit of the Prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him, the Last of Allah's Messengers for the world. None of the deep meaning of this holy knowledge can be passed on through learned treatises, nor does it live in any books, except in the Book of Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, the Holy Qur'an. It is only through the Good Pleasure and Grace of Allah and for the fulfillment of His Order that He bestows this blessing upon whom He wills of His slaves.

Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli

This now is something of the story of the life and sayings of the Shaykh and Master Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli, whose full name was `Ali ibn `Abdullah ibn `Abdu 'l-Jabbar, who, on his father's side, descended from the Fatimid-Hasanid line, and on his mother's side from the Fatimid-Husaynid line.

He was born in the year 593 A.H./1196 C.E., in the mountain village

The Tariqa of the Prophet Muhammad is one. It is the same way as that of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. If you want to know the way to reach God, then pray five times a day and make dhikr. This way of the Shadhiliyya is the straight way. You do not need many months or many years; but one hour is all that is necessary to know the Tariqa and to know your God. All of you come as children to Him and so I must give you the understanding of who you are. You are from the Knowers (al-`Arifun). If you are not in knowing, then you are in the beginning of knowing and this is a beginning which the ends of most of the ways have not yet reached. There is only one way, no more ways; all ways converge here.

Muhammad is the 'insan al-kamal and through him all the knowledge (ma'arifa) from Adam until now is ours because the truth is within our hearts. This is the way of the "Muhammad of the time" or the "Jesus of the time." He is the Prophet of the Holy Light (Imam al-Huda). Turn back to the Way of Muhammad which comes through him; it is the Truth and its embodiment.

This Way is the way to know God. I knew this after a meeting of only one hour when I met my Shaykh Abd'ar-Rahman as-Shadhili. No way is faster than this one and no way has more knowledge. The shaykh takes the hand of the murid and says to him, "Now you are facing God, face to Face." And the shaykh says, "This is who you are. (Ha unt)." You see that your eye is really the Eye of God. There is only one eye.

The Tariqa Shadhiliyya is the way of the person who forgets all things and returns back to the truth as in the beginning; a child in the Presence of God. You cannot see more than Him or hear of any other place. You cannot speak without Him. You are with God, in God, to God in the origin of all things. You do not sleep, you are not tired, you watch everything. And so you meet your love to the end which has no end. Then you are together; you are one thing only, without borders, without above or below, without right or left. You are in this station and this station is in you: fana al-mutlaq (annihilation in the freedom of God); the start which has no start; the end which has no end.

The stations and steps begin in the first moments with your shaykh. Your food is the love of politeness and peace and agreement to all the orders without saying why? or what? You are always a witness in the garden and the garden is the Truth of God. Because here you are so near the King of kings, you only say what He gives you to say. God cares for the people who seek the Truth. He takes the hand of the lovers in knowing and takes their hearts to Him always, forever, face to face.

Pray for Muhammad and his family and the awliya (saints) and lovers of the truth. There is no difference amongst them, of who they are, where they have come from and what they are saying. They speak the language of God, because they are His children and lovers. The Maker of the people teaches them the truth. I ask God to open our hearts to Him that all our things will be in His Hands. We ask Him that we may not be ashamed when we meet Him. We ask Him that there may be no veil between us and Him and to make us always under His eyes and orders, hand to hand, joining.

All of this comes from the hidden knowledge of Him. This is the first time in my teaching that God gives me permission to give or to show all that is written in these meetings. I do not know what is the wisdom of God in all these things, but I think you must surely be the sons of God, the eyes of the truth of Muhammad. After you leave you will return to give this message of the real to the people. Then you are like guides. You are the light in this world; this weeping sad world. You will be with the prophets and messengers of God. You will be asked by God about the message. If you have received it, you must give it, because you will take the people from the darkness to the light; from death to life and from hating to loving. For this, God permits you to be the prophets of the love of Him, giving His kindness. This is your work, like the work of the candle which is light; with the Love of God, give light to those whose way is dulled. Then you will live and they will live in the Compassion of God and the prayers of Him forever. You are the people of Him in the reality forever. You are always in the garden. My Master and my King, the Owner of this world, is with you always because you are His children. Amin.

The Life of the Shaikh Ahmad Al Alawi By Himself

Translation and commentary by Martin Lings (*)

(*) in his book A Sufi Saint of the twentieth century - Shaikh Ahmad Al-Alawi - his Spiritual heritage and Legacy. (Chapter, Seen from within)

The Shaikh was born at Mostaganem in 1869. His name, as given on the title-pages of most of his books, was Abu 'l-' Abbas Ahmad ibn Mustafa 'l-' Alawi, and he was an only son, with two sisters. A little less than a year before his birth his mother Fatimah 'saw in her sleep the Prophet with a jonquil in his hand. He looked her full in the face and smiled at her and threw the flower to her, whereupon she took it up with humble modesty. When she woke, she told her husband of the vision, and he interpreted it as meaning that they would be blessed with a pious son, and he had in fact been importuning God not to leave him without an heir ... and after a few weeks God confirmed her dream, and she conceived her son. After the Shaikh's death in 1934, the following autobiographical extract was found among his papers. He had evidently dictated it some years previously to one of his disciples: 'As to learning how to write, I never made much effort in that direction, and I never went to school, not even for a single day. My only schooling was what I learned from my father at home during the Qoran lessons which he used to give me, and my handwriting is still quite unproficient. My learning by heart the Book of God went as far as the Surat ar-Rahman, and there I came to a standstill owing to the various occupations which I was forced to turn to through sheer necessity. The family had not enough to live on-although you would never have thought it, for my father was proud and reserved to the point of never showing on his face what was in his mind, so that nobody could have concluded from outward signs that he was in need of anything. I hesitated between several different crafts, and finally took to cobbling and became quite good at it, and our situation improved in consequence. I remained a cobbler for a few years, and then went into trade, and I lost my father when I was just sixteen. Although I was so young I had been doing all sorts of things for him and I was bent on nothing so much as giving him pleasure. He was exceedingly fond of me, and I do not remember him ever blaming me for any- thing or beating me, except when he was giving me lessons, and then it was because I was lazy in learning the Qoran. As to my mother, she was even more lavish in her affection, and she worried more about me than he had done. In fact after his death she did all she could

in the way of harsh words and blows and locking the door and so on to prevent me from going out at night. I wanted very much to humour her, but I could not bring myself to give up attending lessons at night and gatherings for dhikr. What made her so anxious was that our house was outside the town on a road which one might well fear to go along alone at night; and she continued in her attempts to stop me, and I for my part continued to attend those gatherings, until by the Grace of God she gave her full consent, and there was nothing to mar our love for each other, which remained unclouded until the day of her death in 1332, when I was 46. 'As to my attendance at lessons, it did not amount to much, as it was only possible now and then, in between work, and if I had not had a certain natural aptitude and understanding I should not have gained anything worth speaking of. But I was very much addicted to learning, and would sometimes steep myself in books the whole night long; and I was helped in these nocturnal studies by a Shaikh whom I used to bring back to our house. After this had been going on for several months, my wife took offence and claimed divorce from me on the grounds of my not giving her rights, and she had in fact some cause to complain. My attendance at lessons, such as it was, did not go on for as much as two years; it none the less enabled me to grasp some points of doctrine in addition to what I gained in the way of mental discipline. But it was not until I had busied myself with the doctrine of the Folk, 1 and had come to know its Masters, that my mind opened and I began to have a certain breadth of knowledge and understanding.' (At this point the scribe to whom this was dictated asked him about how he first came into contact with those who follow the path of the mystics.) 'My first leaning in that direction was marked by my attachment to one of the Masters of the 'Isawi Tariqah who impressed me by his unworldliness and evident piety. I made every effort to comply with the requisites of that order, and this came quite easily to me on account of my youth and the instinctive attraction for wonders and marvels which is part of human nature. I became proficient in these practices, and was well thought of by the men of the order, and I believed in my ignorance that what we did was purely and simply a means of drawing near to God. On the day when God willed that I should be inspired with the truth we were at one of our gatherings and I looked up and saw a paper that was on one of the walls of the house we were in, and my eye lit on a saying that was traced back to the Prophet. What I learned from it caused me to give up what I had been doing in the way of working wonders, and I determined to limit myself in that order to the litanies and invocations and recitations of the Qoran. From that time I began to extricate myself and to make excuses to my brethren until I finally gave up those other practices altogether. I wanted to drag the entire brotherhood away from them also, but that was not easy. As for myself, I broke away as I had intended, and only retained from that contact the practice of snake-charming. I continued to charm snakes by myself or with some of my friends until I met Shaikh Sidi Muhammad Al-Buzidi. 'As to my meeting with this Shaikh, whichever way I look at it, it seems to me to have been a pure Grace from God; for although we—that is, I and my friend Sidi al-Hajj Bin-Awdah who shared my business with me—were longing to find someone who could take us by the hand and guide us, we did not go to the Shaikh Al-Buzidi and seek him out where he was, but it was he who came to us, quite unexpectedly. My friend had already told me about him. He said: "I used to know a Shaikh called Sidi Hamu of the family of the Prophet. He left his home and went for several years to Morocco, and when he returned many people attached themselves to him. He used to speak with authority about the path of the mystics, but to try him God sent against him a man who did him much harm so that he found himself faced with all sorts of opposition, and now he is as subdued as any disciple, without a trace of his former spiritual activity. However, I think that he is one who could be relied on for guidance upon the path. No true spiritual guide has ever appeared whom God did not try with someone who wronged him either openly or behind his back." 'This was the gist of what he said, and immediately I determined to go to this Shaikh on my friend's recommendation. I myself knew nothing about him except that once, when a boy, I had heard his name in connection with an illness which I had. They brought me an amulet and said: "This is from Sidi Hamu Shaikh Buzidi", and I used it and was cured. 'My friend and I were at work together some days after this conversation, when suddenly he said: "Look, there is that Shaikh going down the road." Then he went up to him and asked him to come in, which he did. They talked for a while, but I was too busy with my work to be able to notice what they were talking about. When the Shaikh got up to go, my friend begged him not to stop visiting us. He said good-bye and went, and I asked my friend what impression he had had, and he said: "His talk is far above what one finds in books." He came to see us from time to time, and it was my friend who talked to him and plied him copiously with questions, whereas I was more or less tongue-tied, partly out of reverence for him and partly because my work left me no time to talk. 'One day, when he was with us in our shop, the Shaikh said to me: "I have heard that you can charm snakes, and that you are not afraid of being bitten." I admitted this. Then he said: "Can you bring me one now and charm it here in front of us?" I said that I could, and going outside the town, I searched for half the day, but only found a small one, about half an arm's length. This I

brought back with me and putting it in front of him, I began to handle it according to my custom, while he sat and watched me. "Could you charm a bigger snake than this?" he asked. I replied that the size made no difference to me. Then he said: "I will show you one that is bigger than this and far more venomous, and if you can take hold of it you are a real sage." I asked him to show me where it was, and he said: "I mean your soul which is between the two sides of your body. Its poison is more deadly than a snake's, and if you can take hold of it and do what you please with it, you are, as I have said, a sage indeed." Then he said: "Go and do with that little snake whatever you usually do with them, and never go back to such practices again", and I went out, wondering about the soul and how its poison could be more deadly than a snake's. , Another day, during this period when the Shaikh used to call on us, he fixed his eyes on me and then said to my friend. "The lad is qualified to receive instruction" or "He would be receptive to instruction", or some such remark; and on another Occasion he found a paper in my hand on which was written something in praise of Shaikh Sidi Muhammad ibn Isa, and after looking at it he said to me: "if you live long enough you will be, God willing, like Shaikh Sidi Muhammad ibn Isa", or "you will attain to his spiritual rank". I forget his exact words. This seemed to me a very remote possibility but I said: "God willing"; and it was not long before I was attached to his order and took him as a guiding light in the path of God. My friend had already been received in the order about two months previously, though he had kept this from me, and only told me after I myself had been received. I did not understand at that time the reason for this secrecy. After the Shaikh had transmitted to me the litanies for morning and evening recitation he told me not to speak about them to anyone-"until I tell you", he said. Then in less than a week he called me to him and began to talk to me about the Supreme Name (Allah) and the method of invoking it. He told me to devote myself to dhikr Allah in the way generally practiced in our order at that time; and since he had no special cell of retreat for dhikr, I was unable to find a place where I could be alone undisturbed. When I complained of this to him, he said: "There is no place better for being alone than the cemetery". So I went there alone at nights, but it was not easy for me. I was so overcome with fear that I could not concentrate on the dhikr, although for many nights I tried to do so. I complained again to the Shaikh, and he said: "I did not give you a binding order. I merely said there was no place better for being alone than the cemetery". Then he told me to limit my dhikr to the last third of the night, and so I invoked at night and made contact with him during the day. Either he would come to me, or else I would go to him, although his house was not always a good place for meeting on account of the children and for other reasons. In addition to this, at midday, I went on attending the lessons in theology which I had attended previously. One day he asked me: "What lessons are those that I see you attending?" I said: "They are on the Doctrine of Unity (at-tawhid) and I am now at the 'realization of proofs'." He said: "Sidi so-and-so used to call it 'the doctrine of turbidity' (at-tawhil)". Then he added: "You had better busy yourself now with purifying your innermost soul until the Light of your Lord dawn in it and you come to know the real meaning of Unity. But as for scholastic theology, it will only serve to increase your doubts and pile up illusion upon illusion". Finally he said: "You had better leave the rest of those lessons until you are through with your present task, for it is an obligation to put what is more important before what is of lesser importance." 'No order that he ever gave me was so hard to obey as this. I had grown very fond of those lessons and had come to rely on them so much for my understanding of the doctrine that I was on the point of disobeying him. But God put into my Heart this question: How do you know that what you are receiving from the Shaikh AI-Buzidi is not the kind of knowledge that you are really seeking, or something even higher than it? Secondly, I comforted myself with the thought that the prohibition was not a permanent one; thirdly, I remembered that I had taken an oath of allegiance to obey him; and fourthly I told myself that perhaps he wanted to put me to trial, as is the way of Shaikhs. But all these arguments did not stop the ache of sorrow that I felt within me. What sent that away was my spending in solitary invocation the hours which I had previously devoted to reading, especially after I had begun to feel the results of this invocation. ' As to his way of guiding his disciples, stage by stage, it varied. He would talk to some about the form in which Adam was created and to others about the cardinal virtues and to others about the Divine Actions, each instruction being especially suited to the disciple in question. But the course which he most often followed, and which I also followed after him, was to enjoin upon the disciple the invocation of the single Name with distinct visualization of its letters until they were written in his imagination. Then he would tell him to spread them out and enlarge them until they filled all the horizon. The dhikr would continue in this form until the letters became like light. Then the Shaikh would show the way out of this standpoint- it is impossible to express in words how he did so-and by means of this indication the Spirit of the disciple would quickly reach beyond the created universe provided that he had sufficient preparation and aptitude-otherwise there would be need for purification and other spiritual training. At the above- mentioned indication the disciple would find himself able to distinguish

between the Absolute and the relative, and he would see the universe as a ball or a lamp suspended in a beginning less, endless void. Then it would grow dimmer in his sight as he persevered in the invocation to the accompaniment of meditation, until it seemed no longer a definite object but a mere trace. Then it would become not even a trace, until at length the disciple was submerged in the World of the Absolute and his certainty was strengthened by Its Pure Light. In all this the Shaikh would watch over him and ask him about his states and strengthen him in the dhikr degree by degree until he finally reached a point of being conscious of what he perceived through his own power. The Shaikh would not be satisfied until this point was reached, and he used to quote the words of God which refer to: One whom his Lord hath made certain, and whose certainty He hath then followed up with direct evidence. 1 'When the disciple had reached this degree of independent perception, which was strong or weak according to his capability, the Shaikh would bring him back again to the world of outward forms after he had left it, and it would seem to him the inverse of what it had been before, simply because the light of his inward eye had dawned. He would see it as Light upon Light, and so it had been before in reality. 'In this degree the disciple may mistake the bowstring for the arrow as has happened to many of those who are journeying to God, and he may say as more than one has said: "I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I", and the like-enough to make anyone who has no knowledge of the attainments of the mystics and is unfamiliar with their ejaculations throw at him the first thing that he can lay hands on. But the master of this degree comes before long to distinguish between the spiritual points of view, and to give to each of the different degrees of existence its due and to each of the spiritual stations what rightly belongs to it. This station took hold of me, and it has been my home for many years, and I have become as it were expert in it, and made known its obligations, and my followers have had what I wrote about it when I was first in its grip, and some of them now have knowledge of its obligations, and some of them fall short of this knowledge. The acuteness of this state still comes back to me sometimes, but it does not compel me to write about it. True, it prompts me to speak about it, but it is easier to live with than it was, something that I feel rather than something that I am submerged in. 'This path which I have just described as being that of my Master is the one that I have followed in my own spiritual guidance, leading my own followers along it, for I have found it the nearest of the paths which lead to God.' The Shaikh is speaking here with the voice of unmitigated 'slavehood', and it is consistent with the general tone of this passage that even with regard to the very Summit of all spiritual attainment he should single out for mention its aspect of 'obligation', to which the Qoran refers in the words: We offered the trust (of being Our representative) unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they shrank from bearing it, and were afraid of it. And man took it upon himself. Verily he hath proved an ignorant tyrant. 1 Reaching the end of the spiritual path, which is none other than the state in which man was originally created, means, amongst other things, reassuming the tremendous responsibilities from which mankind in general has fallen away. This ultimate station, that is, the state of Supreme Sainthood, which he referred to in speaking to Dr Carret as the 'Great Peace', is defined elsewhere in his writings as being one of inward intoxication and outward soberness, in virtue of which the mind fulfils its analytical function with perfect clarity, although, as he has just indicated, there is nothing in the nature of an absolute barrier between it and the Heart's rapture. But in the case of the mystic who, though far advanced upon the path, has not yet reached the end, other-worldly drunkenness is liable to invade the mind and make it supernaturally and unbearably active, or produce some other abnormality in it, thus throwing the soul off its balance. It is even possible, as is shown by the reference to al-ilallaj and as we shall see more clearly in a later chapter, for a mystic to reach in a sense the end of the path and to attain to a plenitude of drunkenness which is as yet unstabilized by the complementary perfection of sobriety. For although the Divine Nature of the Saint is Eternal and does not develop, his human nature is subject to time and may not be able to adapt itself in one day to the Supreme Presence, especially in cases where the spiritual journey has been completed with phenomenal speed as it almost certainly was in the case of the Shaikh Al-Alawi. More than once in his writings he quotes Abu 'l-Hasan ash- Shadhili as having said: 'Vision of the Truth came upon me and would not leave me, and it was stronger than I could bear, so I asked God to set a screen between me and It. Then a voice called out to me, saying: "If thou besoughtest Him as only His Prophets and Saints and Muhammad His beloved know how to beseech Him, yet would He not screen thee from It. But ask Him to strengthen thee for It." So I asked for strength and He strengthened me-praise be to God!' The dictation continues: 'When I had reaped the fruit of the dhikr-and its fruit is no less than knowledge of God by way of contemplation-I saw clearly the meagreness of all that I had learned about the doctrine of Divine Unity, and I sensed the meaning of what my Master had said about it. Then he told me to attend once more those lessons which I had attended previously, and when I did so I found myself quite different from what I had been before as regards understanding. I now understood things in advance before the Shaikh who was teaching us had finished expounding them. Another result of the

invocation was that I understood more than the literal sense of the text. In a word, there was no comparison between the understanding which I now had and that which I had before, and its scope went on increasing, until when anyone recited a passage from the Book of God, my wits would jump to solve the riddle of its meaning with amazing speed at the very moment of recitation. But when this took hold of me and became almost second nature, I was afraid that I should come altogether under the sway of its imperious and persistent impulsion, so I took to writing down what my inward thoughts dictated to me by way of interpretation of the Book of God, and I was so much under its sway that I brought them out in a strange and abstruse form. This is what led me to begin my commentary on Al-Murshid al-Mu'in, in an attempt to stop myself from falling into a still more abstruse manner of expression. God be praised that this did in fact help to stem the onslaughts of that surge of thoughts which I had tried by every means to stop and could not, and my mind came near to being at rest. It was much the same kind of predicament which had previously led to my putting together my book on astronomy called Miftah ash-Shuhud (The Key of Perception). I was absorbedly pre-occupied for certain reasons with the movements of the heavenly bodies, and the arrow of my thoughts had gone awry. To make a long story short-and I have already referred to this question in the book itself I-when I found that I was unable to resist this surge of thoughts, I complained to my Master about it, and he said: "Take them out of your brain and put them in a book, and then they will let you rest", and it was as he had said. But I have still not been able to bring myself to allow the book to be published, and God alone knows whether it ever will be. 'To revert to what I was saying, when after many long days I was freed from the obligation of devoting myself exclusively to the Divine Name, my Master said to me: "Now you must speak and guide men to this path inasmuch as you are now certain where you stand." I said: "Do you think they will listen to me?", and he said: "You will be like a lion: whatever you put your hand on you will take hold of it." It was as he had said: whenever I spoke with anyone in the intention of leading him to the path he was guided by my words, and went the way I pointed out to him; and so, praise God, this brotherhood increased.' Elsewhere he says: 'Our Master, Sidi Muhammad al-Buzidi, was always urging us to visit the tomb of Shaikh Shu' aib Abu Madyan at Tlemcen. He spoke of him with great reverence and said that prayers made at his tomb were answered; and he used to tell us: "It was through his blessing and with his permission that I went to Morocco. I spent a night at his shrine, and after I had recited some of the Qoran I went to sleep, and he came to me with one of my ancestors. They greeted me, and then he said: "Go to Morocco. I have smoothed out the way for thee." I said: "But Morocco is full of poisonous snakes. I cannot live there." Then he passed his blessed hand over my body and said: "Go and fear not. I will protect thee from any mishap that might befall thee." I woke trembling with awe, and immediately on leaving his shrine I turned my face westwards, and it was in Morocco that I met Shaikh Sidi Muhammad ibn Qaddur.'" The Shaikh Al-' Alawi's own narrative continues: 'I asked my Master why he had ordered me to speak after first having imposed silence on me. He said: "When I returned from Morocco I taught our doctrine as I had taught it there. Then when I found myself faced with opposition I saw the Prophet of God in my sleep and he ordered me to remain silent. From that time I kept such a hold of silence upon myself that sometimes I felt I would burst into flames. Then, just before my meeting you, I had another vision in which I saw a gathering of fuqara, and every single one of them had my rosary round his neck. When I woke I took what I had seen as a good sign of activity in the future. That is why I am willing that you should propagate the doctrines of our order. Otherwise I should not have dared to allow you to make them known. Moreover, I saw very lately one who said to me: "Speak to people; there is no harm in it." By "one who said" he no doubt meant the Prophet, though God knows best. 'Such was my beginning; and I remained at his side for fifteen years, doing all that I could for our order. Many others helped me in this, though of the old ones there are now only about ten left-may God lengthen their lives and show increasing solicitude for them! ' As for myself, I was so taken up during all that time with the service of the Shaikh and with furthering the increase of our order, that I neglected the demands of my own livelihood, and but for the friendship of Sidi al-Hajj Bin-' Awdah who took care of my finances and kept my affairs in order, my business would have been altogether ruined. I was so busy in the service of the order that our shop was more like a zawiyah than anything else, what with teaching there at night and dhikr during the day-all this, God be praised, without any loss of money or lessening of trade. 'Then, not long before the death of my Master, God put into my heart the desire to emigrate. I was so struck with the moral corruption in my own country that I began to make all possible arrangements for moving further East, and some of my friends had the same intention; and although I knew very well that my Master would not allow me to leave the country unless he came with us, I was driven on by all sorts of plausible motives. However, after I had actually started on the removal-this was some days before his death-freed myself from all trade obligations, sold my possessions and mortgaged what was difficult to sell in the way of immovables with the intention of having them sold by someone else when I had

gone, and after my cousins had already started off ahead of me, and just when I myself was on the point of leaving, my Master who was already ill suddenly grew much worse, and one could see on him the signs of approaching death. I could not bring myself to leave him in that state, nor would my friends have allowed me to do so. His tongue was paralysed so that he could not speak, but he understood everything. What was especially painful to me myself was that I felt pulled in different directions to do things which were scarcely reconcilable one with another: on the one hand there was my Master's illness which obliged me to stay with him, and on the other hand I had a permit to travel for myself and my family which was due to expire on a certain date, after which it was no longer valid, and what made matters worse was that at that time it was difficult to obtain a permit. In addition I was also burdened with winding up my business and selling my furniture; and I had sent my wife to her family in Tlemcen so that she could say good-bye to them. In fact it was as if I were no longer in my own country. None the less I decided that I could not possibly leave my Master just as he was dying, and go off after I had spent fifteen years with him, doing all I could to serve him and never having once crossed him even about the smallest point. 'It was not many days before he was taken to the Mercy of God. He only left one son, Sidi Mustafa, who had something of the holy simpleton about him; he also left a wife and two brothers, of whom one, Sidi al-Hajj Ahmad is now dead, whereas the other, Sidi 'Abd al-Qadir, is still in the bonds of life. The Shaikh was exceedingly fond of his family and especially of his son, Sidi Mustafa. Just before his death I saw him give a long look at him, and it was clear that he was thinking of his simpleness, and that he was afraid he would be neglected after his death, and when I realized this I said to him: "Sidi, act on our behalf and take care of our interests in the next world before God, and I will act on your behalf in this world and take care of Sidi Mustafa." His face shone with joy, and I kept my promise and did everything I could for his son until the day of his death, and was never in the least troubled by his state of mind which others found so irksome. I took care of the Shaikh's daughter also-he only had one-until she married. 'After we had said a last farewell to our Master, some of us prepared him for burial, and he was buried in his zawiyah after I had prayed over him the funeral prayers-may God shower Mercy and Blessings upon him! A few days later news came to me from my parents-in-law in Tlemcen: "Your wife is very seriously ill." So I went to Tlemcen, and when I arrived I found that my wife, who was so deeply religious and so full of kindness and so pleasant to live with, was almost at her last breath. I stayed with her for three days, and then she died and went full of grace to the Mercy of God; and I returned to Mostaganem, having lost my Master and my wife, homeless, without means of livelihood, and even without my permit to travel, which had expired. I went to the Ministry to have it renewed, and they put me off for several days. Then they promised to give me a permit for myself alone. 'Meantime, while I was waiting for it to be issued, the men of our order were conferring together about who should take charge of the fuqara. I myself was not present at their discussion, being prepared to accept their choice. Moreover I was quite unreconciled to the idea of remaining in the country, so I said: "It is for you to appoint whom you wish for this function and I will support you." for I knew that there was one amongst them who would be capable of it (apart from myself, and I assumed that they would appoint him)l. But since this meeting of the fuqara proved somewhat argumentative, because (although they would all have agreed to choose me) they knew that I was determined to go away, so that each one proposed the solution that seemed best to him and there was much difference of opinion, the Muqaddam Sidi al-Hajj Bin-'Awdah said: "We had better leave this question for the moment, and meet again next week, Meantime if any of the fuqara has a vision, let him tell us about it," They all approved of this suggestion, and before the appointed day many visions had been seen-they were all written down at the time-and everyone of them was a clear indication that the matter in question devolved upon me. So the fuqara were strengthened in their determination to make me stay with them and act as their remembrancer. While trying to find some details of the visions, I came upon the following passage by Sidi 'Uddah: 'The Shaikh Al-Buzidi died without ever having told anyone who was to succeed him. The question had in fact been broached to him by one of his more prominent disciples who thought well of himself and fancied that he was qualified to fulfill in our order the functions of upbringing and remembrancing; but the Shaikh Al-Buzidi answered him as follows: 'I am like a man who has been living in a house by permission of the Landlord, and who when he wishes to leave that house gives the keys back to the Landlord. He it is, the Landlord, that sees who best deserves to have the house placed at his disposition; I have no say in the matter. God createth what He will, according to His Choice' ... and after his death his followers were left in a state of great upheaval, although most of them showed quite plainly their leanings towards Sidi Ahmad Bin-'Aliwah on account of his having, as was known, already exercised the function of his Shaikh, even to the point of guiding disciples to the end of their journey, although his Shaikh was still alive. This was the strongest indication of how well he was thought of by him, and how qualified he was to succeed him. 'Now since visions are to be relied on for ascertaining the

truth about things which lie hidden from our normal perceptions, I just as they are to be counted as glad tidings for him who sees them, or for him on behalf of whom they are seen, I wish to set down here some of those visions that were seen on behalf of our Master, Shaikh Sidi Ahmad Bin-' Aliwah. He then gives an account of some of the many visions which were seen after the Shaikh Al-Buzidi's death, and of which here are a few: 'In my sleep I saw Shaikh Sidi Muhammad al-Buzidi, and not forgetting that he was dead I asked him of his state, and he said: "I am in the Mercy of God". Then I said to him: "Sidi, to whom have you left the fuqara?"', and he answered: "It was I who planted the shoot, but it is Sidi Ahmad Bin-' Aliwah who will tend it, and it will come, God willing, to all fullness of fruition at his hands.", ('Abd al-Qadir ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman of Mostaganem). 'In my sleep I saw myself go to visit Shaikh Sidi Munammad al-Buzidi, and Shaikh Sidi Ahmad Bin-' Aliwah was sitting beside the tomb which was open. I saw the body of the dead rise up until it was on a level with the surface of the earth. Then Shaikh Sidi Ahmad went and took the shroud from off his face, and there, unsurpassably beautiful, was the Shaikh. He asked Shaikh Sidi Ahmad to bring him some water, and when he had drunk he gave what was left to me, whereupon I started saying to the fuqara: "In this water which is left over from the Shaikh there is a cure for all sickness". Then he began to talk to Shaikh Sidi Ahmad, and the first thing he said to him was: "I shall be with you wherever you may be, so have no fear, and I give you tidings that you have attained to the best of this world and the next. Be very sure that in whatever place you are, there shall I be also." Then Shaikh Sidi Ahmad turned to us and said: "The Shaikh is not dead. He is as you see him to be now and the death that we witnessed was just a rite which he had to perform." , (Al-Munawwar Bin-Tunis of Mostaganem). 'I saw Shaikh Sidi Muhammad al-Buzidi stop and knock at the door of my house, and when I rose to let him in I found that the door was already open. He came in, and with him was a companion, tall and very thin, and I said to myself: "This is Sidi Ahmad Bin-' Aliwah." After they had sat with us for a while, Shaikh Sidi Muhammad al-Buzidi rose to his feet, and said he wanted to go. Then someone said to him: "If you go, who will you leave to look after us?"', and he said: "I have left you this man-this man", and he pointed to Shaikh Sidi Ahmad Bin-' Aliwah'. (A member of the family of Al-Hajj Muhammad as-Susi of Ghalizan). 'I saw the Imam' Ali and he said to me: "Know that I am' Ali and your Tariqah is' Alawiyah." , (Al-Hajj Salih ibn Murad of Tlemcen). , After the death of Shaikh Sidi Muhammad I had a vision that I was on the shore of the sea, and near at hand was a huge boat in the center of which was a minaret, and there, on the top-most turret, was Shaikh Sidi Ahmad Bin-' Aliwah. Then a crier called out: "O you people, come on board the boat", and they came on board from all sides until it was full, and each one of them was well aware that this was Shaikh Sidi Ahmad's boat; and when it teemed with passengers, I went to the Shaikh and said: "The boat is full. Are you able to take charge of it?", and he said: "Yes, I shall take charge of it by God's Leave." , (Al-Kilani ibn al-' Arabi). Sidi 'Uddah also quotes the following from the Shaikh Al-' Alawi himself: 'In my sleep, a few days before the death of our Master, Sidi Muhammad al-Buzidi, I saw someone come in to where I was sitting, and I rose out of reverence for him, overcome with awe at his presence. Then, when I had begged him to be seated and had sat down facing him, it became clear to me that he was the Prophet. I turned on myself reproachfully for not having honoured him as I should have, for it had not occurred to me who he was, and I sat there huddled up, with my head bowed, until he spoke to me, saying: "knowest thou not why I have come to thee?", and I said: "I cannot see why, O Messenger of God". He said: "The Sultan of the East is dead, and thou, God willing, shalt be Sultan in his stead. What sayest thou?" I said: "If I were invested with this high dignity, who would help me, and who would follow me?" He answered: "I shall be with thee, and I will help thee." Then he was silent, and after a moment he left me, and I woke up on the heels of his departure, and it was as if I saw the last of him, as he went, with my eyes open and awake The dictation continues: 'Since the fuqara knew well that there was no turning me away from my intention to go, they compelled me to take charge of them if only while I was waiting for the permit to travel, although their aim was to make me give up my journey by every possible means. One of those who were most bent on my staying was my dear friend Sidi Ahmad Bin- Thuraiya, and he spared no possible effort to that end, all for purely spiritual motives. One of his devices was to marry me to his daughter without imposing any conditions on me, despite his knowledge that I was determined to go away. I accepted his offer very gladly, and gave her what little I could in the way of marriage portion. 'Unfortunately she did not succeed in living on good terms with my mother. As time went on my dilemma grew worse and worse. I felt bound to do all I could for my mother, and I had already taken her part in more than one situation of this kind; but a separation which had been relatively easy for me in the case of other wives seemed very hard in the case of this last one. As for any possibility of reconciliation between the two, it was clearly very remote indeed; and when my father-in-law saw the dilemma I was in, he suggested divorce and even demanded it with some insistence, saying: "It is your duty to look after the rights of your mother. As to the rights of your wife, they are guaranteed by the words: If

the two separate, God will enrich both out of His Abundance; and all that, God willing, shall not affect our friendship in the least." He went on and on repeating this suggestion, and I knew that he was sincere, although my own feelings were all against it; and when God brought it to pass, against the will of both parties, I was full of regrets, and so, no less, was my father-in-law. But there was nothing for it but to resign ourselves to what seemed clearly God's will. Our friendship however remained undiminished and that saintly man continued to be as devoted to me as ever until the very end of his life, thanks to the fineness of his feeling which was so well integrated into the spiritual path. 'Much the same took place between me and Sidi Hammadi Bin-Qari' Mustafa: I had to divorce a wife who was a member of his family and whose guardian he was; but God is Witness that both to my face and behind my back-to judge by what I heard of him-his attitude was very like that of Sidi Ahmad Bin- Thurayya, and we are still the best of friends. As to the cause of this divorce, it was my being pre-occupied.at that time, almost to the point of intoxication, first of all with learning and then with the dhikr. Meanwhile the rights of my wife were neglected, as were, very nearly, the rights of my whole family. So, in one way or another, it has been my fate to divorce four wives. But this was not because of any ill treatment on my part, and therefore my fathers-in-law did not take it badly. In fact they are still fathers-in-law to me; and what is more surprising, some of my wives forewent the remainder of their marriage portion after we parted. In a word, any short-comings that there were were on my side, but they were not deliberate. 'When the fuqara. had made up their minds, with the cirucumstances all in their favour, not to let me go away, they decided to have a general meeting in our Master's zawiyah, ... and they took the oath of allegiance to me by word of mouth, and it continued to be taken in this way by the older fuqara., whereas all subsequent newcomers took it through the clasping of hands l. As to those members of the order who were outside Mostaganem, I did not write to any of them, nor did I put them under any obligation to come to me. But it was not long before groups of fuqara. started coming to me of their own free will to acknowledge me, testifying as to their own convictions and telling what they had heard about me from our Master or what had come to them by way of intuition or inspiration. So it went on, until all the members of the order were united except two or three. This union of the fuqara. was counted by us as a miraculous Grace from God, for I had no outward means of bringing within my scope individuals from so many different places. It was their unalloyed certainty, nothing else, as to how I had stood with our Master in this respect. Moreover the training that they had had from him was firmly ingrafted in them as regards recognizing the truth and acknowledging it whatever it might be, for he had gone on giving them the means of doing this until, thank God, it had become second nature to them. 'I received their oaths of allegiance and gave them advice, and I spent on those who visited me at that time part of what I had in hand for my journey, and I took nothing from them, for I never felt easy about taking money from people- , As a result of all this I was left in a quandary, not knowing what to do or where the Will of God lay. Ought I to go away, according to what I felt to be an imperative need, or ought I to give up all idea of going and devote myself to acting as remembrancer to the fuqara., according to what seemed to be already my fate? I was still hesitating when the time came at which God had ordained that I should visit the seat of the Caliphate.l One day He put into my soul a feeling of constriction which was so persistent that I began to look about for a means of relief and it occurred to me to visit some of the fuqara outside the town. So I took with me one of the disciples who was staying with us, Shaikh Muhammad ibn Qasim al-Badisi, and off we went with God's Blessing. Then when we had reached our destination it occurred to us that we might as well visit some of the fuqara in Ghalizan, which we did; and after we had stayed with them for about two days, my companion said to me: "If only we could go as far as Algiers! I have a friend there, and what is more, we could go to some of the publishers, and this contact might bring Al-Minah al-Quddusiyyah nearer to being printed." We had the manuscript of this book with us at the time, so I let him have his way. We had none of our fuqara in Algiers, and when we arrived, my companion set about trying to find his friend, although he was not particularly anxious to do so. In this connection he said to me: "Places in which there are no fuqara are empty"-such was his experience of their kindness and cordiality. ' After we had made contact with a publisher, we had the impression that for various reasons no Algerian firm would be likely to accept my book, so my companion said: "If only we could go as far as Tunis, the whole thing would be quite simple." I myself was busy revising my book (which I could do equally well elsewhere) in between visits to the publisher and other outings, so I let him have his way once more, and we traveled from town to town until we reached Tunis. The only practicer of remembrance (dhakir) that I knew there was a blind man who knew by heart the Book of God. He used to call on us at Mostaganem on his way to visit his Master in Morocco. But as to my numerous fellow countrymen who had settled in Tunis, there was none of them that I wanted to meet, so we entered the town at an hour of siesta, and found lodgings, and I constrained myself not to go out until there should come to us some dhakir whom we could go out with. This was on account of a vision I had had in which men who

were members of Sufic brotherhoods came and entered the house where I was and took me out with them to their place of gathering. When I told my companion this, my idea was too much for him, and he said: "I did not come here to stay shut in by these four walls." So he would go out on various errands and walk round parts of the town and then come back; and after we had spent four days in that house, there came to us the company of people I had seen in my vision. They were from among the followers of Shaikh Sidi As-Sadiq as-Salirawi who had died only a few months previously. This holy man traced back his spiritual ancestry in the path of God through Sidi Muhammad Zafir and his father Sidi Muhammad al-Madani to Shaikh Sidi Mawlay Al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi.' Some twenty-five years previously As-Sadiq as-Salirawi's Master, Muhammad Zafir al-Madani, had written: 'My honored guide and father, Shaikh Muhammad Hasan Zafir al-Madani, left Medina about AH 1222 (AD 1807) and went as far as Morocco in search of a way by which he might attain to God, and he took guidance from many Shaikhs ... Then God brought him together with his Master, the Standard-Bearer of the Shadhili tariqah in his day, Sidi Mawtay Al- Arabi ibn Alimad ad-Darqawi. His meeting with him was on Safar 23rd, A.H. 1224, in the Darqawi Zawiyah at Bu-Barih in Bani Zarwal, two days' journey from Fez. He took the path from him, and his heart was opened under his guidance, and if it be asked who was my father's Shaikh, it was Mawlay Al- Ara.bi ad-Darqawi. 'For about nine years he was his companion. ...Then Mawlay Al-' Arabi said to him one day, in great earnestness: "Go to thy home, Madani. Thou hast no longer any need of me"; and on another occasion he indicated that he had reached the end of all perfection, and said to him: "Thou hast attained unto that which is attained to by the perfect among men," 'and he told him to go to his native town, the House of the Perfumed Shrine, and when he bade farewell to him, he wept and said: "I have made thee the instrument of my credit with God and a link between me and His Prophet". 'He went to Medina, and stayed there with his family for three years, and every year he joined the Pilgrims on Mt Arafat and then returned to Medina where he visited continually the Shrine of the Prophet, spending his time turned towards God, steeped in contemplation, in utter detachment. ...And he said: "During that time I met with the perfect Shaikh, the Gnostic, Sidi Ahmad ibn Idris. I found him on a most exalted footing as regards following the Wont of the Prophet, and I so marveled at his state that I took initiation from him for the blessing of it." 'During his stay in Medina he was asked for spiritual guidance by some who were seeking a Master but he made no response to them out of pious courtesy to his Shaikh until he heard a voice from the Pure Shrine which said to him: " Be a remembrancer, for verity remembrancing profiteth the betievers. He said: " I quivered and shook at the sweetness of that utterance, and I understood it to be an authorization from the Apostle of the All- Bountiful King". So he obeyed God's command and transmitted initiation to various persons in the city of the Prophet ...and returned to his Master Mawlay Al-' Arabi ad-Darqawi ...and remained in his presence for some months. Then Mawlay Al-' Arabi died, and my father set out once more for Medina ... and when he reached Tripoli the eyes of some of its people were opened to the excellence of his virtues and the fullness of his spiritual realization, so they took initiation from him. Then the number of his disciples increased and the brotherhood became famous and men associated it with him, and on this account it was named Ai-Tariqat at-Madaniyyah and it is a branch of the Shadhili Tariqah.' This last passage calls for some general remarks about initiation. The practice of grafting a new scion on to an old stock is alien to the modern world except on a material plane. But throughout the ancient world this was practiced also and above all on higher planes; and since estrangement from the Mysteries had become 'second nature' to man, it was considered indispensable, before he could enter upon the path which leads to them, that a scion of primordial human nature should be grafted on to his 'fallen' stock, which by definition is dominated by the purely mental and therefore unmystical 'knowledge of good and evil'.¹ At the outset of a religion the question of initiation is not so urgent, for the first believers are in the grip of a Divine Intervention, at a cyclic moment which is better than a thousand months and in which the Angels and the Spirit descend. Since they stand at one of the mainsprings of spirituality, the dormant seeds within them (to use a different simile) can become impregnated as easily as those who stand near a fountain or a cascade can be splashed with water. But as the caravan moves away from this oasis across the desert of the centuries, men soon realize that the precious water is no longer in the air, and that it is only to be found stored in certain vessels. Strictly speaking, the rite of transmission from one vessel to another cannot be confined to any particular set of forms. Its form may depend, in exceptional cases, on the inspiration of the moment. For example, in addition to the Shadhili initiation which the Shaikh ad-Darqawi received from his Master Shaikh .Ali al-Jamal, he also received one from an aged Saint at the point of death who made him his spiritual heir by the ritually unprecedented yet highly significant act of placing his tongue in the Shaikh ad-Darqawis mouth, and telling him to suck. But normally transmission takes a form consecrated by apostolic precedent. We have seen that the initiation into the Shadhili -Darqawi Tariqah is an oath of fealty, and this rite is patterned on the Beatific Allegiance,¹ an outstanding occasion of spiritual

overflow at the fountain-head of Islam, when the Prophet seated himself under a tree and called on all those of his Companions who were present to renew their oaths to him. Apart from this occasion there was a continual spiritual over- flow in the form of Divine Names for invocation or litanies for recitation which the Prophet transmitted to his Companions either singly or collectively, and initiation into some brotherhoods takes the form of some such transmission. Moreover such invocational transmissions are in any case indispensable, in all brotherhoods, as secondary or confirmatory initiations, for anyone who seeks to benefit from the full spiritual resources of Sufism. On the title pages of most of the Shaikh Al-' Alawi's books he is described as 'renowned for the transmission of the Supreme Name'. No Sufi would consider himself qualified to practice methodically an invocation unless he had been formally initiated into it. A transmission can be passed on by anyone who has received it, even if he has not brought it to fruition himself, though no one can give expert guidance who is not an adept. This does not exclude the possibility that by strictly conforming to the traditional methods of the order a gifted initiate, even without a real Master, might avoid remaining stationary upon the path in virtue of the great weight of the spiritual heredity behind him. But the presence of a Master means direct contact with the Divine Source itself, while at the same time that presence transmits, as no other can, the full force of the spiritual heredity. In addition, most of the great Masters of Sufism could claim, like the Shaikh Al-' Alawi and the Shaikh Al-Madani, to have received a special investiture directly from the Prophet. The tree at the end of this book gives the main lines of the Alawis' spiritual heredity, the unbroken chains of transmission, whatever form it may have taken, through which they trace their descent back to the Prophet. Apart from the normal initiation which marks the entry upon the spiritual path, it is possible to become attached to a chain 'for the blessing of it', as the Shaikh Al-Madani did after his return to Medina; and though this particular case is an exceptional one, the 'initiation of blessing' is very frequently sought by those who are not capable of following a spiritual path or even of conceiving what a spiritual path is, -but who have an indefinable urge to benefit from a sacred presence. By the end of his life the Shaikh Al-' Alawi had great numbers of such followers attached to him. With regard to his meeting the Madani fuqara at Tunis he continues: 'The whole gathering sat down and we talked together for a long time, and I saw the lights of their love of God shining on their foreheads. They asked me to go out with them to a place they had in mind, and they did not stop insisting until they had taken me out and lodged me at the house of one of their friends. Then one after another the fuqara came to visit us, full of ardor. Such was their hospitality to me, and the honor they showed me - may God reward them! 'During my stay in Tunis I was continually visited by theologians and canonists and other eminent men... and with them came a number of their students. Some of them were already initiates and others were not, and of these last several entered upon the path. One of the students had suggested that I should give them a lesson in Al-Murshid al-Mu'in. What I said found favour with my hearers, and this was the cause of some of the students becoming initiated into the order. That is how we spent our time, both as rememberers and remembrancers, and some derived benefit. God be praised for that visit! , As to the question of printing Al-Minah al-Quddusiyyah, we made a contract with the owner of a press through the mediation of a fellow traveler. We liked them both very much indeed, and this was what prompted us to make the contract, although we knew that this particular press was not well equipped. As a result the book did not come out at the promised time, and I had to go and leave it behind me for somebody else to look after. 'I had decided to go on to Tripoli to visit my cousins, who had left Mostaganem, as I have already mentioned, to settle there. Since I had a permit to travel, I thought that I had better take this opportunity. I was also prompted by thoughts of visiting the Holy House of God and the tomb of the Prophet, but unfortunately a letter came to me from Mostaganem telling me that the Pilgrimage was forbidden that year, and cautioning me against standing on Arafat for fear of incurring the penalty. , At all events I embarked for Tripoli-by myself-and suffered some hardship through travelling at that season, for it was cold winter weather. In fact I only had one day of relief: I was meditating on the crowd of people-men of Jerba and others- who thronged the boat and I was wondering whether there was a dhakir amongst them, when one of the travellers stopped beside me and looked hard at me as if he were trying to read my face. Then he said: "Are you not Shaikh Ahmad Bin-' Aliwah?" "Who told you?", I said. "I have always been hearing about you", he said, "and just now while I was looking at you, as I have been for some time, I suddenly realized that you must be that very man"; so I said that I was. Then I went with him to another part of the boat and having asked his name, was told that he was Al-Hajj Ma'tuq; when we began to talk together I realized that he was a Gnostic. I asked him if he found any spiritual support among his fellow countrymen, and he said: "I am the only man of this art in all Jerba." From my meeting with him the time passed as happily as I could have wished until he and those who were traveling with him landed at Jerba, and I was once more in the grip of loneliness and the inevitable hardships of traveling in winter until I myself landed at Tripoli. 'My cousins were waiting for me at the harbour. We were

longing to catch sight of each other, all the more impatiently on account of our enforced separation. No sooner had we reached their house and sat down than we discussed the question of emigration and all that was connected with it, and they told me that materially speaking they were well off, thanks to God's safe care. As to the country, it seemed to me as far as I could tell a good place to emigrate to, since its people were' as like as possible to those of our country both in speech and in ways. 'Towards sunset I asked my cousins if they knew any dhakir there, or any Shaikhs who were Gnostics, and they said that they only knew a Turkish Shaikh, who was the head of some government department, a man of the most evident piety. I asked if it would be possible for us to meet him the next day, and just as we were considering this there was a knock at the door and one of them went out and came back saying: "Here is the Shaikh him- self at the door, asking if he can come in." He had never visited them at their home. I told them to bring him in, and in he came, a tall man with a long beard dressed from head to foot in Turkish fashion. 'We greeted each other, and when he had sat down he said: " A man from the West-he meant Shustari - says of the Divine Manifestation: 'My Beloved embraced all existence, and appeared in both black and white.' I said: 'Leave Western talk to Western folk and let us hear something from the East." He said: 'The poet said "embraced all existence", and did not specify either West or East', whereupon I knew that he was well versed in the lore of the mystics. He sat with us for an hour or two that night, all eagerness, listening with all his faculties rapt in attention, as I noticed. Then he took leave of us, but not before he had made us promise to visit him at his office the next day. We went the next morning to where he worked- the department of maritime revenues, of which he was the director. He received us most joyfully and gave orders for work to be stopped and gave his staff a holiday, although there was much work to be done. Then we went off with him alone, and it would take too long to tell of all that we spoke of in the way of mystic doctrine, but I may mention that he said to me: "If you wish to stay in our country, this zawiyah here is yours, and all the outbuildings that go with it, and I will be your servant." I knew that all he said was spoken in perfect sincerity, and I told him that I would leave my home and settle there. I went for a short walk round the district and found myself very attracted by that neighborhood as if it corresponded to something in my nature. 'On my third day in Tripoli I heard a town crier calling out: "Whoever wants to go to Istanbul can have a ticket for very little", and he added that the boat was due to leave at once. Immediately I had an urge to visit the capital of the Caliphate, and I thought that very likely I might find there the learning I felt the need for. So I asked one of my cousins to go with me, and he said he would, but the sight of the fury of the sea and the crash of the waves stopped him. It was certainly no weather for a crossing. Suffice it that we reached the other side! 'Don't ask me for any details about our embarkation! Once I had found a place on the deck I began to wonder where I should turn for help and refuge upon the journey, and I found no comfort in anything but reliance upon God. 'By the time we reached Istanbul I had almost died of sea- sickness, and what made my plight worse was that at that time I had not a single friend in Istanbul to take me by the hand, and I was so ignorant of Turkish that I was hard put to it to say the simplest thing. 'One day after my arrival I was walking at the outskirts of the town, and suddenly a man took my hand and greeted me in clear Arabic, and asked me my name and where I came from. I told him who I was; and who should he be but an authority on Islamic law from Algiers, a man of the family of the Prophet. By that time I was very eager to see the sights of the capital, so I put myself in his hands, and he was a great help in showing me what I wanted to see. But I was unable to satisfy my thirst to the full owing to the upheavals in which the Caliphate I was involved and the troubles which were soon to break out between the Turkish people and their so-called "Renaissance Youth' or "Reformist Youth". This movement was headed by numerous individuals whom the Government had banished and who had consequently become scattered throughout various countries of Europe where they had started newspapers and periodicals in the sole purpose of criticizing the Government and exposing its weaknesses in the eyes of foreign states; and self-seekers found in this subversive movement loopholes and doors through which they pushed their way and gained their ends. Thus was the Caliphate doomed to have its ruler arrested and thrown into prison, while the "Renaissance Youth" went about its work with utterly unbounded ruthlessness until in the end they succeeded in achieving their aim, and the meaning of their "Renaissance" and "Patriotism" and "Reform" became as clear as day to anyone who had eyes to see. But I will say no more: what the Kemalists have done makes it unnecessary for me to trace this degradation step by step. 'I was convinced that the stay which I had hoped to make in those parts was not feasible for various reasons, of which the chief was that I sensed the impending change from kingdom to republic, and from republic to unprincipled tyranny. So I went back to Algeria, feeling that my return was sufficient as fruit of my travels, even if I had gained nothing else; and truly I had no peace of soul until the day when I set foot on Algerian soil, and I praised God for the ways of my people and their remaining in the faith of their fathers and grandfathers and following in the footsteps of the pious.'

The Way of the Shadhili

The Shaykh Abu-l-'Abbas al-Jami related to me that a certain man asked Sidi Abu-l-Hasan, "Who is your spiritual guide Sidi?" He said to him, "In the beginning it was Sidi Shaykh Abu Muhammad 'Abd as-Salam Ibn Mashish. At present I draw from ten seas, five of the sons of 'Adam and five of spiritual origin. **The five 'Adamic are Sayyidina Muhammad and his companions, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali. The five of spiritual origin are Jibril, Mika'il, Israfil, 'Izra'il and ar-Ruh {the Holy Spirit}.**"

Thus the Way of the Shadhdhuliyah, though traceable back through Sidi 'Abd as-Salam Ibn Mashish as well as Sidi Muhammad bin Harazim and Sidi Abu-l-Fath al-Wasiti, really has its beginning with our Shaykh, Sidi Ali Abu-l-Hasan.

Sidi Ibn 'Ata 'illah reported on the authority of Sidi Shihab ad-Din Ahmad, the son of our Shaykh, that at the time of his death his father said, "I have brought to this Way {Tariqah} what no one has before me."

Thus the Way of the Shadhdhuliyah, though it has many areas in common with the various Turuq, may Allah be pleased with them all, is a unique Way unlike any other.

The Shaykh, may Allah preserve his secret, said, "Of all the Ways there are two: the way of travelling {suluk} and the way of attraction {jadhb}. Our Way is the Way of Jadhb. Our beginning is their end. Their beginning is our completion." Shaykh Ibn 'Ata' illah, whose books greatly aided in the diffusion of the teachings of our Shaykh, says in the Kiatb al Hikm, "He who is illumined in the beginning is illumined in the end." Thus the Way of the Shadhdhuliyah is firmly based on the reality {haqlqah} that Enlightenment or Illumination {-ishrdq} is both in our beginning mid at our end with the certain knowledge that both our beginning and end are in His Presence and by His Grace." {see 7:172}

Shaykh Ahmad az-Zarruq, commenting on this, said, "The variety in a branch is due to the variety of its origin. The origin of Tasawwuf is in the station of 'Ihsan and it splits into two kinds: 'to worship Allah as though you saw Him' and 'knowing that if you do not see Him, He sees you.' The first is the degree of the Knower; the latter is the degree of the Seeker. The Folk of ash-Shadhdhuli revolve around the first and Folk of al-Ghazali revolve around the other."

Shaykh Ibn 'Ata'illah as-Sakandari said, "Do not think that the 'attracted' {al-majdhub} has no path. He has a path that has been enveloped by the providential solicitude of Allah {'inayatu-llah} so that his way has been speedily expedited. Too often we hear that the traveller {as-salik} is more perfect than the attracted due to the traveller's experience of the Path and the Attracted's lack of experience. This is not true. He does not miss it but misses only its hardships and the length." Thus 'attraction' {al-jadhb} was a necessary prerequisite for the Folk {al-qawm} who took the Way of our Shaykh as the Shadhdhuli Way was par excellence that of "witnessing" {mushahddah} Allah at the beginning of the Way which in turn fostered a great concern with 'intuition' {kashf} in contradistinction to the other ways more concerned with 'intellect' {the rational faculty = 'aql} and not The Intellect {al-'aqi} understood as The Existentiating Reality}.

Ibn 'Ata 'illah, to whom we are so indebted for our knowledge of the Way of our Shaykh, made abundantly clear that the Way of Arrival to the knowledge {al-ma'rifah} of Allah by insight, direct witnessing, and tasting at the beginning was the way of the elite who are the chosen of Allah whilst the Way of Arrival to Allah by intellection, reason and proofs was the way of the commoners who have chosen Allah. He indicates that arrival to the knowledge of Allah is not attained by struggle {jihad} with the self {nafs}, neither by obedience nor good deeds, for these are the product of human will {'irddah} and humans have no will in relation to the

Will of Allah. Man cannot reach Allah by his will alone, not by renouncing himself, humiliating himself, or destroying himself for "there is no logical nexus between the transcendent and the contingent." Arrival to the knowledge of Allah stems from the providential solicitude of Allah. Real and ineffable sanctifying grace in conjunction with amorous wisdom. The 'spiritual life' is not so much a question of choice as it is a matter of vocation and an abiding sense of having been chosen in eternity on the day of -Alastu bi-rabbikum?

In his book Kitab fi 'Isqat at-Tanwir fi 'Isqdt at-Taddblr {Light on the Cessation of Self Direction} he says, "Know that The Truth {al-haqq} has always taken the best of care for you throughout all of your life since He brought you into existence on the Day of the Decree [yawm al-muqadir}, the Day of "Am I not your Lord" and you said, "Yes, we bear witness!" Among the signs of His Care is that He caused you to know Him. He revealed Himself to you and you witnessed Him. It was He who made you speak and inspired you to affirm His Lordship [rububiyyatahu] and so confirm His Oneness."

wa 'idh 'akhadha rabbuka mim banii 'aadama min dhuhurihim dhuriyyatahum wa'ashhadahum'alaa'anfusihim

^alastu bi-rabbikum qalu bala shahidnaa 'an taqulu yawma-l-qiyamati 'inna kunna 'an hadha ghafilin

And when your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their spines, their seed and made them to witness of their selves "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes! we bear witness." lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "As for us we were not aware." { 7:172 }

This statement concerning the pre-eternal celestial witnessing is crucial to the understanding that within all human beings there is a part that always has known the Truth both of origin and destination. The whole question of the spiritual path {at-tariqah} is thus not so much a matter of going 'somewhere' as it is an awakening to where one already is and a remembering of who one is, was and will be.

The literalist objection to the sufi doctrine of arrival {wusul} is completely misguided as it is clear that all humans had direct knowledge and direct witnessing of their Lord and, moreover, directly entered into a covenant of witness with their Lord, in the beginning and at the end. The goal of the path is, simply stated, the return to this realization by the elimination of forgetfulness.

For some it is a lengthy process whereas for others, less mindless {ghaflah} perhaps, it is clearly evident by virtue of insight which is a grant or bestowal of grace from their Lord. The view of our Shaykh was that the cessation of self-direction, in itself a recognition of the necessity of a continual 'Islam {self surrender}, was the means par excellence for the cultivation of insight [kashf}, which best blooms undisturbed by agitation and the sense of 'doing' so much evident in the contemporary world.

Commenting on the saying of one of his contemporaries, "Spiritual knowledge comes from Allah in two ways: one way, the path of the Source of generosity, and one way, the path of enormous self-exertion," our Shaykh said, "Regarding the Source of generosity, it refers to those whom Allah has initiated with His Divine Gift and who by this Gift have attained to obedience unto Him. Concerning the great self-exertion, this refers to those people who, by obedience unto Him, have attained to His Divine Gift." He continued saying, "Certainty {yaqin} is a word pertaining to the apprehension of realities without a doubt and without an intervening veil. Spiritual knowledge {ma'rifah} is a disclosure of the sciences along with the veil. When the veil is removed, we call it certainty. He who has access to the realities [haqd'iq} is carried away in rapture {nashwata-l-tarab}. The one who has spiritual knowledge is drawn by it away from the self {nafs}.

The mystical sciences are gathered treasures and the lights are spiritual insights. Spiritual knowledge is amplitude; unity is truth, wisdom is inspiration, light is clarity." He said, may Allah preserve his secret, "The real knowledge is that which is not overcome by contraries and evidence of likes and equals. He who enters into this knowledge is as one engulfed by the sea. The water closes in over him. What contrary do you meet with, or hear or see?" As an example of his teaching on a particular subject, in this case watchfulness {muraqabah} and its connection to the 'Ceasing of Self-Direction', {'isqat at-taddblr} consider the following drawn from Ibn Sabbagh's book, "The Pearl of Secrets" [Durrat al-Asrdr},

"So, oh voyager on the road of the Hereafter, it is incumbent upon you to accomplish what you have been Ordered concerning your outward conduct. When you have done that, sit upon the carpet of watchfulness {muraqabah} and render sincere {takhlis} your inner life until there remains nothing that He has forbidden. Give the prescribed limitations {huddud} their full due. Diminish your attention to your outer self if you desire the opening of the inner self to the secrets of the Kingdom of your Lord. Whatever thoughts come to hinder you from the object of your desire, be aware, in the first place, of the Nearness {qurb} of your Lord, with a knowledge {ilm} which sets your heart to work in seeking of Allah those things which are beneficial to you and averting those things which cause you harm.

"Reflect, 'Allah is powerful over every thing. Whatever Mercy Allah opens to men, none can withhold and what ever He withholds none can loose after Him. He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. O humans, remember Allah's grace upon you; is there any creator apart from Allah who provides for you from the heavens and the earth ?' {35:2-3} From the earth is your self {nafs} but from heaven is your heart {qalb}. If any thing descends from the heavens to the earth, who is he that will turn it away other than Allah ?' He knows what penetrates into the earth, and what comes forth from it, what comes down from sky and what goes up in it. He is with you wherever you are and Allah sees what you do.' {57:4}

"Give then watchfulness {muraqabah} its due by continuing in your absolute slavery to His commands and abstain from adherence to lordship with respect to His creations. If anyone contends with Him, he will suffer defeat, since, 'Have they not seen how We destroyed before them many a generation and we had established them in the earth more firmly than we established you: {6:6} and ' If Allah touches you with affliction none can remove it but He; and if He touches you with good. He is powerful over all things. He is Omnipotent over His slaves. He is the All-Wise, the Knower: {6:17-18} How excellent is The Truth {al-haqq}.

What I am saying to you is that there is not one breath of your breathing but that Allah controls it, whether you be one who is resigned or one who is contending. For you desire resignation at one time but Allah refuses everything except contending and you desire contending at another time, but Allah refuses everything except resignation. This is but an indication of His Lordship in all of His doings, especially with the one occupied with guarding the heart for the attainment of His realities {haqaiq}.

"If the matter is as described then give due respect to right action with regard to whatever may come over you, in that you will not testify that any thing pertaining to you is first except through His being The First, or last except through His being The Last, or outward except through His being The Outward or inner except through his being The Inner. For if you attain to the 'firstness' of the First, you are looking at that which is first in respect of anything which you could ever make to be first.

"If there should come over you any stray thought for an action pleasing to the self {nafs} or a hateful action which is not suitable to it from among those things which the Law has not forbidden, then consider what Allah has created in you through the traces {athar} of what occurs to your mind as a stray thought. If you discover some admonition it is for you to believe it to be true, for that is the proper thing to do at the time, and do not have recourse to anything else. But if you do not find the way to believing it to be time, then wait before Him, for that is the proper thing to do at that time. Whenever you turn to someone else you miss your way. If you are not able to do that, then you must trust, be contented and submissive. If you do not find the way to do that, then you must pray for the bestowal of gifts and the averting of harms on the condition of becoming resigned and committing yourself to Allah. I caution you against choosing for your self, for it is an evil with people of insight {kashf}.

"There are four rules of conduct: the rule of assured belief, the rule of waiting, the rule of trust, and the rule of supplication. He who believes {the admonition} to be true is preserved {from the thought form}; he who waits before Him dispenses with making his own choices through the choices of his Lord; he who calls upon Him by way of advancing toward Him and Love, to him will He give a favourable response, as He wishes, according to what is suitable for him, or, as He wishes, withholding that which is not suitable for him.

"Each rule has its extension {bisat} and each dimension has its plane. The first plane is the plane of the dimension of belief. If a thought {khatir} comes over you from other than Him and there are disclosed to you

His attributes, then sit within your inner soul for it is forbidden to witness other than Him.

"The second plane is the plane of waiting. If there comes a thought to you from other than Him and if there is disclosed to you His actions, wait here in your innermost soul. For it is forbidden to witness other than His attributes as a witness and with an immediate vision of Reality, for primarily there is the passing away [fana'] of the association {shirk}, since {if you say} you are the conqueror you have not conquered. For if you are a conqueror, then be as you are, for you will never be as you will.

"Your very struggle {ijtihad} is a veritable proof of your extreme ignorance of the workings of Allah. How ugly is an ignorant worker {'amil}? or a corrupt scholar {'alim}? I do not know with what words to describe you, whether with ignorance or with corruption or both together. We take refuge with Allah from the nafs being divested from struggle {mujahadah} and the heart's being empty of witnessing. Idleness {ta'til} nullifies the Law and emptiness nullifies unity {tawhid} and the Judge brought them both together. If you relinquish vying with your Lord you will be a Unitarian {muwahhid}; if you act according to the Law you will be a follower of the Sunnah; if you bring them both together in true union you will a true {muhaqqiq} sufi. 'Is it not sufficient that your Lord is a Witness of all things ?' {41:53}

"So then if there comes to you in your state of watchfulness {muraqabah} a thought of something disapproved of in the Law or desirable {in spite of the Law}, with regard to some past act of yours, consider what you remember by it and be admonished. If you remember Allah by it, then the proper thing for you is to declare His unity on the plane of devotion to Him alone.

"If there is not transmitted to you the vision of His bountifulness in the gifts of His Mercy with which he has covered you, and in obedience to Him with which He has adorned you, in that you have loved Him on the plane of His affection, and you are below this level, not having been there, then the proper thing for you is to see His Bounty in that He has covered you in whatever act of disobedience toward Him you commit, without disclosing your shame to any of His creatures.

"If you have turned aside from this matter and are reminded of your disobedience, and if you have not remembered the preceding three rules of conduct, then dwell upon the rule of supplication, repenting of {your act of disobedience} and of similar acts, and seeking forgiveness for it, just as a confused guilty culprit would seek it. This is relative to the thing disapproved of in respect to the Law.

"But if there comes to you a thought of an act of obedience and you proceed to recall Who has caused you to benefit thereby, let not yourself be consoled by it, but rather by its Author, for if you are consoled by other than Him, you have already fallen from the grade of advanced Tasawwuf {tahqiq}.

"If you are not of this stage, then be in the one following it, that of witnessing the great Bounty of Allah toward you, since He has made you to belong among its possessors, the heritage of which is that you will be provided something good from it; but rather it is one of the tokens which point to the genuineness of it.

"If you are not made to dwell there, but to abide below it, then the proper thing for you to do is to examine minutely this act of obedience and ask, is it really an act of obedience, with you being secure from being called to account for it, or is it the opposite of that, with you being held punishable for it ? We take refuge with Allah from good deeds which become evil deeds, -for there appeared to them things from Allah that they had never reckoned with; {39:48}.

If you descend from this grade to some other, then the proper thing for you is to seek to escape from it with its good and from its evil. Let your flight from your good works be more frequent than your flight from your evil works, if you desire to be one of the righteous.

"As for you, know that if you wish to have some share in what the awliya' of Allah possess, you must shun people altogether, except for those who direct you to Allah with trust worthy counsel and unquestionable conduct which neither the Book nor the Sunnah will render invalid. Shun the world entirely and be not of those who shun it in order to receive something on that account. Further, do it as a slave of Allah who has

ordered you to shun his enemy.

"So whenever you bring forth these two good habits, shunning the world and asceticism with regard to the people, practice devotion to Allah with spiritual watchfulness. Take upon your self the duty of turning to Allah {tawbah} with spiritual watchfulness {ri'ayah}, of seeking pardon by repeatedly turning {inabah} and submitting with uprightness to the Law.

"The meaning of these four things is that you remain a slave of Allah in what you perform and what you desist from, and you watch over your heart lest you see in its possession something belonging to another. If this happens the voices {hawatif} of The Truth {al-haqq} will call out to you from the lights of splendour, 'You have lost the Way.'

"You know you have reached that practice of devotion to Allah with certainty that He sees you when you hear His saying -Allah watches over all things: {33:52} Here you are overtaken by a certain politeness which incites you to repentance for what you considered to be nearness to Allah. Repentance with watchfulness of the heart necessarily implies that you do not imagine repentance as coming from you in any case, so that you return from that to that from which you departed. If this is genuine on your part the voices will also call out to you from the presence of The Truth. Repentance is not of yourself; turning repeatedly is but from Him.

Your being occupied with what is an attribute of yourself is a hindrance to your real desire, for there you are considering your own attributes and so you are seeking refuge with Allah from them and beginning to implore pardon and to turn back repeatedly. For imploring pardon is seeking forgiveness for your attributes by returning to His Attributes. If you are in this condition, I mean seeking refuge with Allah and turning to Him repeatedly. He will so proclaim to you, "Yield to My Decrees, lay aside contending with Me, comply closely with My Will by putting aside your will. It is only Lordship that has been invested with power over slavery.

Be then a slave possessed having power over nothing. When have I seen you in possession of any power which I have entrusted to you whilst, 'I am the Knower of all things- {2:29}? If you are well grounded in this matter, and if you adhere to it, you have a view of secrets which you will hardly hear from any one of the worlds."

Our Shaykh says concerning the Way:

"The Way is holding steady by four things. He who partakes of all of them is of the Confirmed {siddiqun}, he who partakes of three of them is of the Friends of Allah {awliya'}, he who partakes of two of them is a Witness [shahid} and who partakes of a single one is of the upright Slaves of Allah {'ibad}. The first of these is remembrance {dhikr}, the extension of which is correct religious practice and the fruit of which is illumination {ishraq}; the second is contemplation {tafkir}, the extension of which is perseverance {sabr} and the fruit of which is knowledge {ilm}; the third is poverty {faqr}, the extension of which is thankfulness [shukr} and the fruit of which is increase; the fourth is love {mahabbah}, the extension of which is abhorrence of the world and its inhabitants and the fruit of which is arrival [wusul] or attaining the goal of the Beloved."

Our Shaykh was very concerned with the precision of his teachings in the rearing up {tarbiyyah} of his muridun. Unlike some of the Shuyukh of later times and, particularly, of our present time, he was very careful to fully know all the circumstances in the life of the murid, often intimately and in great detail. Additionally many of the muridun lived with him, especially during his time in al-'Iskandariyyah, and he made use of travelling, especially the Hajj, both as a means to know his muridun and also as a means of instructing them. He once said, when visited by some scholars who enquired why a man of his learning and knowledge did not write books, "My companions are my books," referring to his muridun.

Besides speaking extensively on such subjects as Qur'an, Hadith, Shari'ah, Fiqh and 'Aqidah, he taught at great length both by words and, more importantly, by actions, the following subjects: sincerity {al-ikhlas}, returning in repentance to Allah {at-tawbah}, intention {an-niyah}, seclusion {al-khalwah} {especially in the sense of the seclusion of one's self and family from the sources of agitation, confusion, aggravation, illusion and desire

as well as the necessity for periods of physical seclusion}, concerted and active struggle {al-jihad} both in its lesser and greater manifestations and specifically in relation to the commanding lower self {an-nafsu-l-ammara}, the necessity for remembrance of Allah {adh-dhikr}, contemplation of Allah {al-fikr} and watchfulness of the decrees of Allah {al-muraqabah}, worship and service of Allah {al-'ubudiyah} and service of people {al-khidmah}, avoidance of worldliness and its attachments especially to power and leadership unless under the mandate of Allah, worship of Allah {'ibadah} both prescribed {fard} and voluntary {nafl}, obedience {at-t'dt} to the requirements of Allah, the understanding of degrees {ad-darajat} and decrees {al-aqdar} as a means of certification, certainty and proof founded on principle rather than supposition, piety or scrupulousness {wara'}, contentment {ar-rida} with what Allah ordains, love {al-mahabbah} for Allah and that which He loves and those whom He loves and thus makes pure, the necessity for fervent and repeated supplication [ad-du'a} and repetition of spiritual litanies {al-ahzab}].

There can be no doubt that all of the great Shuyukh spoke and often wrote about these subjects, as they form the basis of the universal spiritual path. What distinguished the teaching of our Shaykh, as we said at the outset, was that he approached all of these subjects from above rather than below. This was consonant with his understanding of arrival before departure, of attraction rather than travel and insight rather than intellection.

He was abundantly aware that the path was "not from you to Me but rather from Me to you." It was never with him a matter of getting 'somewhere'; rather it was a question of being. His muridun often used to observe him saddling one of his horses and setting out on a journey.

They asked him, 'Whence, oh Shaykh?' His reply, as often as not, was, 'Nowhere.' When asked about this he said that it gave him pleasure simply to ride, from time to time, with no destination, sleeping rough at night in the desert, and in general having no purpose other than an apparently circuitous trip from which he would return after a week or so. He used these trips as times of reflection and ongoing contemplation. So in many ways did he view the spiritual 'journey', not so much as going any where, for after all where was there to go, but rather a reflection on Allah and a process of refinement of the self {nafs} until it was capable of fully reflecting the light and sublimity of Allah. A refinement of one's assumed nature whereby one resumed one's original nature. "Surely We created man in the best of forms". {95:4}

"So set your face to the pure {hanifa} Dm, the original nature of Allah {fitrata-llah} in which He created man: {30:30} For this reason he also stressed a certain invisibility or transparency in respect to the world. He abjured his muridun from adopting a way of dress which would set them apart from people and specifically taking the patched cloak {muraqqa'ah} so favoured by the darawish that it had become almost a uniform. On the contrary he preferred his muridun to dress well, even elegantly, as a means both of proclaiming 'their contentment with Allah' and harmonizing with the world in which they moved. All of this had very much to do with his teaching of 'transparence' or 'disappearance' which, in essence, held that to the degree the self became transparent to the Self, exactly to that degree, could one exist 'in' the world and not be 'of the world and thus simultaneously enjoy the fruits of both this world and the next.

Our Shaykh recounts, "On a certain night I had been meditating on the realm of the unseen and transcendent knowledge, when Allah bestowed upon me sublime knowledge and I penetrated into the unseen in a delightful manner. I said within myself, 'Is not this better than entering into the affairs of the creatures as compared with the Creator, and being together with Allah more perfect than being in the midst of things belonging to men even though it be permitted according to the Law to be among them?' Whilst I was thus, I fell asleep and I saw as if there were a torrent surrounding me on every side and carrying along garbage on my right and on my left. I began to wade through it to get out of it but I saw no land on four sides to which I could escape.

So I resigned myself. But I remained standing in the torrent like a post or a firmly rooted palm and said to myself. This is the bounty of Allah that I have stood firmly in this flood without being touched by the least bit of the garbage.' Then suddenly I perceived a handsome person who was saying to me, 'Certainly it is on account of being a Sufi that one becomes exposed to the affairs pertaining to men, the ordaining of which is of The Truth. Whatever Allah decrees you are thankful, whatever he does not ordain you are content. The

ordaining of them which obliges you to give thanks is not more perfect than their lack of being ordained which obliges you to be contented.

Allah has taught me knowledge which subsists in the essence of my self {dhat nafsi} leaving it not but adhering to it like the whiteness in white and the blackness in black. He is Allah, there is no deity other than He, The One, The Victorious, Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, The Powerful, the Forgiving {38:66}.

Consider the divinity {uluhiyyah}, uniqueness {fardaniyyah}, unity {wahdaniyyah}, victoriousness {qahiriyyah}, lordship, power and pardon, and how all of these are joined together in a single statement. Pardon is a descent upon the person who has mystical knowledge of Allah like the torrent bearing garbage and Allah causes whom He will to stand firm in the midst of it and by means of it {the stream of pardon} no garbage touches him.' I awoke from my sleep having been vouchsafed a great secret."

Thus our Shaykh, though he valued periods of withdrawal {especially the last 10 days of Ramadan} and reflection, advocated a life for his muridun which was lived, often fiercely and always with focused concentration, in the very midst of the flow of life stressing that every event was specially prepared by Allah and offered a means for deepening awareness and understanding. He said, with reference to those who are in the world yet not of it, "They are {al- mukhlisun} those whom Allah has created for the beauty of slavery to Him, the beauty of worshipping Him, and the beauty of contemplating Him.

Of those who worship Him in perfect slavery and adoration they are the most highly favoured due to their sincerity in the declaration of the oneness of His Lordship and for following His Law in so far as He endowed their inner beings with the illuminations of His presence, whose spirits {arwah}

He has provided with the inner meanings of His mystical sciences and with the peculiar manifestation of His concern {inayah} and whose minds He has caused to contemplate the beneficence of His Greatness, whose souls [nufus} He has purified, guarded and made to emerge from the darkness of ignorance, whom He has guided by the stars of knowledge {ilm} and the sun of spiritual knowledge {ma'rifah} of Him, whose beliefs He has confirmed by the proofs {barahin} of His Book and Sunnah, whose resolves {'aza'im} He has wiped away through the realization of His overpowering desire {mashi'ah},

whose will [iradah} He has reduced by giving them knowledge of His Will, whom He has bedizened with the adornments of asceticism {zuhd}, the ornaments of trust {tawakkul}, the nobility of scrupulousness {wara'}, the light of sure knowledge and luster of gnosis {ma 'rifah}, whom He has guided by inspiration to His Bounty and abundance {tawl}, whom He has drawn near to Him so that with Him they are made to dispense with other than Him.

Some of them He has appointed to be keys for the hearts of men and springs of the greatest wisdom of which they learn according to the divine law which they communicate secretly and openly to those who are capable. Some of them the decrees {aqdar} have concealed and veiled from others in order that they alone may become the masters of the truth of the hidden mysteries.

They are not at all to be recognized by any distinguishing marks. In their inner self they are with The Truth {al-haqq} while in their outer selves they are with the creatures {al-khalq}. They are they and not they. They are in the realm of being {wujud} characterized by their absence {fana}. They appear to walk in ranks yet in their journeys they take separate roads. Outwardly they are poor; inwardly they are rich."

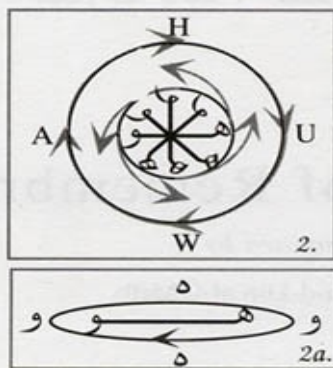
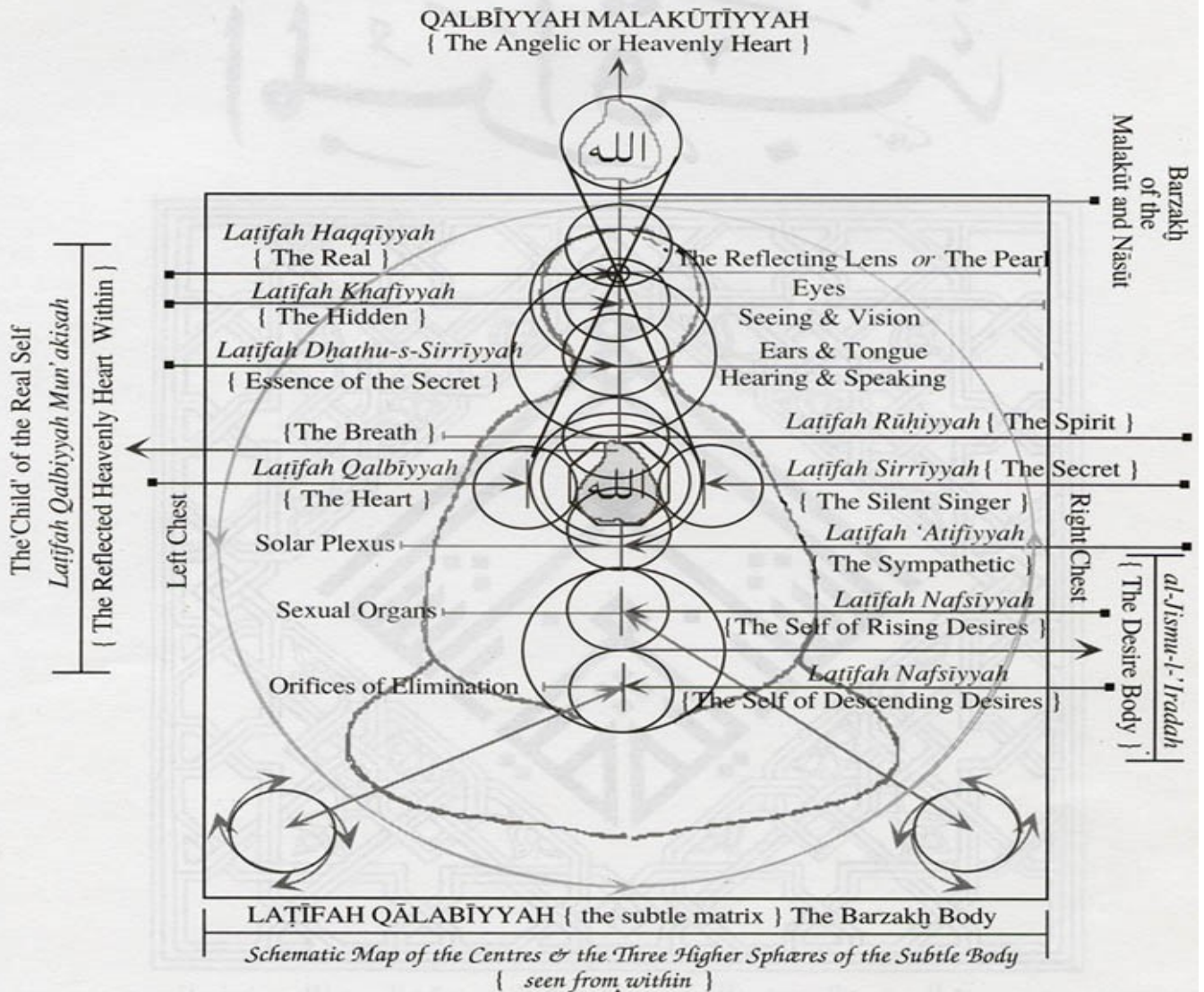
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Diagam Muraqabah Shadhaili Way

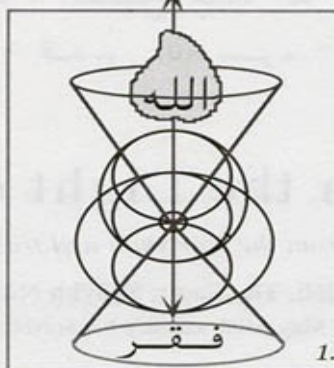
◦ THE SCHOOL OF THE SHĀDHĪYAH: VOLUME I ◦

◦ al-Murāqabah fi Nūri-dh-Dhikr ◦

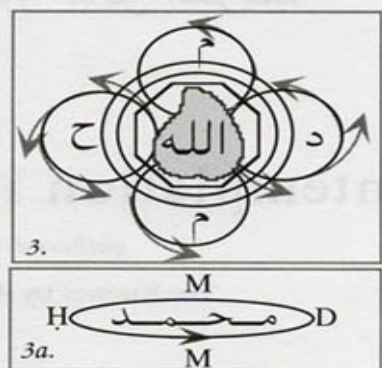
32



Latifah Dhatiyyah Sirriyyah
{ Essence of the Secret }
The Body of Correspondence



Latifah Khafiyyah
{ The Hidden }
The Body of Silent Substance



Latifah Qalbiyyah Mun'akisah
{ The Reflected Heavenly Heart }
The Body of the New Born Child

figure 18

Schematic Map of the Seven Subtle Centres & the Three Higher Spheres of the Subtle Body
{ see pages 92-93 Introduction & p 234 }

Diagrams & Text Muraqabah Shadhaili Way

Spiritual health warning PLEASE DONT TRY THIS WITHOUT 'I'jaza ..! Thank you please consult a Shaykh of Tariqah

Intro by Muhammad Sajad Ali Qadiri-Noshahi - a simple understanding of what Muraqabah --Science of Sufi Meditation or technique to meditate. These are some references i've found to make it easy to explain Method of Practising Muraqabah.

Muraqaba --Science of Sufi Meditation or technique to meditate. Its more like visualization/image practice based on the Name of Allah or the Shaykh!

The wise say –‘Wisdom is inherited through Silence and reflection’ so know that great power comes in this form.

In Muraqabah- one needs to do dhikr and then concentrate- make a mental attention or focus by picturing the Shaykh and keep on contemplating on this!

...Muraqaba is the name of that contemplation through which man is able to gain the knowledge which is the primordial knowledge of his Ego, Self, or Soul. After gaining that knowledge, any man can gain access to his Ego or Soul.

... muraqabah, where he or she sets aside some private time to sit and reflect on Allah. In this exercise the salik strives to empty the heart of all thoughts and imagines the blessings and mercy of Allah entering the heart and erasing its darkness. As if in gratitude to being cleansed of darkness the heart joyfully calls out the Name of Allah over and over again... Allah! Allah! Allah!

A general scientific principle states that whenever a vacuum is created, something comes in to fill it and therefore the vacuum does not stay as is. Similarly when we sit and strive to remove all thoughts from our heart the aim is to create a void that will hopefully be filled with thoughts of Allah.

Darkness and light cannot coexist in the same space. Hence the more we strive to rid our hearts of filth, the hope is that divine light, goodness and blessing will enter to replace the darkness that was there. This is why it is extremely important to do muraqabah in abundance. Wherever in the Holy Quran we find the command to practice dhikr, the word is accompanied with the adjective signifying abundance (dhikr-e-kathir).....

"One hour of meditation {muraqabah} is better than 70 years of worship."

...Muraqaba. The invocation of the Supreme Name with deep contemplation and stillness until the falling away of the attributes and the secret is revealed. The secret of muraqaba is mushahada (That is, the secret of watching is witnessing.)

below is text is from the book which explains Muraqabah

Book ref: - The school of the Shadhdhuliyah: Volume 1

Contemplation in the Light of Remembrance al-Muraqabah fi Nuri-dh-Dhikr

The process of absorption in, and internalisation of, the Wird is generally known as muraqabah {inward contemplation} and occurs in three stages: Rotation, Circulation and Fixing. These stages, when successfully traversed, coincide with a process of transmutation in which the fallen {'asfala safilin} and renegade self is restored to its original high state {'ahsan taqwim}. This process is known as 'the return of the exile'.

Among the teachings and methods contained in Volume II {Origins} are some of the ways and the means that this 'journey', by the Grace of Allah, is accomplished. We have referred to it in English in terms of the constituent elements of the process {Rotation, Circulation and Fixing} in order to avoid confusion with other meanings which apply to the term muraqabah. Yet it is the same.

It must be understood that if one hopes to prepare the 'house' of the heart in order that its True Lord may take up residence, the foundations must be carefully laid. The basic prescriptions of 'Islam {the shahadatayn, the salah, the zakah, the sawm, the hajj} all serve to bring about a state of equilibrium {nidham} or balance {tawazun} which is the foundation for a spiritual life. The circulation of the remembrance is the internalisation of the shahadatayn, the basis of spiritual jihad {mujahadat an-nafs}, and the way of purification. It is what connects and ties the foundation together.

Before proceeding to explain the method whereby the Dhikr is made first to rotate and then to circulate throughout the bodies of the self, we must explain the 'backward' flowing motion. Simply put it is the motion of returning all things to the 'heart': the movement from without to within. It is analogous to Arabic writing which proceeds from the right and moves toward the 'heart' in contradistinction to Western writing which proceeds from the left, or the heart side, and moves 'outward'. It also counters the direction of 'clock time'; a 'time' which, in the efflorescence of its decay, is the decomposition of an 'earlier' time and a profanation of the eternal 'present' referred to by Allah in His saying,

"Surely We created man in the best of forms {'ahsan taqwim} and then We reduced him to the lowest of the low {'asfala safilin}." {94:4-5}. This 'turning back' [tawbah} is the defeat of the Babylonian and Pharaonic magic [as-sihr} by which Pharaoh, the outer surrogate 'ruler' who has usurped the prerogatives of the inner spiritual king, seeks in order to preserve and perpetuate his 'rule', to drown all the 'male' children of the believers in the indifferent uniformity of the river 'time' that traverses his secular one-dimensional flat-land world in which only the 'normal' survive.

The 'normal' being those willing to deny their heritage and accept, conform to and strive for the rewards of a world in which only that which can be physically apprehended is 'real' and who, above all, do not wish to know they are lost and in exile. Meaning, in the words of Allah: "Striving for increase in worldly things you are distracted until you come to your graves. Then you shall know. Then shall you know. Then shall you know with the knowledge of certainty." {102:1-5}

From a 'scientific' perspective this 'backward' inward flowing motion is the functional reversal of the second law of thermodynamics which postulates the continual decay, degeneration and disintegration of all things: a clockwise, 'outflowing' or 'downflowing' motion, an external descent into barren vain 'actions' and unconscious 'activities'. The 'backward' or 'inflowing' motion, on the other hand, is integrative in intent and by nature; it seeks to return the self to its source and origin, to restore the throne and kingdom to its rightful and true ruler: to return from dispersion to collectedness, from motion to stillness, from agitation to tranquillity, from noise to silence, from shadows to the light, from the many to the One.

A prerequisite of this practice is the active observation in spirit and letter of the five fara'id prescribed by Allah in the Law [ash-shari'ah}, the daily recital of Qur'anic readings and the integration into the pattern of daily life of the awrad and wadha'if prescribed by the shaykh. The aspirant must know that taking on such practices from outside the Law is a barren exercise which only serves to strengthen the nafs and is counter-productive. In some rare cases it may yield positive results but most often it leads, due to lack of guidance, to the experience of dead-end psychic phenomena.

The Method of Practising Muraqabah

The one who seeks to practice the Circulation must be in a state of ritual purity {wudu'} with especial attention given that the mouth and nasal passages are clear of any filth or obstruction. The ideal garments are loose and non-binding. One should be comfortably seated on a rug or blanket {or a chair if necessary} facing the qiblah as in salah or when reading Qur'an and lightly anointed with a pleasant smelling natural scent [tib or 'itr].

The light should be subdued, the space unfrequented by comings and goings {later, when the dhikr rotates of its own accord, 'place' is of less importance}. The best times are the deep watches of the night, after the Fajr Salah on returning from the masjid, or in the gloaming between Maghrib and 'Isha'.

In sitting the right foot should, if possible, be placed on the left calf and the hands should rest lightly in the lap or on the knees. Gathering oneself together and raising one's two hands before one's face one recites three times the accompanying ayat, kalimat and ad'iyah on the breath into one's upraised hands with the intention of creating a safeguard against idle or evil thoughts. Upon completion the hands should be passed over the face and the body. Every effort should be made to preserve {hifdh} these selections upon the heart eliminating the need to direct the glance outward.

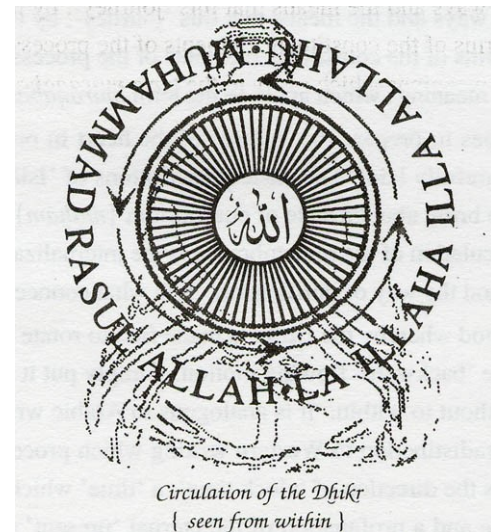
See below for recites three times the accompanying ayat, kalimat and ad'iyah

Taking refuge within this zone of safety one concentrates on the centre of the sole or the big toe of the right foot and begins from there to draw a deep smooth breath concentrating on the words LA 'ILLAHA 'ILLA LLAHU in a rotating circle, and at the same time visualizing that the breath one is drawing into the core of oneself is rising, purifying, harmonizing and suffusing the entire body with radiance and a silent resonance.

Circulation of the 'Dhiki { seen from zuithin }

This breath, drawn through the right nostril, must traverse the body until it reaches, with the sound of HUW, that point between and slightly above the eyes known as the heavenly heart. At this point the breath should be retained like a drop of water on the tip of a leaf and then be smoothly released through the left nostril, traversing in its descent the whole body and all of its centres and flowing out through the sole or big toe of the left foot.

The words and sound attached to the downflow are MUHAMMADU-R-RASULU-LLAH which arrives at its destination and departs the body on the sound of AH. As it descends one visualizes that the entire subtle body {latifah qalaibiyah} is being washed and purified. The subtle matrix upon which the outer physical body is formed is the barzakh body built of the sum total of one's lifetime impressions; it is the body which survives the physical body, {not the true resurrection body} {Introduction pp 91-93}, in which one dwells in the barzakh until the Day of Resurrection.



Note: Introduction pp 91-93 notes will at added the End plus seven centers daigram

After a number of cycles {varying from person to person} one senses a gathering tension or condensation in the heavenly heart often accompanied by a tingling of the hairs of the body and a feeling as of a gentle breeze blowing over the skin. Simultaneously there is a sense that the breath is breathing itself, harmoniously rising and falling, and the words revolve passing in and out of their own volition. One is being breathed rather than breathing. This is the 'shift' point' where one gently 'shifts' upward and inward.

If, in the process of 'shifting', one notes a falling off of smoothness in concentration accompanied by incoming random thoughts then one should 'fall' back down to the starting point. This holds true for all 'shifts'. The main function of the practice until the inner heart centre is reached is emptying' in which, by a process of substitution, the internal dross of the subtle mold and its desire centre is cleansed by the pure waters of LA 'ILAHA 'ILLA ALLAHU.

In this phase MUHAMMADUR-RASULU-LLAH acts as a carrier bearing away impurities by the pureness of his being, blessings of Allah and peace be upon him. In the phases that follow as one moves to the heart {qalb} and from the qalb to the secret {sirr} and from the sirr to the spirit {ruh} and so on within and throughout all the various centres of the subtle body, MUHAMMADUR-RASULU-LLAH functions in the capacity of Messenger to the various 'selves' of one's being, bringing the message of the 'Islam of voluntary self-surrender to Allah and deep peace, the 'Iman of complete trust, and the 'Ihsan of pure goodness.

There has come to you a Messenger from among your selves grievous to him is your suffering; anxious is he over you, gentle to the believers, compassionate {9:128}

In the course of the inward journey one reaches different centres. Each is a universe; each must in turn surrender and submit. Each individual cycle begins with negating the contingent reality of that centre with LA 'ILAHA then passing 'upward' through the horizon of 'ILLA followed by the affirmation of the higher by The Highest: ALLAH, subhanahu wa ta'ala. Halting {waqaf} at that point, one then 'returns' from that ascension [ma'raj] as the praised one MUHAMMAD, blessings and peace be upon him, the RASUL of ALLAH, with the message of voluntary surrender to Allah. Each centre in turn surrenders, becomes 'Muslim', finds peace and says AH. The 'self of each centre returns to its original state of 'Islam and thus does one negate and transmute all that is contingent in the Face of the Absolute.

Through grace and, usually, with time and the deepening of one's practice, an entirely new phase commences. This is the phase of the rotation of the light and the circulation of the remembrance throughout one's entire body. When the fragmented self of agitation, unfulfilled desires and egoic assertion has been gradually transmuted into the empty silent, translucent and tranquil self there begins the rotation of the light of the dhikr. This marks the middle stage between the Circulation of Remembrance and the Rooting of the Names.

There are many ways in which this is experienced but a few generalities may be stated. First the rotation and circulation of the light of the dhikr in no way has anything to do with the seeing of bright iridescent coloured lights. Neither does it have to do with the appearance of successions of thoughts no matter how profound nor does it have to do with sinking into ashes, darkness or the cold.

The first is the cave of fantasy and a trap of infinite regress, the second and the third are polar extremes which are the realms of fiery air and waterous earth. In the realm of 'fiery air' one is assailed by an unending succession of thoughts occurring one upon the heels of the other in which one imagines the solution or resolution of all questions and problems. In the realm of 'waterous earth' all things sink in abysmal negation, denial, and refusal. It may be an 'end' to the world of the ten-thousand things but it is a dead and barren end.

The true signs of the circulation of the dhikr are a sense of purity and cleanliness radiating outward suffusing the entire body with freshness, and a kind of lightness akin to the intoxication of the Garden wherein, -There they are given a cup of a tincture of Zanjabil, the water from the spring whose name is Salsabil- {76:17-19} -There wait upon them immortal youths with goblets and ewers and a cup from a pure spring wherefrom they get no throbbing or madness- {56:17-19}. One's body feels strong and sound; a great peace pervades the being. The clear golden light of the full moon is reflected shining in the still silver water. Opening one's eyes one looks out upon all things with great compassion; the rose blooms. These are signs of the circulation of the light of remembrance.

Once the light has begun to circulate throughout the body the dhikr rotates by its own accord. Whenever one returns to the concentration is as though one had not gone anywhere. In this way the dhikr becomes easy and

without effort. Indeed any effort at this point is counter-productive. This 'Cessation of Self-Direction' requires the utmost subtle and delicate sensitivity to what is in fact the internal reconciliation {'islah} with, renewal {'tajdid} of, and rebirth {'ihya} as a being of light which is one's malakuti self, of which this worldly self is but a shadow and witness. It is a re-birth in one's form of "Surely We created man in the best of forms" {95:6} brought about by the re-turn {'tawbah} to Allah through remembrance of the Truth of Existence and one's Original Nature.

Rooting the Two Names Tathbitul-'ismayin

'ashhadu 'al-l-la 'ilaha 'illa-'llah

wa'ashhadu 'anna muhammad an 'abaduhu wa rasuluh.

Just as we must consider both dimensions of the shahadatayn so also must we consider the two names: one absolute and the other contingent. One is: Allah, exalted is He above all things. The other is His Messenger, Muhammad, blessings and peace be upon him. **This 'Fixing' or 'Rooting' of the Two Names marks the third stage in this practice of contemplation {muraqabah} and visualization {tasawwur}. We have reproduced at the end of this section a visual aid for the practitioner intent upon the 'fixing' of the two Names.**

When the dhikr carried on the breath rotates of its own accord, and the light of that dhikr spreads and suffuses throughout the body, then does there dawn the first of the Names: the light of the Name of Allah, Jalla Jalaluhu. This Light is neither fantasy {as in the cave of the moving pictures of the mind} nor photism {iridescent scintillation}. It dawns in the heavenly heart between the two eyes of the HUW. We have referred in many places to the Doctrine of Transparency or the Doctrine of Disappearance.

Whilst its outer 'work' is, in the words of Shaykh Ibn 'Ata'illah, to "Bury your existence in the earth of obscurity " when the 'seed' of that existence has been buried and germinates then does their bloom within the self, unseen to the world, the golden flower, effulgent and radiant with the Light of Sublime Attraction [jadhbu-jaldl]. The boat reaches the shore; clouds disappear; the heart shines forth in the silent sea of light.

When the light of the Name of Allah first begins to dawn, the breath should be shifted from the circular rotation of the dhikr of {LA 'ILAHA 'ILLA-LLAHU • MUHAMMADUR-RASULU-LLAH} to the breath of ALLAH in through the right nostril held in the heavenly or spiritual heart and released as HU through the left nostril.

One must be completely still and allow the breath to come and go as the Light of the Name begins to rise from behind the mountain peaks of the pass to the far distant land. When the effulgent name of Majesty rises in all fulness in the heavenly heart it sends out its solar rays both suffusing and attracting. The effect of this is the disappearance {fana } of the contemplator who, in the flood of that light of sublimity, simply ceases to be, as in the meaning of the words of Allah: "Everything upon it will vanish. Yet still shall there remain the Presence of your Lord, Powerful, Glorious." {55:27}

There arises here the question of what happens to those who are so overcome that they cannot return and it is for this reason that at the very beginning of one's practice of the Circulation of the Light of Remembrance and the Fixing of the Two Names one should spend some time every day in outer contemplation of the Two Names as we have shown them here if one is truly concerned with 'returning'.

This 'contemplation' and 'visualization' should include writing the Names and, if possible, colouring them. It is also an excellent idea to have them made in stained glass or painted on glass so that the light can shine through them rather than on them as there is considerable difference between what we may term 'light on' and 'light through' in terms of the mimetic quality of the light cognate to the experience. Needless.

Allah Gold and Muhammad (pbuh) Silver

In viewing the Names externally their polar nature is clear; this is also an indication of function. The Name of ALLAH appears in what we may call –‘Gold- on a –Red’ ground whereas the name MUHAMMAD, blessings and peace be upon him, appears in -Silver- on a -Green- ground.



The -return- from -disappearance- is by way of the Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him, and his light, the *nuri-1-muhammad*, which exerts the attraction of beauty {*jadhbu-jamal*} coolness and rest for the eyes, accompanied by the overwhelming compassion of, "We have no, sent you but as a mercy for all the world," (21:1071)

This practice rides on the breath of MUHAMMAD in through the right nostril whilst simultaneously it is seen written across the breast from the *latifah sirriyah* to the *latifah qalbiyyah* in silver on a green ground with RASULU-LLAH on the out breath through the left nostril bathing and cooling the -body- Alternatively there is the rotation of the four letters MiM, HA, MiM, DAL in a diamond proceeding from the *Latifah Ruhiyyah* to the *Latifah Sirriyah* to the *Latifah ‘Atifiyyah* and ending in the *Latifah Qalbiyyah*.

The letters move in procession around the throne {*al-'arsh* of the *Latifah Qalbiyyah* Mun ‘*akisah* which is the reflection of the Heavenly Heart {*Qalbiyyah Malakutiyyah*} in the void that exists between those four spheres (figure 18)

In that void the Name of ALLAH radiates forth reflected in the well of one's being from the Hidden Self of the *Latifah Khafiyyah* Here we touch upon the internal actualization of the ayat of Light in *Suratu-n-Nur* (24:35-7) (p. 290) and the mystery of the lamp, the glass, the oil, the light itself and its unique polar nature being neither of the East nor of the West.

Please understand these intimations (*'isharat*) are in no way to be considered exclusive or limiting. The map we have provided is but an imperfect guide to the Subtle Body which is vast and exists in many different times and spaces a veritable mansion of many rooms; it is not a -thing-, rather it is an ‘interspace’ in which life is lived both in this world and the world ‘between’ where you are seated inside the lamp of your self gazing out through the glass upon which the Name is written.

Shaykh Nuri Muhammad says, -At the time of death, the tongue of man is parched; limbs and senses begin to fail. If in his lifetime the seeker has practised rooting the Name of Allah in himself, submerging his being in Its radiance and has revived his heart thereby he will surely come to know the value and the price of that blessed occupation at the critical time of death when through the esoteric concentration on His Name all the etheric personalities {*al-lata'if*}, the skin, the limbs, the hairs make *dhikr* of Allah and vigorously shout out, Allah, *Huw Allah Huw Allah* and the whole body sings until the Name of Allah is heard from every vein and tissue, from every cell and atom Blessed ,s the end of such a person.

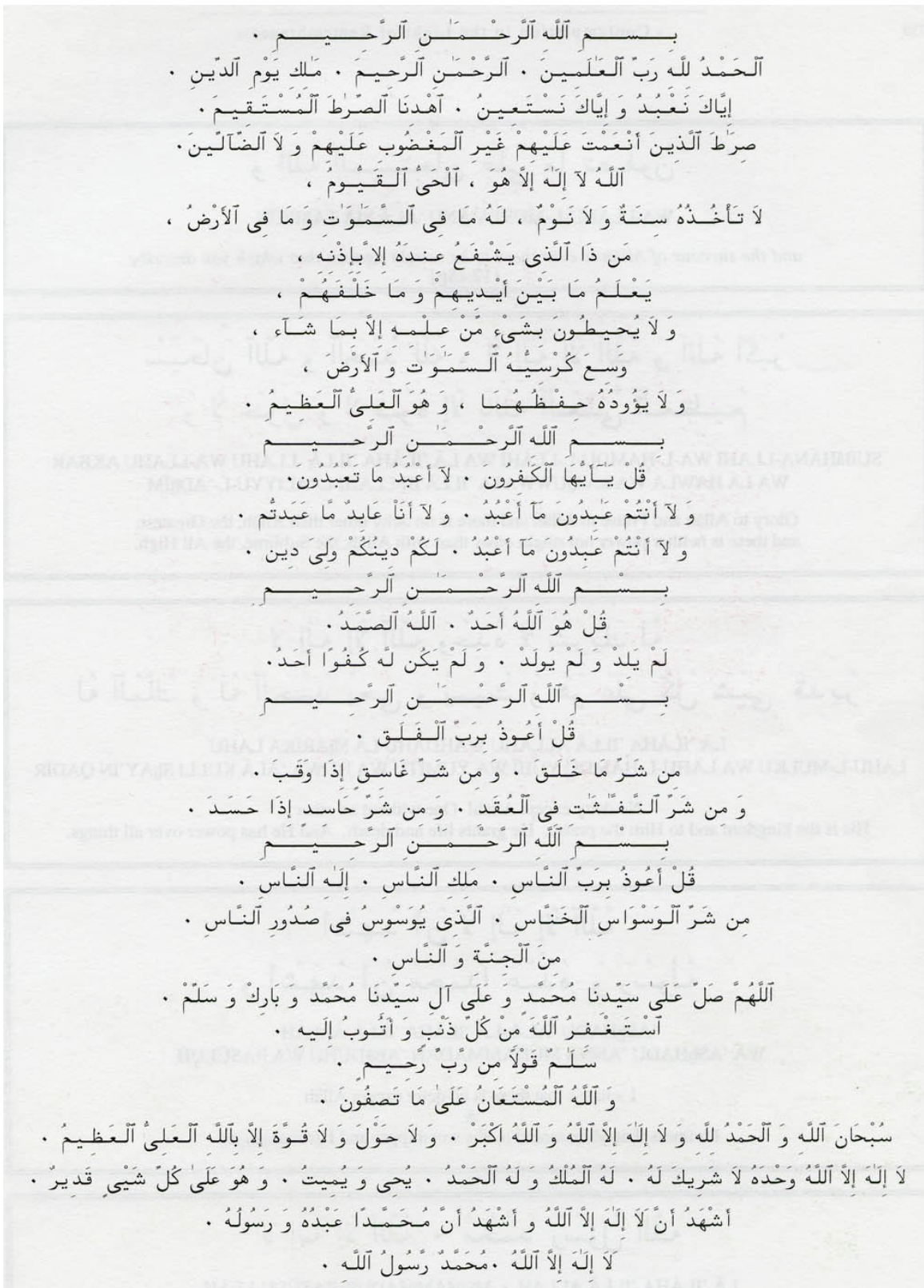
Shaytan cannot approach and when *Munkir* and *Nakar* come to ask their questions the man gets up and the Name of Allah is written in shining light on his forehead and breast, both palms and soles The angels are astonished saying, -You need not answer the questions for your blessed being is the answer."

In closing we must say something about HUW in its function as the voice of Being itself and the Essence of the Secret unveiled in the Hadith Qudsi: -My slave does not cease to draw near to me through devotions of his free will until I love him; and when I love him, I am the Hearing by which he hears and the Sight by which he sees, the Hand by which he grasps and the Foot upon which he walks.- (reported by Imam Bukhari).

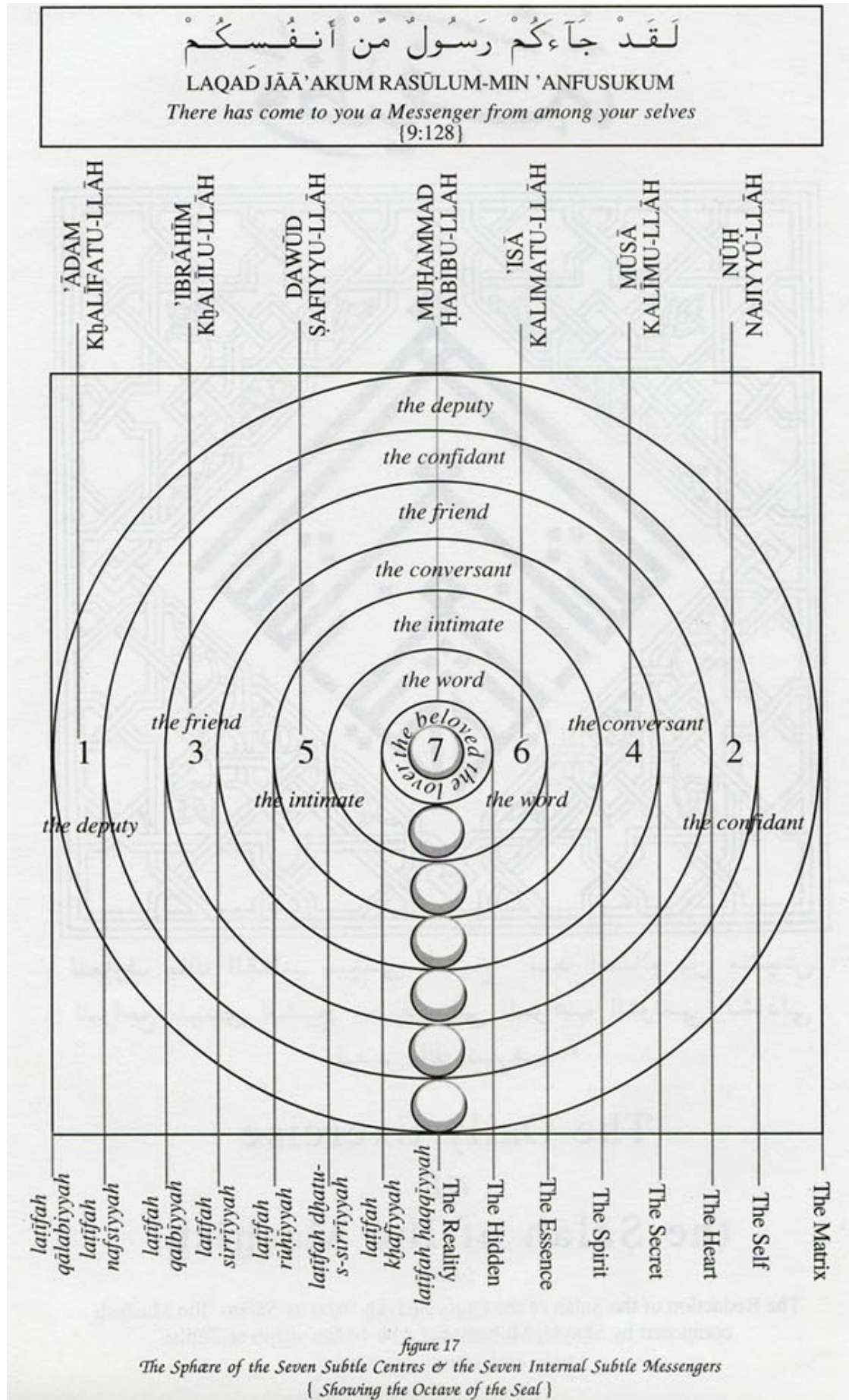
It is the hinge between the Transcendent {tanzih} and the Immanent (tashbih) {p 23}; between the annihilation of non-being and the ipseity of being So All we have written are words - -tears shed on the shore of the sea of non-existence- as our Shaykh Sidi Abul-Hasan ash-Shadhdhuli says, may Allah sanctify his secret.

The practice of this inner contemplation and visualization is altogether other. There is nothing written here that does not refer to an experiential reality but the writing is not the reality. Those wishing to -see for themselves- should implement the practice. As the Shaykh says; -Say Allah and you shall see wonders." May Allah forgive us and have mercy on us and He is the Best of Knowers. waAllahu 'a'lam.

Read threes time before entering into Muraqabah and each evening before sleep: see next page



Note: Introduction pp 91-93 notes will at added the End plus seven centers daigram



Have you not seen how the ships glide upon the sea by the grace of Allah that He might show you His signs? Truly therein are signs for every steadfast and grateful {heart}." {31:31} "Have they not seen the birds above them spreading their wings?" {67:19} "Have they not seen how Allah wafts the clouds, then gathers them and you see the rain come forth from them?" {24:43} "Have you not seen the water you drink?" {56:68} "Have you not seen how Allah makes the night enter into the day?" {31:297} "Have they not seen how Allah increases and decreases their portion?" {30:37} "Have they not seen how every thing in the heavens and the earth praises Allah?" {24:41}

When one comes to understand and know that Revelation is ongoing and constant by 'seeing' that, in Reality, Revelation is taking place all around one, then it is possible to begin to 'read' the Qur'an, for as much as the signs in the external world are dynamic and ecstatic, equally are the internal signs of the Book dynamic and ecstatic. We have alluded to this earlier when we wrote about the prophets, peace be upon them all, existing not only in their historical reality but in their internal hierohistorical reality.

One blessed with knowledge and understanding knows with certainty that all that takes place in the Qur'an takes place within the vastness of one's own self. In this way the Qur'an is not simply a Book revealed 1400 years ago but a Book that is 'revealed' in the eternal present of one's own being. The stories of the prophets and their preaching to the unbelievers do not only report or record historical events but they are the internal perpetual recapitulation of the 'prophets' contained in each self and their preachments to all those unbelieving parts of one's own self that deny the Truth. The floods, the exodus, the hijra, the battles, the angels descending and ascending, the entirety of the Revelation is also an internal event but one reserved to those of knowledge and understanding {'ulu 'albab}.

And it is not only the events but the very words and letters which are composites of our being. Consider carefully the meaning of the words that Sayyidah 'A'ishah, may Allah be content with her, said concerning the nature of her husband, the Unlettered Messenger of Allah, blessings and peace of Allah upon him: "He was the Qur'an walking." Reflect deeply upon the meaning of, "There has come to you a Messenger from your selves {anfusiikum}." {9:128p} In Surah 17 there is a portion of ayah 107 which speaks of those given knowledge {'utu-l-'ilm}: "When they hear it {al-Qur'an} they fall down on their faces prostrating."

Sahl al-Tustari says in his Tafsir, "When the worshipful slave {'abd} truly hears {sami'a} then his inner self {sirr} becomes humble. His heart is illuminated and his limbs and organs {jawarih} become submissive (tadhllul) and they are constrained {inqiyad}." Allah has thus created in each being an outer self {dhahir} and its 'life' is praise {hamd} and thankfulness [shukr] and He has created an inner self [sirr] and its 'life' is remembrance {dhikr}. Both have their duties {huquq} and these are acts of obedience [td 'ah]. In reference to the subject of 'how?' and 'where?' direct witnessing {mushahadah}, contemplation {muraqabah} and seeing {mu'ayanah} take place, al-Tustari says, "Are you not aware that the slave {'abd} sees the Truth [yandhura ila-l-haqq] only due to a subtle substance {latifah} which is connected to his heart {qalb}? It is neither manifest {mukawwanah} nor is it created {makhluqah}.

It is neither united {mawsulah} {to Allah} nor is it separated {maqtu'ah} {from Allah}. It is an absolute secret {sirr min sirr ila sirr} and an ultimate mystery {ghayb min ghayb ila ghayb}." Very few written references exist concerning the science which surrounds the subtle organs {lataif} of the spiritual body that 'hear' and in hearing, say, "We hear and we obey," {2:285} {figures 2, 17 & 18} as this is usually an oral transmission within the core practice of the muraqabah {internal contemplation or watching of the self} {pp 321 -333}.

Earlier {p 72} we made mention of the two dimensions of the physical body {jism and jasad}. Briefly the jism is the body considered in the light of its existence as an animated organism and the jasad is the body considered in the light of its existence as form and dimension. These two aspects of the body have in turn both their inner and outer dimensions. Thus we can say that the outer jism contains the liver, heart, brain, organs of perception and so forth and the inner jism contains subtle organs that are corollaries of the various outer organs but of a refined subtle {latif} nature.

Equally we can speak of the outer jasad which is the multi-dimensional 'form' by which one is recognised and

the inner jasad which is the subtle form {the paradisal body} by which one is 'known' in the spiritual realms. In this instance we will be discussing the inner form of the jism which contains the lataif {organs} which 'read' the signs {ayat} of the four books of revelation: the Qur'an preserved in the mushaf {al-qur'an at-tadwini}, the signs in our selves {nufus}, the signs written in the earth and those which appear on the horizons, the latter three of which are known as al-qur'an at-takwini.

Note: Introduction pp 91-93 notes will be added the End plus seven centers diagram

The first inner organ of perception is the latifah qalabiyyah {the subtle mould; see figures 17 & 18}, the 'Adamic subtle body within the physical body. This subtle body is not the eternal body but rather it, in turn, is the spiritually opaque form connected to the soul {nafs} that veils the true eternal resurrection body or which is connected to the spirit {ruh}.

The latifah qalabiyyah is the vehicle for the self as the eternal body is the vehicle for the spirit and is, in conjunction with the soul {nafs}, the 'barzakh body' between the outer perishable body and the most internal eternal body. It is this combination of the self {nafs} and the subtle matrix {latifah qalabiyyah} which survives the outer perishable body and exists in the interspace {barzakh} between this world and the resurrection world. Through its vital connection with the soul {nafs} we are brought to the second inner organ of perception.

The latifah nafiyyah is the battleground on which the spiritual jihad {mujahadat an-nafs} is fought out, the world in which Sayyidina Nuh, peace be upon him, must build the Ark to survive the internal deluge. We can distinguish eight dimensions of this organ: the unregenerate self {an-nafsu-l-ammara} of uncontrolled desires and passion; the admonishing self {an-nafsu-l-lawwamah} which in simplistic terms is the conscience; the clarified self {nafs safiyyah} representing the self or soul when the admonishing self has overcome the unregenerate self; the inspired self {an-nafs al-mulhamah}

which is the self which is in contact with the fourth subtle organ {latifah sirriyyah}; the pacified or tranquil self {nafs al-mutama'innah} which is in contact with the fifth subtle organ {latifah ruhiyyah}; the contented self {nafs mardiyyah} which is in contact with the sixth subtle organ {latifah khafiyyah}; the accepted self {an-nafsu-r-radiyyah} which is in contact with the seventh subtle organ {latifah haqqiyyah} and the perfected self {an-nafsu-l-kamilah} which is the self in contact with the Self, first in the Malakut and, symmetrically, on the planes of Jabarut, Lahut and Hahut.

The latifah qalabiyyah {the subtle heart} is that organ referred to by the Prophet, blessings of Allah and peace be upon him, when he said, "Within the body is an organ which, when it is sound the entire body is sound, and which, when it is spoiled, the entire body is spoiled." Within it the initial victory over the nafs takes place; it is the 'buffer' between the lower and higher selves. If victory is not won here, there is no access to the higher dimensions of the subtle self except for brief flashes, "As often as it flashes forth they walk in the (light) and when it becomes dark they stand still." {2:20p}

It is within this organ in a process akin to that undergone by 'Ibrahim, peace be upon him, when he comprehended only Allah and neither the stars nor the moon nor the sun were worthy of worship {6:76-80}, that the self gains its first certainty as to the real existence of the True Self and it is within this organ that the 'child' of the True Self is born. It is also this organ that 'resonates' with all of the higher centres and underpins their harmonious functioning.

The latifah sirriyyah, often simply known as the sirr {secret} is the subtle body of hearing and listening to the internal dialogues {munajat} exemplified by "and Allah spoke directly to Musa" {4:163p} and explicated in the Kitab al-Mawaqif Shaykh Muhammad al-Niffari, may Allah preserve his secret, which was a great favourite of Shaykh Abu-l-Hasan. It is the seat of the inspired self {an-nafsu-l-mulhamah} and it is within this centre that 'directions' are issued for the actions of the will after the dropping of self-direction {" isqatu-t-tadabirat}.

The latifah ruhiyyah {subtle spirit} or the 'body' of the tranquil self {nafs al-mutama'innah} is that organ through which one enters into the earthly Paradise to which we have referred on a number of occasions. It is

the 'place' of awakening after the sleep of illusion {wahn} when the self has first died voluntarily in the limited {rather than ultimate} sense of the saying of the Prophet, blessings of Allah and peace be upon him: "Man is sleeping. When he dies he awakens."

It is to the higher organs what the heart is to it and it is the place of bliss in this world as in, "Truly the friends of Allah {'awliya' Allah} are {those} on whom fear {cometh} not nor do they grieve. Those who believe and who are steadfast. Theirs are good tidings in the life of the world and in the world to come. There is no changing the Words of Allah. That is the Supreme Triumph:' {10:62-64} It is from this organ that the Zabur {Psalms} revealed through Sayyidina Dawud, peace be upon him, radiate, reverberate and resonate. Entrance into the latifah khafiyah marks the 'disappearance' or 'hiddenness' from this world which represents a crucial aspect of the doctrine of the Shadhdhuliyah. Its most well-known manifestation is the state of fana' as in "Everything upon it will vanish. Yet still shall there remain the Presence of your Lord, Powerful, Glorious:' {55:26-28}

Note: Introduction pp 91-93 notes will at added the End plus seven centers daigram

It is from this state of fana' that the door of understanding opens to the mighty secret of, "And because of their saying, 'We killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah.' They did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared so to them. And those who disagree concerning this are in doubt of it. They have no knowledge save conjecture. Of a certainty they did not kill him. But Allah took him up unto Himself. Allah is All Mighty, Wise." {4:157}

Perhaps because of this Sidi Abu-l-Hasan said, "All the words in all the books of the mystics are but tears shed on the shore of the sea of non-existence {al-bahru-l-kafiyah}." Shaykh Ibn 'Ata 'Illah says, "Bury your existence in the earth of obscurity for whatever sprouts forth without having first been buried flowers imperfectly."

The return, if there is one, as for some there is no return, takes place within the realm of the the latifah haqqiyyah and it is the sphere of the accepted self {an-nafs ar-radiyyah} in the passive state and the perfected self {nafs kamilah} in the active state. **It is the maqam {station} of Sayyidina Muhammad, blessings of Allah and peace be upon him, and, in time, it is the sublime maqam of the Warith al-Muhammadiyah {the Inheritor of the Muhammadan Essence} who is the Ghawth and the Qutb.**

It is to this maqam which our Shaykh referred in reply to a question concerning his spiritual guide, "In the beginning it was Sidi Abu Muhammad 'Abd as-Salam Ibn Mashish. At present I draw from ten seas, five of the sons of 'Adam and five of spiritual origin. The five 'Adamic are Sayyidina Muhammad and his companions, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali. The five of spiritual origin are Jibril, Mika'il, Israfil, 'Izra'il and ar-Ruh {the Holy Spirit}."

We draw the readers' attention to the distinction between the passive and active dimensions of this station and wish to make clear that these words are not meant in a 'limited' sense but rather represent a hierarchical distinction which refers to the role of the Warith al-Muhammadiyah in his function as Qutb and Ghawth.

At any one time there exist a multitude of selves who, through their total and complete surrender to The Self, have been 'accepted'. These include the three hundred Nuqaba', the forty Nujuba', the seven 'Abdal, the Five Presences of whom we cannot speak, the four Awtad, and the two stationed on either side of the Qutb. All of these are 'passive' in relation to the 'activity' of the Qutb.

In addition there are the Rukkab who are themselves Aqtab but do not 'act' in the outer world though they leave traces of their activities for those receptive enough to note them and can be said to occupy the position of, "Thus did we show 'Ibrahim the kingdom {malakut} of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty." {6:76} For these reasons we say that the mark of the one who 'arrives' in the Way of ash-Shadhdhuli is disappearance rather than appearance; being rather than becoming; presence rather

than assertion; direct knowledge rather than derivative thought.

The Shaykh left spherically encapsulated messages for his followers across both horizontal time and within the veridical vertical present which are encrypted within the Ahzab and, very particularly, encrypted within **Hizb al-Ayat and Hizb ash-Shaykh**. Deciphering is contingent upon learning to read the 'signs' through entering, under guidance, the subtle organs or centres of perception.

If we recall again the story of the encounter that took place in the cave on the Mountain of Light between the Prophet, blessings of Allah and peace be upon him, and the Angel of Revelation, Sayyidina Jibril, peace be upon him, it is to point out that each time he was ordered to 'read' he protested his inability to 'read' until the Angel pressed him to his chest, heart to heart and he began to "Read in the Name of your Lord who created. Created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is Most Generous. He who taught by the Pen. Taught men what they knew not." {96:1 -5} When the Angel had departed he said, "It was as though the words were written on my heart."

For "He has written faith upon their hearts and He has confirmed them with a Spirit from Himself." {58:22} It is this 'writing on the heart' that characterises 'reading' and separates it from mere recitation. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, may Allah be pleased with him, distinguished three levels of readers. The lowest level is that in which the reader feels that he or she is reading the Qur'an to Allah Most High. The reader is standing before Him and Allah is looking at him and listening to what is being read.

At the middle level not only is the reader reading to Allah but he is conversing with Allah, whilst at the highest level he sees the Speaker in the Words to the point that he ceases to exist of himself and is divested of anything or any thought other than Allah. Al-Ghazali says that this is the highest level of those who are drawn near {al-muqarrabun} and at the next level are the foremost {as-sabiqun} and after that the level of those of the people of the right [ashab al-yamin] and that any lesser level is the degree of the people of mindlessness and inattention {al-ghafilun}.

The School of the Shadhdhuliyah: Orisons Vol one Abul Hasan Ash-Shadhdhuli, Abdullah Nur ad-Dir Durkee

The Mystical Teachings of al-Shadhili from Ibn al-Sabbagh's Durrat al-Asrar wa Tufat al-Abarar

translation by Elmer H. Douglas

Hizb ul Bahr - Litany of the Sea

The worthy Shaykh Abu al-'Aza'im Madi ibn Sultan related to me in the city of Tunis, may God the Exalted watch over it, as did also the worthy and blessed Shaykh Sharaf al-Din, son of the Shaykh (al-Shadhili) in the city of Damanhur al-Wahsh of Egypt in the year A.H. 715 that shaykh was on the point of setting out from Cairo to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca a short time after the departure of the pilgrims.

He said, "I have been divinely ordered to go on pilgrimage this year. So find for us a Nile vessel in which to make the journey by way of Upper Egypt:' They looked about for a vessel, but found only one belonging to Christians on which was an elderly Christian man with his sons.

He said, "Let us get on board:' We entered the vessel and set sail from Cairo and traveled for two or three days.

Then the wind shifted so that we were sailing into it. So we tied up to the bank of the Nile at an uninhabited spot. We remained there about a week within sight of the hills of Cairo.

One of the pilgrims accompanying us asked, "How is it that the Shaykh says that he was ordered to perform the pilgrimage this year when the time for it has passed? And how long will this journey take? , In the middle of the day the shaykh slept and awoke, and then offered this prayer [known as Litany of the Sea]. "Where is the captain of the vessel?" he inquired.

"Yes" he answered, "here I am:'

"What is your name?" the shaykh asked. "Mismar:'

"O blessed Mismar, unfurl the sail:' the shaykh ordered.

"O my master:' the captain objected, "[If I do that], we shall come again to Cairo by sailing before the wind:'

"We shall again become travelers:' the shaykh replied, "if God wills:'

Again the captain objected, "This wind will drive us back to Cairo before the end of this day, and, furthermore, with the wind as it is, to get the ship under sail will be absolutely impossible:'

"Unfurl the sail;' the shaykh ordered him, "with the blessing of God:' So we unfurled the sail, and God [He is exalted] commanded the wind so that it shifted and filled the sail [so quickly that they] were unable to cast off the rope from the stake. They cut it and we departed under a gentle breeze. The captain converted to Islam, both he and his brother.

Their father did not cease to lament and say, "I have lost my two sons on, this journey:' "On the contrary;' the shaykh said to him, "you have gained them:'

That night the Christian had a vision in which the day of resurrection, as it were, had come, and he was beholding the Garden and the fire. He witnessed the shaykh (al-Shadhili) conducting to the Garden a large crowd of people. Among them were the Christian's sons. He wanted to follow them, but he was prevented. He was told, "You are not of them until you enter their religion:'

The Christian related that to the shaykh, and he [the Christian] converted to Islam. Then the shaykh told him, "The people whom you saw with me are my companions to the day of resurrection."

We continued our journey easily and successfully with incidents the telling of which would consume a long time. They finished the pilgrimage that year.

My master, Madi, related, according to a report from the shaykh, The Christian became one of the great saints of God. Consequently, he sold his vessel and performed the pilgrimage with us, along with his sons. He had a zawiya (worship place) in Upper Egypt and was one of those who were endowed with charismatic powers. This blessed journey was an occasion for the manifestation of such a power. May God have mercy on him and be pleased with him.

The shaykh said,

By God, I did not utter it [the Litany of the Sea] except as it came from the Prophet of God, from whose instruction I learned it. "Guard it;' he said to me, "for it contains the greatest name of God:'

It is not recited in any place without security reigning there. If it had been with the inhabitants of Baghdad, the Tatars would not have taken the city.

Hizb ul Bahr - Litany of the Sea in English

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Blessings of God and peace be upon our master Muhammad and his family. O God,
O Exalted One, O Gentle One,

O All-Knowing One,

Thou art my Lord, and Thy knowledge is sufficient for me. What an excellent Lord is my Lord! What a wonderful sufficiency is my sufficiency!

Thou plea to Thee is for protection, in movements and moments of rest, in words, desires, and passing thoughts, from doubts, suppositions and fancies-veilings, they, over hearts, occluding sight of the unseen. The faithful were tried; They were severely shaken.

Then the hypocrites would say, with those of disease-ridden hearts, "God and His Messenger promised us only delusion. (Q. 33:11-12)

Even so, make us firm, aid US, and subject to us this sea, as Thou did subject the sea to Moses, and the fire to Ibrahim, and the mountains and iron to David, and the wind, the Satans, and the jinn to Solomon.

Put in subjection to us every sea of thine in earth and heaven, in this domain and the celestial, the sea of this world and the sea of the next. Render subservient to us every thing, "O Thou, whose hand holds sovereignty over every thing" (Q. 23:8).

Kaf ha' ya' 'ayn sad

Kaf ha' ya' 'ayn sad

Kaf ha' ya' 'ayn sad

Help us, for Thou art the best of helpers.

Open to us the hand of mercy, for Thou art the best of openers. Pardon us, for Thou art the best of pardoners.

Be compassionate toward us, for Thou art the best of those who show compassion.

Sustain us, for Thou art the best of sustainers. Guide us and rescue us from the unjust people.

Send us a gentle breeze, as Thou dost know how to do, and let it blow on us from the storehouses of Thy mercy. Let it bear us along as it by miraculous intervention, with security and well-being, in religion, worldly affairs, and the hereafter.

Thou art powerful over all things. God, facilitate for us our affairs, with ease of mind and body, with security and well-being in religious and worldly matters. Be a companion for us on our journey, and a substitute for our households.

Blot out the countenances of our enemies, and transform them where they stand, disabling them from leaving or coming to US. If We willed, We would blot out their eyes. Yet, they would race forward to the path. But how would they see? If We willed, We should transform them where they stand. Thus, they would be unable to leave or return (Q 36:66-67).

Ya' sin! By the Wise Qur' an! Surely thou art one of those sent on a straight path! A revelation sent down by the Mighty, the Merciful, that thou mightest warn a people whose fathers had not been warned. Yet, they do not take heed.

The declaration has been confirmed against the greater part of them. Yet they do not believe. We have circled their necks with chains up to the chin, but they hold their heads high. Before them have We placed a barrier, and behind them a barrier, and We have obscured their vision; so they see not (Q 36:1-)

May their faces be deformed!

May their faces be deformed!

May their faces be deformed!

Let their faces be submissive before the Living, the Self-Subsistent, For he who is laden with wrong has already met frustration. Ta' sin, ha' mim, 'ayn sin qaf. (Q 27:1)

He has released the two seas that meet; Yet between them is a barrier [barzakh] that they do not overpass. ...(Q 55:19-20)

Ha' mim, ha' mim, ha' mim, ha' mim, ha' mim, ha' mim, ha' mim! (Q 40:1)

The affair has been decreed. The triumph has come. Over us they shall not triumph. Ha' mim!

[It is] the sending down of the Scripture from God, The Mighty, the All-Knowing, Forgiver of sin,

Receiver of penitence, Severe in punishing, Forbearing.

No god is there except Him.

To Him is the returning. (Q 40:1-3)

In the name of God (bismillah) is our door. May [God] bless our walls.

Ya' sin (Q 36:1) is our ceiling.

Kaf ha' ya' 'ayn sad (Q 19:1) is our sufficiency. Ha' mim 'ayn sin qaf (Q 42:1) is our shelter.

So God is sufficient for thee against them, for He hears all, knows all.

[Repeat this thrice]

The veil of the throne has been dropped over us, and the eye of God is gazing at us. God is behind them, round about. Indeed, it is a glorious recital [Qur'an], inscribed on a guarded tablet [lawh mahfuz] (Q. 85:20-21).

[Repeat this thrice]

My Protector is God, Who revealed the Book (from time to time), and He will choose and befriend the righteous. (Q. 7:196) [Repeat this thrice]

My sufficiency is God. No god is there except Him. In Him have I put my trust, For He is Lord of the majestic throne (Q. 9:129). [Repeat this thrice]

In the name of God, with whose Name nothing in the earth or sky can do harm, for He is the All-Hearer, All-Knower. [Repeat this thrice]

There is no force and no power except with God, the High, the Mighty.

The book can be bought from either UK and US here is one link to the book

The Mystical Teachings of al-Shadhili from Ibn al-Sabbagh's Durrat al-Asrar wa Tufat al-Abarar translation by Elmer H. Douglas

yes you need to be connected to a Shaykh of Tariqah and many of the Hizbs many spiritual Power that can unlock jinns and cause you problems and that is what Hizbul-Bahr does.!

you may think how is that possible i will explain;

if your ill you go to a doctor will will prescribe you with Medicine this Medicine is for the **Jism- Body**. Now you would go and open a book of medicine and say Ah that's wrong with me and ..mmmmm well that must be the cure and as i'm very weak i'll 1000gms of so-and-so medicine.

the result will be you 'll most likely drop down dead to some to that affect which i sure you will agree with.!

As for Shaykhs of Tariqah they are Also Doctors but of the **Ruh-Soul** more than the **Jism-body** if you tried the same thing you 'll end up not dead or **Mad as a spiritual over dose causings Psychological** problems which are problems for the **Mind and Soul - Ruh** with have been unbalance with the wrong medicine!

i hope that makes sense to you !

you must understand that all Hizbs cause a spiritual well-being over the person they effect ones Nasm-Aura by dressing them with Nur-lights and these lights are Barakah lights glow they with attract and be seen by the unseen and see; they attach you with beauty that the oppsite sex finds you handsome; how you say look At Sayyid Yusuf (as) the attach to you thye shaykhs cause your Aura with cause and they can Smell and see you glowing lights Looked Sayyid Musa (RA) after be came from Mount Sina.

first was Jamal the second was Jalal.! what happens is the Nur-light is a a Heavenly light as the words are powerful Words the Shaykhs were given in a Hal-state they got in the presence of Allah these Hibz reflect that.

so by reciting them attributes of those words refelct on your Aura as well.

Its like going into a Perfume shop and spray all over yourself a beautiful smell, well in dunya is going to attract someone, this is why the Awilya are ao handsome as you see the Beauty of there Dhikr or Hibz glowing off there faces to the effect some of them even give of smells of Rose and this is what our Noble Prophet peace and blessigns did his sweat was sweet Rose.!

Of these Lights and smells attract Angels as well as Good Jinn but if one isn't connected they he isn't protected by the shaykhs in the Unseen world.!

the actual Hizbul Bahr is very very very Powerful that it contains Allahs Hidden Name as well as other powerful words and verses that let off spiritual lights these can effect the reader!

so please this hizb calls on the Unseen World for help and protection for the Read also so now you know.! i think leave at that for now i hope this wasn't tooo much to handle.

finally this last point were **Science Stops Sufism Starts so things** may sound a bit strange to you but just remember that point if nothing else. like flying in the air, turning stone into Gold, becoming invisible and travelling to one place of the earth to another in seconds, minding reading of thoughts, curing a sickness with words and piece of cloth (like Yusuf did for this father Ya' qub who went blind but was cured by this sons Shirt see quran) the list goes on !

the powers of the this Hizb calls on these powers from the Quran itself . sorry i've started again better stop there !

any way in short Please find a Shaykh and him for 'Ijaza to read it to go and take Baya with a Shaykh. if your into Shadhaili i would go and taken Baya Right now with **Sayyid Shaykh Muhammad Ya'qaubi** in Damascus.! or the **Great Master Sayyid Shaykh Nazim** in cyprus

book a flight and go now! now ! now ! dont delay or waste any more of your life without a Shaykh as Satan is they Shaykh.! as it says in a famous quote.! note some people are already connected to a shaykh even so thye havn't taken baya' i thought i'd also mention that also.

any way Salaams any questions .!!!

Yours Muhammad Sajad Ali Qadiri-Noshahi

The Sufi Path is a process Dhikr (remembrance) - Alastu bi-Rabbikum?

The Sufi Path is a process Dhikr (remembrance). In pre-eternity, God asked the spirits: **Alastu bi Rabikum (Am I not your Lord)?** When we come into this material existence, we forget about pre-eternity and the task of life is to remember our way back to the truth concerning the nature of our essential relationship with God.

When Allah created our spirits He said **Alastu Bi Rabbi Kum - Am I not your Rabb ?** We all answered **Balaa**

Imam Junayd, radiya'llahu anhu, said that Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, gathered before the creation of the world all of the spirits, all the arwah, and said, Qur'an 7:172:

Alastu bi-Rabbikum?

They said, "We testify that indeed You are!"

The Rasul, salla'llahu alayhi wa sallim said, "Men are asleep and when they die they wake up." The Sufis are those people among the fuqara' who begin to wake up and who begin to remember from inside themselves, the cells remember an ancient covenant, an ancient contract, that they made before the creation of the world. Their ruh, when it was asked, Alastu bi-Rabbikum? said, "We testify that indeed You are." That is the beginning of the end of something in the Sufi and something new begins which is always in motion. It is always in movement.

and on that day each persons and nations were picked for this times this includes Prophets their follows and saints and there followers is a long story.

So on that day your Shaykh picked you in Pre-Dunya and creation, when we all were at Home in Heaven in the world of Spirits.! the references can be found from Quran Surah 7 when Allah took us all out from Adams Loins and then questioned us Alastu Bi Rabbi Kum - this verse is from Quran we said Balaan- Yes .!

so its a a big day and many things happened and one of them was all shaykhs were appointed and then took to pick there followers.!

So if you take Bayya you will be fulfill that which you did in the world of spirits -'Alam Arwah remember We made a Covnent - a promise which we need to uphold - but we dont remember it it because the nature of Dunya is to forget.! the shaykhs are the Tools to makes us remember that oath we made with them and Allah on that Day.!

thats why the Quran is can a Dhikr- a remembrance you can only call some remembrance if you first made Knowledge of that thing but later forgot;

so the Quran is a message about a state we we once in, in Heaven the prophets are reminding us of that Time and the Shaykhs are now taking us to that time. in a Place called Dunya were e forget easily by Was-was; Sata, Huwa-desires; Nafs-Ego and Dunya these are the 4 ways were are taken away made to forget who and we are and were we came from.! hope that helps !

Knowledge of God by Shaykh Ahmad Ibn Mustafa al-'Alawi

A Sufi commentary on the poem al Murshid al-Mu'in of Ibn al-'Ashir

Section : Book of Fasting

Intro:- Shaykh al-'Alawi has taken a traditional verse poem that is learned by muslims, especially in north Africa, to give a them a summary knowledge of the deen of Islam. By learning it they have the necessary basis in tawid, fiqh and tasawwuf.

When he has finished speaking about the tax and its branches, and it is the third root of Islam, he begins to speak about the fourth root, which is fasting, and he says, may Allah be pleased with him,

Book of Fasting

Fasting in language is to refrain. In the language of the People, it is to refrain from everything except their Beloved. For this station there are obligations, conditions, that which is forbidden, and that which is recommended, as the author explains.

Fasting is obligatory in the month of Ramadan, and fasting is permissible in Rajab and Sha'ban and upon the ninth of Dhu'l Hijja, and also the last of Dhu'l Hijja, also in Muharram on the tenth.

We have seen what the meaning of fasting among the People is, and one of them has said, may Allah be pleased with him,

Fasting is to refrain from seeing otherness My breaking the fast is to return to You.

And another has said,

Through my fast my self has become isolated from other-than-me My tax, by the generosity of overflowing was purified from me.

When the gnostics refrain from other-than-Allah, it is in a special presence, and it is the presence of the essence. This is also expressed as the presence of the kingdom of power. There is no witnessing of the essence in the presence of acts, or names, or attributes. That is why refraining is permissible in this situation. The man of this station is not in a state of gatheredness in most cases, because of disturbances from the waves of names and attributes. These disturbances interfere with the attempt to refrain from other-than-Allah. On the contrary, the Presence of Oneness is exalted above the interference of other matters. Even if the one of this station intends to see otherness, he cannot, because the reality of that Presence does not permit it. If other-than-Allah crosses his heart, he leaves this Presence, and his fast is void. The Sultan of the Lovers has said in this meaning,

If desire of other-than-You crosses my heart from forgetfulness,

I judge myself out of Islam.

This is how the man of this Presence should be, but in the other presences the murid is veiled by the appearance of names and attributes, in which case the witnessing of the essence is recommended to him, if he can. The author said, 'In Sha'ban, it is permissible to fast.' Then he said, may Allah be pleased with him,

Ramadan is confirmed by sighting the crescent or by thirty days before its completion. The obligations

of fasting are intention at night, no sexual intercourse or drinking or eating, no vomiting and nothing reaching the stomach from ear, eye or nose, these take effect from the rising of the dawn to sunset. And being sane at the beginning of it is an obligatory condition. And the one who loses any of it should make it up. The time of menses prohibits fasting and the obligations of the fast must be made up after menses stop.

Since the People have decided on abstinence, and it is obligatory to abstain from other-than-Allah, the self wants to know what the time of obligation is. Then the author says that it is from the time of seeing the crescent. It is as if he were saying,

Whoever of you witnesses the crescent should fast the month.

It is then obligatory on him to refrain from what will break his fast. Know that this vision does not take place on this earth of solidities but in the sky of subtleties. The one who does not raise his head to see outside does not see the hidden kingdom of the heavens and the earth. In most cases, the yearning of the murid is not gathered in the sensory - because it is the cause of changing the heart so that it does not witness the Lord.

In conclusion, this is contrary to the meaning, and that is why the author, may Allah be pleased with him, asked the murid to leave everything that may come to him from the five senses when he says 'no sexual intercourse or drinking or eating. No vomiting and nothing reaching the stomach from ear, eye, or nose.'

Everything that reaches the stomach breaks the fast, and the meaning of stomach is the cave of manifestations of the Lord. This is also expressed as the depth of the heart, and this is also what is called the inner sight, because it changes very quickly, so the murid must protect it as much as he can. This is why you find murids often entering upon Allah by shutting their eyes and gathering their sensory when remembering. That is one of the great means in the path because the yearning of the murid is not gathered except when the sensory is cut off. The sensory is overpowering in the outward. Moulay al'Arabi ad-Darqawi, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'the sensory sucks up the meaning, even if it belongs to Abu'l Hasan ash-Shadhili.' Everything that comes through the sensory to the meaning at the time of annihilation nullifies the abstinence - except if the sensory becomes the source of meaning. This is why the author has brought our attention to this state, and it is rare. The intellect does not arrive at it, but one must have an intellect at its beginning, because he said, 'And being sane at the beginning of it is an obligatory condition.' In its middle and in its end, not being conscious of the intellect is its condition. To arrive at this station is beyond intellects. If the self of the murid is struck by a matter that cuts it off like the blood of menses or of afterbirth, then this matter prohibits the continuation of what the self was doing. The veil is lowered over it because of what stopped it. The self has many things which block it. As soon as a blockage is removed, the murid is obliged to catch up with what he lost at an appropriate time, as the author has mentioned. I ask Allah the Exalted to come between us and obstacles - He is capable of anything He wants. Then he said, may Allah be pleased with him

And touching women is undesirable, and imagining as long as these do not bring liquid out of you, if it does come out, these are forbidden.

The author mentions here what is undesirable for the murid - and that is that something of the sensory should cross his inner eye, fearing that it might be imprinted in his heart and cut him off from his Lord. The author of the Hikam said, 'How can a heart be enlightened when the shape of the cosmos is imprinted on it?' The smallest matter influences the heart. This is why the murid must not be lazy in that matter, rather he should be a guardian by the door of his heart. He should do as one of the People have done, 'I stood guardian by the door of my heart for forty years. Whenever something other-than-Allah crossed it, I threw it out.' This is how the murid should be. Then he said, may Allah be pleased with him,

And undesirable is tasting from a pot, and idle talk, and vomiting if it overpowers, and flies - these are forgiven. The dust of a craftsman, or from a road, and cleaning the mouth with dry siwak, and to rise in the morning in need of the ghusl.

The author here mentions things that are undesirable for the murid, and things that are forgiven if they happen to him without intention. If he intends them, then they are undesirable. If he stops with them, then they

become forbidden - as we have previously seen. Whatever comes out of the sensory goes to the meaning. Certain sensory things come before the murid on his path. If he leaves them, then there is no harm. But if he pays the slightest attention to them, then they are undesirable.

If he stops with them, then they are forbidden. We have seen before that the sensory is opposed to the meaning. The murid wants to leave everything. If he stops with something then it cuts him off from Allah. It is enough to see what the author has said, expressed as flies or dust of the path. It has reached us that one of the Shaykhs ordered his students to leave the sensory, meaning to strip away. The murid left everything that he owned except what he needed to cover himself, and one needle with which to repair his clothes. Opening did not come to him. Then he asked his Shaykh why that was. The Shaykh replied, 'if one needle is left to the murid, it bars him from Allah.' The murid flung it away and received the opening instantly. This is an example in the stripping away of the sensory. Alongside it is the stripping away of the meaning. The one who has the least of things imprinted on his heart, even if it is a hair from his body, that hair becomes tremendous and it veils him from his Lord. O Allah! Gather us to You and come between us and other-than-You. Amin. Then he said, may Allah be pleased with him,

One intention is enough, because of its succession except if it is broken by a matter that breaks the fast.

This means that there are many things that cut one off. We cannot limit them. Nor can we leave these things one by one. Even if one wants to do so, they come one after another, as the author has mentioned. From this we understand that one single intention is enough for the murid to gather with in it the whole of the universe and what is in it, and to leave it by his heart. This is the one of the easiest paths to Allah. As one of the People has said,

Say: Allah! And leave existence and what it contains. If you desire to reach perfection.

Everything that comes upon the murid which breaks his fast, is within the Throne - outside it he finds nothing which breaks his fast. Even if he intends the sensory, he finds no substance for it, because the place is a place of disconnection. The Sultan of the Lovers has said, may Allah be pleased with him,

Purity, and no water. Subtlety, and no air.

Light and no fire. Spirit and no body.

Breaking the fast is impossible as long as the sensory is absent, unless he returns by himself. If he returns by his Lord, then that is what was required of him, and is expressed as the festival. Breaking the fast then is obligatory - to return to the sensory and to look at it. One only leaves it because it nullifies the obligation. Once it becomes obligatory, we must fulfill the obligatory, wherever we find it. We observe Allah wherever we know Him. The murid comes out of the sensory fearing to touch it and to take pleasure from it, lest he be veiled from his Lord. But if the sensory is the source of the meaning, or we would say, the screen of manifestation, then he should not leave it. The sensory becomes to him like the mountain of Musa, upon whom be peace. He finds it in intimacy. Musa, upon whom be peace, asked for the vision of disconnection before the one of connection, which is the one of the sensory. And, Allah the Exalted said,

Look at the mountain. If it remains in its place, you will see Me.

When it was realised in the sensory, or we can say in the world of connection, he became independent by that from the meaning. Or, we say, from the world of disconnection. He said that in the sensory and the meaning, and in connection and disconnection, wherever you turn, there is the face of Allah.

One of our brothers has said, 'I opened the outward and I found the inward. I realised the inward and it is the outward. There is no inwardness to what is inward and no outwardness to what is outward. I found it, taken from His saying, the Exalted,

I am the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward.'

When the murid becomes realised in this meaning, that is, annihilation in His name, the Inward - until he finds that He is the source of the outward, then he must return to this facet immediately. If he does not return to it immediately - for example he knows Him in disconnection and he does not know him in connection, or, we say, he knows Him in the meaning and not in the senses - then he is defining place and direction and does not know it. The author said,

It is permitted to hurry the breaking of the fast, and it follows, to delay the meal before beginning the fast.

The benefit for the murid is in leaving the world completely - that is where he used to witness it as existent in itself. When he finds out that the world is attributed neither with existence nor non-existence, he finds himself veiled from Allah by something that does not exist.

Ibn 'Ata'llah, may Allah be pleased with him, said 'What proves to you the existence of His overpowering, praise belongs to Him, is that He veiled you from Him with that which does not exist with Him.' This is why you find most of the gnostics at their end being intimate with creation, as they used to reject it at the beginning, and to be intimate only with the retreat, until all of existence becomes a retreat to them. There is nothing in existence except the One - and that One is the goal in essence. I have said in this meaning,

I used to think before today that my goal was distant. He is with me in creation, and I am slow.

We see the earth, the heaven, everything as slaves,

We see the light - and also darkness, and the veil is sharp.

I have left Him in the outward and sought increase While I thought my opinion was to the point.

In conclusion, the murid is required to return to the sensory as soon as he knows, in the same way that he was required to leave the sensory at the beginning. He left it because of the existence of the illness - and sickness is with the one who is ill, whether he exists or not. This is why Sidi Muhyid-din has said, may Allah be pleased with him,

The essence is not grasped in any other way

Even if man-is destroyed from so much watchfulness.

Then the author said, may Allah be pleased with him,

The one who has eaten during the obligatory fast should make it up and add to it a fast of two months without stopping or to feed sixty poor people, if he intentionally broke his fast in Ramadan - by eating or drinking, or by releasing sperm - even if only through imagining or to refuse what was established.

Here he mentions the one returning to creation, before one is drowned in the witnessing of the Real. He confirmed them, after abstinence from them -meaning he broke his contract and his fast after declaring that he would not return to creation except if he returns to creation by Allah, but he returns by himself. This is why the author has said, The one who has eaten during the obligatory fast should make it up and add to it.'

This means that it is obligatory upon him in the shari'a of the People to fast two months without stopping or to feed sixty people - he must abstain again from whatever disobedience had occurred that broke the contract. He must leave the sensory and drown in the meaning completely. He must not return to creation except if he is certain that it is hidden and veiled, and he knows with certainty from himself that he will not return to it, and that everything has clearly been removed from his heart, to such an extent that it does not even cross his

intellect, as the author has said, 'even if only through imagining, or to refuse what was established', meaning he rejects what he established intentionally.

Such a one does what we have mentioned, if he returns to the cosmos and confirms it without any hurried resolution. But if he returns by himself, he has made a hurried resolution. He thinks he has arrived at the goal. But the contrary is proven. There is no harm, but he should return to what he was doing, and he must not make a resolution like this again. The knowledge of the People is built upon certainty which has been double-checked. It is not based upon imaginings, whether by hurried or slow resolutions. When he has finished speaking about this, and has shown us how the law applies to the one who returns from obligatory abstinence, he shows us the law about one who breaks a recommended abstinence, and he says,

And to intentionally break a nafila fast without sickness is forbidden and one must repay it. He should repay it by fasting two months in succession or free a slave who is muslim. And it is preferable to feed sixty poor people a dry measure of about 20 kilos to each from the most abundant foodstuff.

We have seen before that for the murid to abstain from other-than-Allah in a presence that is connected with names and attributes is difficult in most cases. The witnessing of the essence is not obligatory on him in this world before his knowledge of its root, because of the multiplicity of manifestations of names and attributes. If it happens that he becomes confirmed in witnessing in this world before leaving it, then that is what is needed, and he must abstain from seeing otherness and remain that way even though abstinence is not obligatory for him.

It is not necessary that he leave what he is doing to be occupied with another matter so that he exchanges what is less for what is better. Allah the Blessed and Exalted has drawn attention to this, in relation to the one who is not satisfied with one type of food, meaning the unity of the essence, and wants other than that of created beings. He said, the Exalted,

Would you exchange what is higher for what is lower? Go down to Egypt, thus you shall get what you demand.

What we understand from 'Egypt' is the seat of the self, and of what is in it of hidden desires and manifest desires, which Allah the Exalted indicated by His saying,

Of that which the earth grows, of its herbs and its cucumbers and its corn and its lentils and its onions.

All the desires of the self are connected with the existence of humiliation. This is why Allah sent to them degradation and poverty and they gained only the anger of Allah. There is no degradation except with the existence of the self.

There is no might except with the existence of intimacy. This is why it is said that if you want might without end, do not display might that ends. As for the saying of the author 'and pay it up by fasting two months', we have already spoken of this matter. It is desirable for the murid to return to Allah so as to repair the damage, and hurry to find something that will heal his brokenness so that he does not fall in the opinion of Allah because he broke the contract of Allah in the Presence of Allah. The damage that the murid did before entering the Presence of Allah usually does not harm him because he was distant from Allah, contrary to the one on the carpet - expansion is feared for him, that is, that he should become casual. Know then, that if the murid falls into this and breaks the contract with Allah and nullifies his fast, then he must return immediately to Allah the Blessed and Exalted with a heart that hands over. He must ask Him through the means of His beloved ones whose hearts are sound, noble and generous.

He must tell them about his state and weep. He must ask them to return him to his station. He must be generous to them and feed them as much as he can because they are the ambassadors of Allah, as the author puts it 'it is preferable to feed sixty poor. . .' meaning that if he gathers from his brothers who know of his state, sixty, there is bound to be one among them who is accepted by Allah. And if he asks Allah, He will answer him, and this brother will take him to Allah, and his brokenness will be repaired. The one who belongs

to Allah, Allah is on his side.

Knowledge of God By Shaykh al-'Alawi.

A Sufic commentary on al Murshid al-Mu'in of ibn al-'Ashir.

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/ABewley/books.html>

Edited by 'Abd as-Sabur al-Ustadh. Translated by 'Abd al-Kabir al-Munawarra & 'Abd as-Sabur al-Ustadh. 1981. 384pp.p/back, UK .

A lucid and profound exposition of the gnostic science that lies at the heart of Sufism. A Guidebook to Khalwa, spiritual retreat, preparing the murid by the doctrine of Unity for the experiences that will befall him in the self-shattering annihilation he desires. Shaykh al-'Alawi has taken ibn al-'Ashir's verse poem, itself a summation of Islamic teachings, and made it a vehicle for making plain the unitary knowledge, the hidden doctrine, that lies beneath every phenomenon of outer wisdom. Thus he is able to unveil from even the lowest functions of cleaning the body an exalted meaning which indicates the Oneness of his Lord. Above all, this is a book of action constantly returning the gnostic traveller to slavehood, covering over his secrets and concealing the intoxicating knowledge that he gained. It confirms the simple qualities of correct moral behaviour that are the hallmark of the great.

The Introduction to al-Mawadd al-Ghaythiyyah by Shaykh al-Alawi of Mostaghanem

This is Shaykh al-Alawi's introduction to his commentary on the Hikam of Abu Madyan al-Ghawth

Al-Mawadd al-Ghaythiyyah ?Ī an-Nashi'ati 'ani'l-Hikam al-Ghawthiyyah

(Help-giving Materials arising from the Ghawth's Hikam) Shaykh Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-'Alawi

After mentioning the Name and seeking refuge with the Named, Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-'Alawi says with conviction and resolution, praising the One Who is manifest by the vastness of His essence in power and judgement, and Who has removed Himself far from impurity and association in the self-manifestations of His attributes in wisdom and knowledge. He is the First and the Last, the Outwardly Manifest and the Inwardly Hidden in the earth and the heaven. Whomever He singles out for His presence witnesses Him, and the deaf denier is ignorant of Him.

I witness that there is no god but Allah with the witnessing of unveiling and certainty, which heals rancour and cools vehement thirst. Glory be to Him, majestic is His majesty, that describers should describe Him, or that they should circle around that protected zone. If it were not for the graciousness of Allah towards His creatures, and His mercy to them none of those who dispute His authority would remain, because He would cause the earth to swallow them up or drop the sky upon them, or the winds would annihilate them and leave them deaf and blind after they had been accustomed to hearing and seeing. But glory be to Him for a compassionate pitying God. His will precedes His causing to come into existence and His mercy precedes His anger, so that all is blessed and established in His liberal generosity. Intellects are exhausted at grasping His reality, and thoughts are incapable of encompassing anything of His knowledge, "He encompasses everything in mercy and knowledge."

I thank you, O Allah, for that gnosis of Your well-guarded secret which You have generously and forbearingly entrusted to us and given us. I ask You by Your liberal generosity to preserve us in that which You have given as a gift to us with a preservation and a protection which will not leave any illusion; and I seek Your help that You will rain down upon us from the clouds of mercy, and that you will help us, with a strength from You, to be steadfast and resolute and that You will protect us from the evils of our selves in that which we forget or in which we make mistake or which we do unjustly, deliberately or out of ignorance, out of hostility on our part

or wrongdoing, and that You show mercy to us if we are worthy of it, and if not, then You are worthy of forgiving and showing mercy to every one who is affiliated to You or depends on You.

I ask You that You bless and exalt and send blessings to the measure of Your capacity and to the measure of the vastness of Your essence upon Your Messenger, in spirit and in body to the measure of those blessings of which he is worthy and of miraculous ennoblements with which he is pleased, and as much as befits his loftiest station, and upon his family and companions, his descendants and his wives, as long as the earth and the heaven endure, and upon his ummah, the elect of them and the generality, as You sent blessings and barakah upon Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. How could that not be, when You have said, and Your word is the truth, paying tribute and teaching us and honouring the rank of Your Chosen Prophet and exalting him, "Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe send blessings on him, and send him greetings of peace a great deal."

Before I begin what I intend to do I must mention two introductions: the first, on the reasons for the commentary on the book and for dividing it into sections; the second, comprises an introduction to the author and some biographical notices. My success is only by Allah and upon Him I depend and to Him I turn in penitence.

First Introduction: the reasons for the commentary on the book and for dividing it into sections.

Allah is sufficient for me in that which I have written, the praise is for Him and by Him help is sought, His is the grace in that which I have outlined. We have done nothing except clarify, and I seek forgiveness of Allah for that which I mention, for we have no hand nor tongue, His is the creation and the command, for in every thing there is an affair and an affair.

That which ought specifically to be mentioned is our concern for these noble wisdoms, so I say that it is sixteen years since these wisdoms fell into our hands and into the hands of a body of the brothers guiding us in our journey to Allah in the stations of ihsan. We gained revival of our spirits through study of them, and the breasts increased in expansion because of those realities and gentle subtleties which it contains, for realities are clarified in it very fully. How many a disobedient one is checked by its remonstrances, and how many a confused one its expressions take by the hand, particularly his saying, may Allah be pleased with him, "When the Truth appears nothing other than Him remains with Him." How much he indicated the manifestation of realities and the falsity of restricted [meanings], and how much he showed travellers the right way to the meaning of arrival and the reality of tawhid, and how much he made the desirous to yearn, and counselled the neglectful, and there is no increase to be made in his counsel, so that he said, "Whoever cannot be patient in accompanying his Lord, Allah will try with the company of the slaves." What a wise man he was who undertook that which was his duty. We are only bound to model ourselves on him and the likes of him, "Those are the ones whom Allah guided, so by their guidance be guided."

This is that with which we must concern ourselves and which we must desire, even if those who devote themselves to its service are few. Even if some are occupied with it, it doesn't fulfil its object and, in the main, it hinders worshippers from benefitting from it and seekers being ennobled by its study as they are ennobled by other works. However the sun must have clouds which is a part of Allah's bounty to it. When we read it I immediately said, because of my zeal for it, "If Allah extends my life and takes me in hand by His bounty, completes His blessing upon me as is His characteristic, if He expands my breast, loosens the knot from my tongue, and makes my speech understood so that I may be able to make clear some of that which it contains, then I will make a commentary for the blessing of it, and in honour of his rank." After my vow some time elapsed and I forgot that which I had promised Allah until He woke me, subhanahu wa ta'ala, by the tongue of one of the beloveds who said, "You must fulfil that which you promised Allah, and you must undertake the service of this wali, and you are obliged to do it. 'Allah helps the slave as long as the slave is helping his brother'. That is only forgetfulness on your part and a shortcoming with respect to Him. I tell you that it will find wide acceptance among people." At that, his concern moved me into action, and I worked by His permission, for Allah recompenses whoever does good or commands it, and how can that not be when 'the one who points out good is as the one who does it'?

When I realised that I had to make a commentary on it, I resolved to enter the ocean from its shore in order to

bring out for it a garment of its own class, and to present it with a gift of its own description, even if I was not one of its people, for whoever sits with the perfumer becomes fragrant with his perfume. There is no avoiding our saying that we have a portion of its taste, and the favour is Allah's, there is no one to withhold His bounty, 'When Allah bestows a blessing on His slave He loves that it should be seen on him'. I hope from Allah that it will benefit me and that it will be of benefit, and that we will be a reason for its acceptance and its publication. At least we will be honoured with its service, for the genitive noun is honoured by the nobility of the noun by which it is governed because of his words, may Allah show mercy to him, "Whoever sits with the people of dhikr is alerted to his distraction, and whoever serves the people of right action benefits from his service." Serve them even if you cannot fulfil what is due to them For the ignoramus serves his Highness the Sultan. It is no wonder if you preserve some of their speech For commentators preserve the words of the Qur'an

Moreover, know that I have arranged these wisdoms differently from their original arrangement hoping by that to complete the benefit, since I have arranged them in sections according to the stations and the requirements of the sayings. Every wisdom I have gathered together with its own type in a reasonable way, to awaken the desire of the reader and to make it simple for him so that he will not become tired and so that if he wants to study a section he will find that which accords with his wish and more. I did not find the wisdoms intelligently arranged, rather each copy differed from its sister in transmission. So I undertook to unite what I stumbled across along with correcting its ascription to the author, may Allah be pleased with him, to the extent of my capacity and of my own judgement. When I had gathered it, it wasn't clear to me how I should proceed with beginning the book. One whose counsel ought to be acted upon indicated to me that I should make it in sections, and that I should put each phrase among its own kind. After I had sought permission of our Master the author in my heart, the mercy of Allah be upon him, it seemed certain to me that was the best course, because the first of the wisdoms is not judged in comparison with the last of them, rather it is the wisdom itself that is taken as an admonition, so it is different from composition.

The explanation of that difference is that in composition a fitting relationship between the thing written and what is written after it is stipulated, as long as the section continues to the end of the speech.

That is not a precondition of wisdoms. The wisdom is only considered with respect to itself, and so for this reason it is said, "Sages' lights precede their words." Even if the sage were to be occupied with placing one wisdom after another, and he undertook to make clear the relation between them he would have gone out of the abundance of making known and he would have entered into the gathering together of composition. For that reason the structure of wisdoms is different from the structure of composition. On that basis a precondition of wisdoms is the composition of speech, and there is nothing wrong with arranging wisdoms in an arrangement other than their received structure as long as the wisdom remains in its original condition.

Moreover, you should know that hikam is the plural of hikmah, which is a word comprising "a meaning by which benefit is attained". Other things have been said in explanation of it. I was told the number of the wisdoms at the beginning of being occupied with them, and they are approximately one hundred and seventy. I have arranged them in eighteen sections as they indicated:

First section: on the self and its treatment.

Second section: on his forbidding keeping company with the worst of people.

Third section: on his forbidding accompanying people who make claims.

Fourth section: introducing the Shaykh of instruction.

Fifth section: on useful knowledge.

Sixth section: on dhikr and sitting with the people of dhikr.

Seventh section: on fear and watchfulness (muraqabah).

Eighth section: on surrender and committing one's affairs to Allah.

Ninth section: on dependence on Allah, mighty is He and majestic.

Tenth section: on need and its virtues.

Eleventh section: on doing-without and contentment.

Twelfth section: on sincerity.

Thirteenth section: on love and longing.

Fourteenth section: on the appearance of tawhid and the annihilation of the slaves.

Fifteenth section: on the states of the people after their annihilation.

Sixteenth section: on their sayings after their annihilation.

Seventeenth section: on their actions and their constancy.

Eighteenth section: on obscurity and its virtues,

and success is by Allah.

Second Introduction: introducing the author, some of his biography and his virtues, may Allah show mercy to him.

Know, may Allah grant us and you the grace of loving the Awliya of Allah who are gnostics, that the excellent qualities of the author, may Allah be pleased with him, are too numerous to be counted, and too magnificent to be capable of being exhausted. His fame is not hidden from the person of insight. However, we must mention something in summary.

I say that there is no avoiding the fact that Sidi Abu Madyan is one of the people of excellence. His name is Shu'ayb ibn Ahmad ibn Ja'far ibn Shu'ayb. His honorific is Abu Madyan and he was named thus after his son Sidi Madyan who possessed many well known excellences and is buried in Cairo, may it be protected, in the Jumu'ah mosque of Shaykh Abdalqadir ad-Dashtuti, may Allah be pleased with him, by the cistern on the bare ground outside the walls close to the eastern parts of Cairo. On it there is a great dome and it is a grave which is much visited, and about whose merit most visitors bear witness.

As for the author, may Allah be pleased with him, his grave is in Tlemcen and I will speak further about it. He, may Allah be pleased with him, was handsome, accomplished and well-mannered, humble, doing-without, scrupulous and serious. He encompassed the noble qualities of character, good heartedness, and abstinence from the world. Something which will show you his doing-without, scrupulousness and his total dedication to Allah is that which is narrated of him in his wisdoms, of which there is his saying, may Allah be pleased with him, "Need (faqr) is a light as long as you conceal it. When you make it public its light departs." He also said, "Every needy person to whom taking is more beloved than giving is lying; he has not smelt the scent of need." He used to say, may Allah be pleased with him, "Whoever is occupied with the world will be tried with humiliation in it." He used to say, "The heart has only one direction which whenever it faces it it is absent from other than it."

The rest of his wisdoms will come. Each wisdom ought to be written with liquid gold. There is no doubt that his state exceeded his words because the gnostic is higher than that which he says. The Shaykhs of his age were unanimous in exalting him, as is everyone who followed after them down to our own day. The source of help for this party, Sidi Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mursi, may Allah be pleased with him, when he was asked about his station said, "I went around in the Malakut of Allah and then I saw Sidi Abu Madyan clinging to the leg of the Throne, and he was at that time a man who was of a ruddy complexion and blue-eyed. I said to him, 'What are

your sciences? What is your station?' He said, 'My sciences are seventy-one in number. As for my station it is the fourth of the four khulafa, and the leader of the seven Abdal.'" He was asked, may Allah be pleased with him, about his station and he said, "My station is the station of slavehood, and the sciences of Godhood. My attributes are replenished from the Divine attributes. His sciences fill my secret and my public. His light illuminates my land and my sea. The one who is drawn near is the one who knows Him. No one ascends high except for he who is given a sound heart which is safe from other than Him. There is nothing in the container except that which his Master placed in it. Without doubt, the heart of the gnostic pastures in the Malakut, 'And you will see the mountains which you think are solid and they pass by like clouds'." (Surat an-Naml: 90)

It is narrated that Shaykh Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Hajjaj al-Maghribi said, may Allah be pleased with him, "I heard our Shaykh, Shu'ayb Abu Madyan, may Allah be pleased with him, saying in his assembly, 'Every Badal is in the grasp of the gnostic, because the kingdom of the Badal extends from the heaven to the earth, and the kingdom of the gnostic is from the Throne to the bed. What are the excellent qualities of the Badal in respect to the excellent qualities of the gnostic but as a gleam of a dazzling flash of lightning? The degree of gnosis is only drawing nearer to the divine presence and closer to the assembly of absolute purity.' Then he said, 'Tawhid is a secret whose affair encompasses both realms of being'." He said, "When it was night I slept and there I was with Shaykh Abu Madyan in a gathering of the gnostics, may Allah be pleased with them. I said to him, 'Tell me the reality of your secret in your tawhid.' He said, 'My secret is happy with secrets refreshed from divine oceans which it is not proper to make public except among their people, since indication is incapable of describing them, and jealousy refuses anything but concealing them. They are secrets which encompass existence, and which no one grasps except for one who has lost his country, or who exists in the world of the reality by his secret, revolving in eternal life, and he is by his secret doing tawaf in the space of the Malakut, and pasturing in the canopies of the Jabarut which have been created by the Names and Attributes, and he has been annihilated from them by witnessing the Essence. There is my residence and my homeland, the stillness of my eye and my dwelling, and the Truth, mighty is He and majestic, is independent of every one. He has manifested the wonders of His power in my existence, and turned with protection and grace towards me, and unveiled what was concealed of realisation for me. My life stands by Oneness, and my indication is of uniqueness. My spirit is firmly established in the Unseen. My angel says to me, 'O Shu'ayb, every day is new for the slaves and with Us there is increase.'" It was said to me, "O Abu Madyan, may Allah increase you in His lights'." He said, "When it was morning, I went to Shaykh Abu Madyan and told him about this event, and he confirmed it to me and did not reject any of it."

As for his upbringing and his residence, and the date of his birth, he was born in Andalus in 492 AH/1098 CE. After his upbringing he went to Fez and learnt fiqh there, and dwelt there for a period until he had gathered what he needed. He read aloud to a large number of shaykhs, of whom there was the very learned hafidh, Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan ibn Ghalib from whom he took the majority of what he obtained. He used to say, may Allah be pleased with him, "At the beginning of my affair and of my study with the shaykhs, whenever I heard the commentary of an ayah or the meaning of a hadith, I used to be content with it and I would go aside to an empty area outside of Fez which I took as a shelter to work with what Allah had opened to me. Whenever I was alone in it a gazelle would come to me to take shelter with me and it would be tame towards me. I used to pass along the path and the dogs of the village adjoining Fez would go around me and wag their tails at me. One day when I was in Fez, there was a man from among my acquaintances from Andalus who greeted me and I returned his greeting. I wanted to show him hospitality and so I sold a robe for ten dirhams, and sought him out in order to pay them to him, but I could not find him there. I kept them with me and went out to my place of retreat as was my custom. I passed my village and the dogs opposed me and prevented me from passing, until someone came out of the village and interposed himself between me and them. When I reached my retreat the gazelle came to me as usual, but when she smelt me she fled from me, and refused to know me. I said, 'This thing which is happening to me is only happening because of the dirhams which I have with me.' I threw them away from me and the gazelle was still, and returned to how she had been with me. When I went back to Fez I took the dirhams and met the Andalusian and gave them to him. Then later I passed the village on my way to my retreat, and the dogs went around me and wagged their tails as usual, and the gazelle came to me as usual and smelt me from the parting in my hair to between my feet, and was tame towards me. I remained in that condition for a period."

When he, may Allah be pleased with him, had finished being occupied with outward knowledge he raised his

aspiration towards that which is beyond that of the purification of the inward, and he took the realities from their people. He said, may Allah be pleased with him, "When I heard of the miracles of Sidi Abu Ya'za al-Maghribi and his excellent qualities were repeated within my hearing, my heart filled with love at the beauty of his life story, and I went to see him with a group of fuqara. When we reached him he turned towards the whole group except for me. When the food came he prevented me from eating with them. I stayed in that condition for three days. Hunger consumed me, and I became bewildered by thoughts which would occur to me. I said to myself, 'When the Shaykh stands up from his place I will roll my face in it.' He stood up and I rolled my face and stood up, and I could not see anything. I continued for two nights weeping. The morning after that the Shaykh called me, may Allah be pleased with him, and drew me close to him. I said to him, 'Sidi, I have become blind, and now I do not see anything.' He rubbed his hand over my eyes and my sight returned to me. Then he rubbed my chest and those thoughts left me, and I lost the pain of hunger. At that moment I witnessed wonders of his blessings. Then later I sought his permission to go and visit the Exalted House, and he gave me permission. He told me, 'You will meet a lion on your way, so do not let it frighten you. If fear overcomes you, say to it, "By the inviolability of the people of the Light, if you don't leave me?"' and it happened as he had said.

From there he went to the east, may Allah be pleased with him. The traces of wilayah appeared upon him. He learnt from noted people of knowledge, and received much benefit from the people of doing-without and the people of right action of the east. As for Shaykh 'Abdalqadir al-Jili, may Allah be pleased with him, he met him at 'Arafah and kept his company. He read many ahadith out to him in the noble Haram, and he dressed him in the patched robe of Tasawwuf, and entrusted some of his secrets to him, and ornamented him with the clothing of lights. Sidi Abu Madyan, may Allah be pleased with him, used to be proud of having kept his company and would count him as one of the greatest of his shaykhs.

When he returned from his Hajj and from his wanderings none permitted him to reside but Bijayah where he settled. He used to say, "It is specifically recommended for one who is seeking the halal." He continued there, his state increasing in exaltation with the passing of nights and days. Deputations and people in need would come to him from every horizon. He had visionary knowledges and unveilings.

When his affair became widely known and news of him became very public, some of the scholars of outward knowledge misrepresented him to Ya'qub al-Mansur. They said, "One is afraid of him concerning your state, because he resembles the Mahdi (meaning the Imam Mahdi) and he has many followers in most of the provinces." A fear entered his heart, and he became concerned about him. He sent for him to come to him so that he could examine him, and he wrote to the members of his state in Bijayah counselling them to be careful of him and to convey him in the best manner. When the Shaykh prepared to travel, that was hard for his companions, and they changed and spoke with him about that. He made them be silent and said to them, "My desire has approached, and I have been decreed for the graves of that place, and there is no avoiding it. I have grown old and weak, and am not able to move. Allah, exalted is He, has sent me someone who will convey me to Him gently and will send me to Him in the best way. I will not see the Sultan and he will not see me." The hearts of the fuqara became at ease at that, and they realised that it was one of his miracles. They travelled with him in the best state until they reached the vicinity of Tlemcen. Rabitah al-'Ubbad appeared and he said, may Allah be pleased with him, to his companions, "What a good place to sleep!" A sickness came upon him. When he arrived at Wadi Yusr the pain became very severe. They alighted with him there after he had said to his companions, "Let us alight. What do we and the Sultan have to do with each other! This night we will visit the brothers." Then later he alighted in the vicinity of Tlemcen. The night of his entrance he faced the Qiblah, repeated the Shahadah, and said, "Here, I have come! 'And I have hastened to You my Lord so that You might be pleased' (Surah Ta-Ha: 82)." Then he said, "Allah is the Truth," and his spirit departed. They carried him to al-'Ubbad, which is a village close to Tlemcen and he was buried there. His burial was a great event and a noble assembly. That day Shaykh Abu 'Ali al-Habbak turned in tawbah. It has been said that the Imam Mansur was punished because of him some days later.

His death was in the year 573 AH/1177 CE. He was more than eighty years old. Those who have concerned themselves with information about him transmit that supplication at his grave is answered. A group have tested that. One of those who proved it was Sidi Muhammad al-Huwari in the book at-Tanbih. Our master, Sidi Muhammad al-Buzidi, may Allah be pleased with him, often used to tell us to visit him. He would speak

highly of him and say that supplication at his grave is answered. He used to say, "The cause of my journeying to Morocco was his blessings and by his idhn. That was because I spent a night at his grave after having recited some Qur'an, and suddenly there he was, may Allah be pleased with him. He had come to me with along with one of my grandfathers. They both greeted me, and then he said, 'Go to Morocco! I have made it easy for you.' I said to him, 'Morocco has many poisons and snakes, and I cannot live there.' He began to rub his blessed hand over my body and he said to me, 'Go and do not fear. We will protect you from what comes unexpectedly to you.' I woke up terrified. From his grave I went straight to Morocco, and there I managed to meet Shaykh Sidi Muhammad ibn Qudur, may Allah be pleased with him."

One of those things which I witnessed of the virtue of visiting him is that once I wanted to go Tlemcen to fulfil some important necessities, and so I asked permission of the Shaykh, may Allah be pleased with him, for that. He gave me permission and told me to visit Sidi Abu Madyan. When I got to Tlemcen rain and extreme cold prevented me from visiting him. I spent almost seven days for the sake of that which I had gone there. That became extremely difficult for me in every respect. On the seventh day I remembered the visit to the Shaykh, may Allah be pleased with him, and I said to myself that I had to go there since my master had told me to visit him. I went to his grave and sought the blessing of its threshold. Then I returned to my place and slept that night. When the morning was clear, one of our beloved ones came to me and said, "Rejoice in the discharge of your need!" I said, "From where has that come?" He said to me, "Because Sidi Abu Madyan came to me yesterday in a dream and said to me, 'Say to so and so "Your need has been discharged".'" The story wasn't over before someone came to us to tell us of the completion of what I had intended. So I learnt that the Shaykh, may Allah be pleased with him, is one of those whom by visiting one receives benefit.

As for his admonition, may Allah be pleased with him, and his speech they pervaded the hearts, particularly those of the people of love and longing, to the extent that some died in his gatherings. He did not come out to people nor was he occupied in reminding them until he was told to do that. It is narrated of him that he remained in his house for almost a year without meeting anyone and only going out for the Jumu'ah. People gathered at the door of his house and asked him to talk with them. When they forced him he came out, and as he did so some sparrows which had been on his roof fled, and he went back in after having come out. He said, "If I was in the correct state to give discourse the birds would not have fled from me." He remained in his house for another year. Then when he came out they did not fly away from him, and so he began to talk to people. It is said that birds used to circle around his assembly, and that some of them would fall dead.

As for his tariqah it was on a strong foundation, for he took hold of the shari'ah and commanded it. One of his wisdoms is his saying, "There is no way to Allah except by the door of following the Messenger."

Many people benefitted from him. It has been narrated about him that almost three hundred gnostics of Allah, over and above people of right action, came out of his circle. Abu 'Abdullah al-Fasi the Lesser mentioned in al-Minah al-Birriyah (Solicitous Gifts) in his words on the way of Shaykh Abu Madyan, may Allah be pleased with him, the following: "Three hundred Qutbs came out of his circle apart from people of right action." He used to say in his assembly, "The Shaykh is the one who shapes you by his qualities of character, and teaches you courtesy by his lowering his gaze, and illuminates your inwardness by his luminosity."

It is said that a man entered in order to raise an objection against him and sat down in the circle. The one whose turn it was began to recite, but the Shaykh said, "Wait a little." Then he turned to the man and said to him, "Why have you come?" He said to him, "In order to take a portion of your light." The Shaykh said to him, "What is that in your pocket?" He said, "A copy of the Qur'an." He said, "Open it, and read the first line, and that which you need will come to you." When he opened it and looked at the first line, there was in it, "Those who denied Shu'ayb, it was as if they had never lived there. The people who denied Shu'ayb, they were the losers." (Qur'an, Surat al-A'raf: 91). The Shaykh said to him, "Is this not enough for you?" and the man acknowledged his wrong action and turned in tawbah and his state became sound. He never parted from him after that.

One of his pupils whose wife had enraged him the night before came to him one day, and he intended to separate from her. When the Shaykh saw him he said to him, "Hold fast your wife and fear Allah" (Qur'an, Surat al-Ahzab: 37). The man said, "By Allah! I had not spoken to anyone about her." The Shaykh said, may

Allah be pleased with him, "When you entered the mosque I saw this ayah written on your burnous, and so I knew your intention."

One of his miracles also is that which is narrated of him, may Allah be pleased with him, that he used to talk about the realities (haqa'iq) after Salat al-Fajr in the Mosque of al-Khidr in the town of al-Andalus. The monks of a monastery known as the King's Monastery heard of it. They were seventy in number. Ten of the most important of them came in order to test [the Shaykh], and they disguised themselves and dressed in the clothing of Muslims. They entered the mosque and sat with the people listening. No one knew anything of them at that time. When the Shaykh wanted to talk he was silent until a man who was a tailor came in. The Shaykh said to him, "What held you up?" He said, "Sidi, I had to finish the ten garments which you advised me about yesterday." The Shaykh took them from him and rose from his place to stand. He dressed each one of the monks in a garment. People were astonished at that, and yet no one knew the story. Then the Shaykh began to speak. Among that which he said was, "Fuqara! When the breeze of grace blows from the direction of the Truth, exalted is He, upon illuminated hearts it extinguishes all light." Then the Shaykh breathed, may Allah be pleased with him, and all the candles of the mosque were extinguished, and there were more than thirty of them. Then the Shaykh was silent and lowered his gaze and no one tried to speak because of the greatness of their awe of him. Then he raised his head and said, "There is no god but Allah. Fuqara! when the lights of concern shine on dead hearts they come alive and every darkness is illuminated for them." Then he breathed and the candles burst into flame and their light returned to them, and they excited each other and swayed from side to side until they almost joined together. Then the Shaykh spoke about one of the ayat of prostration and he prostrated and the people prostrated and the monks prostrated with the people from fear of discovery. The Shaykh said in his prostration, "O Allah, You know best the management of Your creatures and what is of benefit to Your slaves. These monks are in harmony with the Muslims in their clothing and in prostration to You. We have transformed their outward appearances and no one other than You can change their inwards. You have seated them at the table of Your generosity, so deliver them from ascribing partners and from going beyond the limits. Bring them out of the darkness of covering over to the light of iman." The monks had not lifted their heads from prostration before that which they had previously of shunning the truth passed away and they finished with error and going beyond the limits. They went to the Shaykh and turned from their kufr at his hands, with tears and grieving hearts. People cried out and wept because of their weeping, and it was a singular day. Three people died in that assembly. Their affair reached the king, and he treated them well and honoured their dwelling place. The Shaykh was extremely joyous at that and he thanked Allah for His blessings.

One of his supplications was, may Allah be pleased with him, "O Allah, knowledge is with You and it is veiled from me. I do not know anything so that I could choose it for myself. I hand over my affair to You, and I hope for You because of my need and dependence. Guide me, O Allah to the most beloved of matters to You, and the most pleasing of them to You, and the most rightly guided of them in its ultimate end, for You do whatever you wish by Your power. You have power over every thing."

As for his literary compositions they are too numerous to count, but I will mention for the blessing that which the patron of our blessing, Shaykh Sidi Muhammad al-Buzidi, used to persevere in chanting as poetry and singing melodiously, just as the majority of the gnostics would sing it, and they would inscribe it in the Diwans. It seems to me that it is the best of the speech of the Folk upon which my sight has fallen, and it is his words, may Allah be pleased with him:

"Allah" say, and abandon existence and what it contains,
if you are content with attaining perfection
Everything apart from Allah, if you realise it,
is nothing in detail and in general.

Know that you and the worlds, all of them,
if it were not for Him, are in obliteration and they come to nothing.
He who has no existence in his essence from his essence,
then his existence, if it were not for Him, is the source of impossibility.

The gnostics are annihilated and do not witness anything other than the Great, the Self Exalted.

They see other than Him in reality as perishing, in the present, the past and the future.

Look with your eye or your intellect; do you see anything other than one of the actions?

Of his fine verse compositions also, may Allah be pleased with him, there is:

My moments are pleasant with a lover of ours whose love is my treasure.

We desire One from whom we have no independence for the rightness of my affair.

I am he, the shaykh of the drink, the one who gives drink to the mariner; rending is sweet to me.

Spread out my prayer rug, wine by wine, bring the beakers near.

Interpret my intemperance with the technical terms, O people of realisation.

O I, who is he? I even I

I am infatuated in my intoxication.

Let me hear the sweetness of the melodies of singing, so that perhaps we may understand.

So that we may recover, O fuqara, from my intoxication, strike upon the 'Oud.

Interpret me above the exaltation of my vine, lost lover.

Put some of its water in my grave, and squeeze the bunch of grapes.

Make its leaves a shroud for me, its water is my purity.

Above or from beneath or on the right, dig my grave.

I have sold my danfas, my patched robe and my lower garment, and I am left naked.

I walk between the great tree of the dwellings, while I am drunk,

Among intimate friends??and drinking cups which circulate, bewitching the intellects.

I fundamentally have no ability not to drink, and desire is my intoxication.

And you, O fuqara, O trustworthy ones, conceal my secret.

He also has much more poetry and rhyming prose than a writer could enumerate, which show his great capacity for gnoses.

In summary, he was, may Allah be pleased with him, one of those in whom the excellent qualities were perfected. There is no avoiding the fact that time will be unlikely to produce another like him. How well he is praised in the following qasidah, and it is his due that the writer of the qasidah should praise him and exhaust what is in his capacity, and yet he did not fulfil the right due to him. He said:

The waymarks of guidance manifested to us in tasting truthfully,
so, by the sun of the deen, our west became an east.

Everything that had been setting shone from there,

and the light of the fortunate star came to fill the horizons.

Allah gave to drink a huge downpour from the water of love

to hearts which were infatuated with Him, so say, "How have you not been given to drink?"

They had done without that which is other than Him so that

their selves came to proclaim the world an old frayed garment.

They drowned in the ocean of love of their God,

sufficient it is for you as an ocean and sufficient it is for you of drowning.

When the secrets of their longing for their Lord rejoiced at the secret,

they increased in longing for His vision.

Hearts went together like an army towards guidance,

so the arrows of love returned, shooting them in volleys.

Then the multitudinous army came from tawhid,

so He annihilated the one who was annihilated and He gave going-on to the one who attained going-on.

They are the people whom the one who sits with comes to no grief;

does anyone grieve who attains nearness to them?

Abu Madyan, a company of men have taken on your deen,

you befriended them out of love and gently drew them near.

For you, O sun, Allah caused to shine out by its light

that of the deen which had been deeply dark.

You gave hearts to drink for as long as thirst had obliterated them,

then you rained upon them of the water of the science of guidance.

You revived all those of them who had been dead,

and you charmed all those of them who had not been treated.

You brought them out of every ignorance and darkness,

for whenever the night of destruction darkens it has lightning.

You entered them into the fortress of dependence (tawakkul)
and the Possessor of Might took hold of them with the 'Firmest Handhold'.
O Shu'ayb, you healed our hearts with knowledge,
for your name has its derivation from the union (sha'b) of hearts.
The Sultan of desire used to lead selves,
and increased them in humiliation and made them slaves.
You freed them from slavery with graciousness,
you repaid with better since you gave men the gift of freedom.
If you should race against the gnostics on their horses,
then your horse with tawhid would win the prize.
If they embarked on vessels to go towards gnoses,
you embarked on passionate love in the ocean of desire to go towards them.
You ascended by the light of Allah high above every one who looks,
so that you began to see in the Unseen that which the sharp-sighted do not see.
You are the Imam of the gnostics and their light
and their expression of meanings whenever you mean them to articulate.
Upon you be the peace of Allah as long as a star shines,
and as long as leaves float down wanting their Master.
Bless the one chosen from the family of Hashim,
as he came for the Truth which manifests the Truth.

Let us conclude the words on what we have set out before by saying that the praise belongs to Allah who places masters in every place and leaders in every time, which is His blessing upon created beings. Whoever denies election in his own age out of ignorance of it and out of low intelligence, then that is an indication of his having been prevented, as is said in this meaning:

Whoever denies the elect of his age,
that is deceit in addition to his desertion.

He conceals them in His creation from His creation,
like that, so know it! from the vastness of His grace.

Because they are the brides of the Merciful,

He veils them from every forsaken one.

No one arrives to the like of what is in his description,
except for the one whom He drew near to His presence.

If you do not meet a gnostic in your lifetime,
he did not live the span of his life for your life.

Let us begin what we intended and our help is by Allah.

Al-Ism al-Mufrad On Permissibility of Using the Unique Name of Allah in Dhikr

Shaykh Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-'Alawi al-Mustaghanami
translated by Abdassamad Clarke

Praise belongs to Allah and it is sufficient, and peace on His chosen slaves.

From the slave of his Lord, Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-'Alawi al-Mustaghanami.

Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah and His blessings.

As for our subject, esteemed brother, I recall the discussion between us during your short visit when I saw you angered at your brothers the 'Alawiyun, as it seemed to me then, not for any wrong they do but just because they are infatuated with having the solitary name on their tongues, and that is their saying ALLAH.

It seemed to you that this requires reproof - we might even say punishment. And this, because they are committed to dhikr of that Name, with cause or without cause. It is the same for them in a dilemma or without one, in a situation not demanding invocation, so that when one of them knocks on the door he says, 'Allah,' and when he stands up he says, 'Allah,' and when he sits down he says 'Allah,' and so on.

You are of the opinion that it is improper to use this name as a dhikr, it not being a form of structured speech according to you - based on what grammarians stipulate as the necessities of grammatical construction in their definition of informative speech. There is no point in my answering you unless it is with the object of seeking mutual understanding and investigating whether what they do is right and proper, and whether it is permissible or not. I present you with this note that through it there may be healing for the breasts and cure for the hearts.

As for your stand on what grammarians lay down as the necessities of grammatical construction in what is considered speech, it is correct, except that the fact escapes you that in this decision of theirs the grammarians are concerned with discursive speech and are far from applying their definition to dhikrs and what distinguishes them from the point of view of lawfulness or unlawfulness, and then what results from that of rewards and the like. If you asked them in their day or this, they would certainly reply, "What we decide is merely a technical term on which we rely in our practice and there is no dispute in a technical term." You must be aware of the fact that the language of the grammarians is not the same as that of the scholars of kalam, and theirs is not the same as that of the fuqaha, nor theirs in turn that of the scholars of hadith and so on, for every group has its technical terms. For us, it follows from this that grammarians are simply concerned with defining informative speech, and are not concerned with distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate dhikrs. In other words, what grammarians stipulate as the requirements of grammatical construction is particularly for someone who intends to communicate with someone else by his speech. As for someone who does dhikr, he only intends to benefit himself and establish the meaning of that noble Name in his heart through his dhikr, or a purpose of a similar nature.

Second, grammarians have not laid down the existence of grammatical construction for one groaning or sighing in what he expresses, for his purpose is not that of grammarians and it is unlikely that grammarians would say to a groaning or sighing man, "I really do not understand your purpose in sighing since it is a word without construction, lacking a predicate or anything like that." None of this is relevant to someone groaning, because his intention is not communication with another but simply to have relief by it from himself.

You must realise, brother, that every name, even if it is not one of the Divine Names, has an effect which adheres to the person of someone who mentions it. Thus when a man repeatedly mentions death, for example, he really experiences its effect, and it clings to the being of someone who mentions that name, especially if he persists in it. There is no doubt that that effect is not the same as the effect of mentioning wealth or power, or authority. Even without considering the effect, it is reported in the noble hadith, "Increase in dhikr of the destroyer of pleasures," meaning death. There is no doubt that it is a single word, and some say that it was a word for the first communities.

Generally speaking, each man, if he has subtle perception, is aware of the relationship to the self of the effect of the name mentioned whether the matter is serious or light. If that is the case we must believe that the Name of Majesty creates an effect on the self just as any other name creates an effect, and that each has an effect particular to it.

The fact will not escape you, brother, that the Name ennobles you through the nobility of naming Him, because of what it holds of His impression in the concealment of its secret and meaning. Let us cut short our consideration of all that we have set out and restrict ourselves to standing by the judgement of the Lawgiver concerning the use of that Name on the tongue. It certainly comes under one of the five evaluations of the shari'ah, that is - obligatory, permitted, forbidden, disliked, and recommended. Since there is no question of there being either a word or an action that does not come under these preceding evaluations it seems to us that before opposing the one who pronounces that Name we should see under which evaluation it comes. If we find it under the categories of forbidden or disliked things then opposing the one who pronounces it is obligatory on us, because he utters something which is rejected. If not, however, and we find it in another category, then to reject him is disapproved, for its pronunciation is permitted. On this assumption, even if neither obligatory nor authorised, if the work is within the limits of the permissible, what is to prevent us repeating something which is permissible, and what makes one who pronounces it worthy of reproach or even punishment?

However we use it, we are not led to a position where we join it to the categories of forbidden or disliked things, and it retains its character as regards its status as the Name of Majesty. This leaves you in the position of one who stays where it suits him - but, "If someone honours Allah's sacred things, that is better for him in his Lord's sight" (Qur'an, Surat al-Hajj, ayah 2), "As for those who honour Allah's sacred rites, that comes from the fear of Allah within their hearts" (Qur'an, Surat al-Hajj, ayah 30).

Now, all that we have set out so far is with respect to the fact that it is a single name not associated with anything even by way of implication. If we investigate the truth and uncover the matter we may say that its dhikr is possible even according to those who define grammatical construction.

It is, in effect, a noun in the vocative case. Among grammarians the vocative is of the category of informative speech because they have vocative particles with the meaning "I call out", and the omission of these is permissible and very common in the language of the Arabs. Often the situation calls for its omission by necessity, as in this case, because of what Qur'anic courtesy and Islamic teachings demand of us, courtesy and teachings of which, perhaps, sufic masters have more than others. I implore you, brother, not to consider far-fetched our saying to you that 'the folk' allow themselves to be guided by the courtesy of the Qur'an, and that they are devoted to taqwa which gives discrimination. He said, may He be exalted, "If you show fear of Allah, He will give you discrimination" (Qur'an, Surat al-Anfal, ayah 29). They inwardly listen to that until Allah shows them what He does not show others. Thus, in relation to this case - the dhikr of the single Name with the omission of vocative particles - they hold to what they are commanded in His saying, may He be exalted:

"Say, 'Call on Allah or call on the Merciful,
whomever you call on,
His are the most beautiful Names'."

(Qur'an, Surat al-Isra, ayah 110)

They concern themselves with the former which they are commanded to call on, which is our saying, "Allah". In the absorption of their zeal in retreats and seclusion, standing, sitting, and on their sides, some keep dutifully to the commanded dhikr, and the divine granting of success forces on them the need to drop the vocative particle when the Presence of Nearness seeks them - because vocative particles are used for distance, not for One who is "nearer than the jugular vein."

There are ayats found in the Book of Allah which show the sincerity of their inspiration, and they are in the vocative category. They are of two sorts, one from the slave to his Lord, and another from the Lord to His slave. In numerous examples of the first kind they occur with the omission of the vocative particle and in those of the second kind they occur with the vocative particle. What do you think is the reason for that? How were the people guided to it? Oh how glorious is Allah!

The master Abu Ishaq ash-Shatily has this to say in his book of Analogies: "The Qur'an brings the message of Allah ta'ala to humanity and [the response] of humanity to Allah. As for the lesson when it shows the address of Allah ta'ala to humanity, it sets it out with the vocative particle required by distance and invariably without curtailment, as in His saying, 'O my slaves who believe, My earth is truly vast?' (29: 56) 'Say, "O My slaves who squander themselves?' (39: 50) 'Say, "O men, I am truly the Messenger of Allah to all of you".' (7: 158) 'O you who believe...'. When it shows mankind addressing Allah ta'ala it is invariably without a vocative particle because originally vocative particles are for admonition and Allah is beyond admonition. Also, most of the vocative particles are for distance, for example, 'Ya - O,' and Allah ta'ala makes clear that He is near, especially to the supplicant, in His saying, "And when My slaves ask you about Me, then, I am near," (2: 185) and in general near to the creation, as in His saying, "There are not three talking confidentially but He is the fourth of them, and not five but He is the sixth of them." (58: 7) He said, "And We are closer to him than his jugular vein" (50: 16), so they take admonition from this through the men of knowledge, first by omitting the vocative particle, and second in consciousness of His nearness.

Similarly, with the inclusion of the particle in the other category they take admonition through the men of meaning, and reinforcement of warning to the negligent, and pointing to the elevation of the One who addresses, and that He is free of nearness such as human nearness, since He in His nearness is exalted and in His exaltedness near, how glorious is He. Second, the address of a slave to the Lord is one of longing and seeking once he has corrected himself. He uses in Qur'anic address the word 'Lord', admonishing and instructing, since in his supplication the slave uses the name fitting the condition of the One supplicated, and 'the Lord' is the one who carries out what rectifies the 'lorded one', as He says, in the statement of mankind's supplication:

"Our Lord do not punish us if we forget or make mistake, our Lord do not impose on us a burden such as You imposed on those before us."

I have demonstrated how the cry of the slave in particular appears with the vocative 'O' dropped, and that is on account of the preceding. If you have understood this, then tell me, by your lord, are the people still to be blamed if we hear that they omit the vocative 'O' in their supplications and cries to their Master? Is this from their discernment in the deen of Allah or from complete lack of understanding of Allah?

Legislating for others and compelling men to follow is one of the prerogatives of the one who is protected from error. No one else can say 'this is permitted and this is not', and the one whose business it is, it is better for him to lower his voice in the areas where his ignorance is greater than his knowledge. That is a principle which adheres in every situation. The Sufi is obliged like others to lower his head and negate his choice before the noble Law and the pure Divine ordering of affairs.

Certainly it is likely that our opponent will come against us from another quarter, saying that we are not allowed to worship with something which it is uncertain that our predecessors used, or make use of it as a

means of seeking nearness expecting reward for it. We say to him, Yes, the matter is just as you say and we hope from Allah that we and you are in unison on a point such as this. I presume, brother, that you do not forget and that it has not escaped you that the Divine Names are legitimate for use in worship by recitation, according to His saying, "Allah has the most beautiful Names so call on Him by them" and they are each single, and although they are single, neither this generous ayat nor any other ayat stipulates the manner of their invocation in respect to form or construction. I believe this is out of consideration for the states of the travellers and those turned towards Allah, since they differ in strength and weakness, desire and awe, yearning and eagerness. Men are in classes and yearning has degrees and the secrets of creation differ as to their relationship with Allah, powerful and majestic is He. From that point of view no restriction can be derived from the forms of supplication and dhikr that were used by the first communities to the extent that we are able to say absolutely, 'this Name was not a dhikr of the first communities' or 'they did not consider this Name an invocation,' because we cannot be familiar with all that was on their tongues in their seclusions and retreats, in sickness and health. It is unlikely that we can believe that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not have the Name of Majesty on their tongues repeatedly, Allah, Allah.

We should set before you what is almost a proof in this matter, in order that you might realise that the truth of the matter is vaster than you suspected. Muslim has it in his Sahih from Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, that he said, "A sick man was groaning in his presence, blessings of Allah and peace be upon him, so one of them forbade the man and told him to be patient. The Prophet said, may Allah bless him and give him peace, 'Let him moan, for he is invoking one of the Names of Allah ta'ala'." Al-Bukhari and at-Tirmidhi stated also from Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, "Leave him to moan for the moan is one of the Names of Allah by which the sick man finds rest." Some negligence occurred at the time of transmission by ascribing the report to someone other than the one who related it, and the truth is that ar-Rafi'i Imam ud-Din related it in Tarikh Qur'un from 'Aisha and, my valued friend, established that it is a good hadith (hasan).

Then, to develop the matter, what do you think? If the sick man had voiced the Name of Majesty repeatedly, 'Allah, Allah,' instead of saying 'Ah, Ah,' - would it have been correct for that Companion to oppose him? Never! For the situation evidently contradicts that. His opposition was only when he failed to grasp the meaning of the word 'Ah', and the fact that it is one of the Names of Allah ta'ala, until the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, directed him by saying "Let him moan for he is invoking one of the names of Allah." I believe that is enough. It is proof of what is obvious. We also relate it to the fact that the word 'Ah,' is single, so the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, agreed to its use as a supplication in that manner. This is over and above what we have inferred from the fact that it is one of the Names of Allah. Without doubt it is a valuable lesson, inducing men to have a good opinion of those who do dhikr, however they may do so.

Assuming that what we set out as a proof to you by way of demonstration is not correct, it is only fair to you and to us that we say that the problem is controversial and it is important that it is resolved because the problem is one of independent judgement (ijtihad). Brother, what is the meaning of your compelling us to accept your word or submit to your ijtihad on the spot when we do not force you to ours? This is from one point of view. From another point of view, however much you may have persisted in denial of your brothers, the 'Alawiyun, in this case, you cannot make them less than forerunners among those who call on that Name singly and also charge the imams of the deen and guides of the Muslims with its dhikr.

Look! I will cite a passage to you from someone who will put you at ease, insha'Allah, a passage of his which in all probability has not reached you. If it has reached you, then why, when you see the 'Alawiyun singled out by it, do you look on them with disdain? In the Mufeed ar-Rawi of Shaykh Sidi Mustafa Ma' al-'Aynayn, from Ibn Jarir in his commentary on Qur'an there is: "...he would say, wanting the murid to confine himself to invocation of the Single Name during his travelling the way, 'It occurs in tradition that when the worshipper says "Allah," there arises from within him a shaft of light, which spreads out on the horizons, then rises to the height of the Throne, filling the cosmos completely so that Allah says to it, "Stop!" It says, "By Your glory and majesty! I will not stop until You forgive the one who called on this Name." Then He replies, "By My glory and My majesty, I vowed to Myself before I created the world - I only set it moving on the tongue of My slave because I have already forgiven him".' "

It is mentioned in the Sharh al-Mabahath al-Asliyya (The Basic Research) of Ibn 'Ajiba, may Allah have mercy on him, that Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, may Allah be pleased with him, said "I wanted in the beginning to travel this way by means of many awrad, fastings and prayers, so when Allah knew the sincerity of my intention, He sent one of His friends to me who said to me, 'My son, detach your heart from each relationship except that with Allah alone, and go into solitude and gather your himmah (yearning) and say, "Allah, Allah, Allah".'" He said, I mean al-Ghazali, in the Mishkat al-Anwar in his own words "As long as you are soiled with what is other-than-Allah, then you have no alternative but the negation - 'la ilaha', but when you withdraw from all things in witnessing the Owner of all things, you can find rest from the negation and reach the affirmation:

'Say Allah!

Then leave them

to their plunging and their playing.'" (6: 92)

Then He said, "When you rid yourself of remembrance of what never was, and busy yourself with remembrance of the One Who has never ceased, say 'Allah', then find rest from what is other-than-Him." He also said, "Open the door of your heart by the key of your saying La ilaha illa'llah, the door to your spirit by saying Allah, and draw down the bird of your secret by saying Hu, Hu."

In his book Maqsad al-asna fi sharh asma'llah al-husna in a passage on the Name of Majesty he said: "It appears that the slave's portion from it, meaning dhikr of this Name, is the gift of Allah, and we mean by that, that his heart and himmah become absorbed in Allah ta'ala, not seeing other-than-Him and not paying attention to other-than-Him."

Al-Ghazali chose this for each believer to have his share of this Name, and if you choose what al-Ghazali chose for you then this is it. If not, do not expect your lack of choice to be a proof for one whose choice agrees with Imam al-Ghazali's.

Suppose that your argument is effective as a proof against the 'Alawiyun and their like, would it also be a proof against distinguished scholars and commentators of Qur'an who have preceded them, such as al-Fakhr ar-Razi and others? For he himself undertook the dhikr of this Name and states it explicitly in his great commentary. We find in the passage on the Bismillah that he says: "...and know, O men, that for the length of my life I have been saying 'Allah', and when I die I will say 'Allah', and when I am questioned in my grave I will say 'Allah', and on the Day of Rising I will say 'Allah', and when I take the Book I will say 'Allah', and when my actions are weighed I will say 'Allah', and when I travel on the sirat I will say 'Allah', and when I enter the Garden I will say 'Allah', and when I see Allah I will say 'Allah'." Ar-Razi said all that in defiance of the one who does not say 'Allah'. We really would not have used these passages over and above hadith except for you to realise the fact that the 'Alawiyun are not innovators in their saying 'Allah', as you imagine them to be. You must be aware that the Sufis are generally concerned with this business and believe that it is the Mightiest Name, by which if He is supplicated, He answers, glorious and exalted is He, and if He is asked, He gives. This is not the choice of the Sufis only but the choice of more than one of the imams, outstanding narrators of hadith, and men learned in the sources. One of them, Shaykh Muhammad Bayram the fifth, may Allah be merciful to him, was of those who supported the permissibility of dhikr of the Name of Majesty. He mentioned in The Prophetic Assistance, ". . . that it is said in Rudd al-Muhtan li's-sadat al Hanifiyya that Hisham transmitted from Muhammad ibn Abi Hanif, may Allah be pleased with him, that it is Allah's mightiest Name, may He be exalted, and that at-Tahawi and many scholars stood by it, and the Shaykh of the community Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Qadir ibn Yusuf al-Fasi quoted it, may Allah be pleased with him, in his cases as to the legitimacy of dhikr of the Name of Majesty, singly." He further said, "? and in the Sahih it is stated that the Hour will not come until there no longer remains on the face of the earth one who says 'Allah, Allah'."

That is perfect evidence for dhikr of this alone especially in the version which is in the accusative (Allaha, Allaha). There is no dispute concerning speaking the Noble Name singly. Since that is the case what is the harm in a man repeating it many times, and what is the purpose of rejecting it?

In relation to the wording of the preceding hadith, according to the way the Imam related it in his Musnad and Ibn Majah in his Sahih from Anas ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, he said: "The Hour will not arise until 'Allah, Allah' is not said on the earth." Here is the strongest and most dependable evidence in this hadith for the repetition of the word of Majesty. Its purpose clearly indicates dhikr of that Name, because if it had not been repeated it could have implied, "there no longer remains one on earth who believes in the existence of Allah." Because of the repetition this is not possible.

There is proof in the Noble Law of the permissibility of the repetition of that Name, and nothing to justify prohibition of repeating it orally or in the heart. Since there is nothing in the Law to demonstrate the prohibition of repeating any of the names of created things and, if that is permitted, how can there be anything to prohibit giving voice to one of Allah's most beautiful Names, unless there were aberration and pig-headedness in the Law which prevented the believer from turning the name of his Master upon his tongue by saying 'Allah, Allah' or one of His other Names, because Allah says, "And Allah has the most beautiful Names, so call Him by them," that is, ask Him and remember Him by them. This is what we understand and choose for ourselves, and you have the right of choice for yourselves, but it is not your business to force us to stand by your choice since we have not forced you to ours.

Assume the surrender and generosity of those who say that this Name is disliked - I seek forgiveness of Allah - for it is laid down about that in which there is dispute as to whether it is disliked or recommended, that it is of a higher grade than being permissible in the Law. Khalil mentions this in his Sharh with this explanation: "When there is dispute over something as to whether it is recommended or disliked, its enactment is preferable. As a result, when the dispute is over the status of something as a sunnah, then its being disliked is not lower in rank than the permissible, rather they stipulate about that over which there is dispute concerning its lawfulness, that it is higher in rank than the permissible."

Now, as to what you mention, or we might say disown, of the 'Alawiyun voicing the Name of Majesty and employing it on their tongues fittingly and unfittingly, as you say, on highways and similar unsuitable places, it appears that you think they abandon the reverence desired for Divine Names and that their action is not a stipulation of the Law. When one of them knocks on a door and says, 'Allah', and when the man answers him calls 'Allah', it is unacceptable in your eyes. I feel compelled to say that you have failed in your study of the hadith relating to this case of ours, or else you merely imagine that the matter among the first community was contrary to our action. I cannot believe that if you had come across the relevant texts, after serious examination you would not have set them above your personal opinion - I have to believe that this would be the case with you.

Our holding unrestrainedly to the dhikr is not outside the Sunnah nor in conflict with it. This dhikr is suitable, not just now and then, or here and there, but at all times and in all places, in order to build up the times and remove the qualities of negligence from controlling the senses and overpowering the intellect. In other words, dhikr is praiseworthy in every state and negligence is blameworthy in every state. Without doubt, recourse to the Book and Sunnah is the proper thing for you and for us in this matter.

The command to do dhikr and the cautioning against its neglect contained in the Book are clear and do not need to be set out in detail, especially among people such as you. Since there is no conflict between what is contained in the Sunnah and the Book, we can cite prophetic ahadith and judgements from the madhhabs to clarify what the Lawgiver wants from us and how to act upon it, if Allah wills. Abu Ya'la related in his Musnad from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, "You must have as much taqwa of Allah as possible and remember Allah at every tree and stone" - the ultimate intention is generalisation of time and place. What Imam Ahmad published in his Musnad from Anas, with a sound line of transmission, is comparable to this. A tradition from 'Aisha is similar to it, that "he would remember Allah at every opportunity, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him." 'Alqama said that ad-Damiri said that the meaning of this tradition is that he remembered Allah whether in a state of ritual purity or impurity, standing, lying down, walking or mounted. An-Nawawi mentions in his Commentary on Muslim something comparable to this, that the meaning of this tradition is that in his dhikr he would not distinguish between states or places, may Allah bless him and give him peace.

Whoever studies the scholars' records in this section will find what will help the consensus of the community

to absolute acceptance in the question of dhikr. What is quoted from the Hanifi masters pertains to this, according to what is said in *The States of the Rightly Guided Ones* by the Qadi Khan - "Dhikr in the markets and in negligent and outrageous assemblies in the markets is permissible given the intention that one is busy with glorification and declaring the unity of Allah and they are busy with the world." Consider carefully, may Allah have mercy on you, his saying "Negligent and outrageous assemblies" - you will not find the 'Alawiyyun carried recklessly to that extreme.

Dhikr is approved even in the hot baths. Over and above the fact that they are places where dirt is removed, they are places of negligence and uncovered imperfections. In *Collected Cases*, the author says that "reading Qur'an in the hot baths loudly is disliked, but softly it is not disliked, and glorification and declaring the Divine Unity are not disliked even when spoken aloud." If the dhikr of Allah is permissible even in the baths, what is the fault of the 'Alawiyyun, for example, if one of them remembers Allah on the roadway? If some individual unaccustomed to hearing this dhikr recoils upon hearing it, and he is fair and desires a decision regarding another person, it is his duty to judge according to the judgement of Allah and His Messenger, not according to his own personal opinion. His judgement must be free of the influence of the approval or disapproval of others. It is our duty not to resort to this source of approval and not to be content with options other than those of the Law. It is the duty of the one who accepts Allah and the Last Day to think about the stipulation of the Law and behave according to it, without choosing anything except what Allah chooses for him: "When Allah and His Messenger have decided something it is not for any mumin man or woman to have a choice about it." (Surat al-Ahzab: 36)

However noble your purpose in examining texts and passages relevant to this problem, still perhaps what we have written, although it is only a little, is enough. Assuming you need something over and above this, (and the believer often needs increase in good), I say to you that more than one of the imams have made clear the permissibility of dhikr even in the toilet. This is mentioned only that you might grasp the significance of the permissibility of dhikr near the dirt of the highways, which you thought unlikely. Qadi 'Iyad said in the conclusion of the book of prayer, "the schools of 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As, ash-Shafi'i, Malik and ibn Bashir, permit dhikr of Allah in the toilet." It is also understood from the words of Ibn Rushd Sama'i Suhanin and from the words of al-Barzili, which Abu'l-Fayd ash-Shaykh al-Katani quoted in his treatise in commentary on His words, may He be exalted - "O you who believe, do not enter houses other than your own until you ask permission and extend greetings to its people." Also from him, in *Customs of the Rightly Guided*, al-Lakhamy said, "The one who relieves himself remembers Allah before entering the place where he relieves himself." 'Iyad also reported its permissibility, "Some of them acknowledge the permissibility of dhikr of Allah in the toilet, and that is the teaching of Malik, an-Nakha'i and 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As." He also said, "If Ibn al-Qasim sneezed while urinating, he would praise Allah."

If you ask if Shaykh Khalil did not say "in the toilet we are ashamed to mention Allah" and it was 'because of its being excluded' and that the immediate understanding of the words of Ibn Abi's-Salam and Khalil in their clarification is that its exclusion is because of prohibition, then we must say that just as one understands from the words of these two that its exclusion is because of prohibition, so one understands from the words of Ibn Rushd, 'Iyad and the author of *at-Taraz* that its exclusion means its 'being disliked' in their opinion; that is the clear position of al-Jazuli and the author of *Conduct*. The imams found fault with anyone who understood it as prohibition - for example, Imam Abu 'Abdillah al-Hatab said "and it is not obvious because it is not consistent with the words of any of our predecessors, who were not explicit concerning its prohibition," and "?

he burden of their argument is that it is disliked, in order to be consistent with the words of the earlier generations."

Our intention in using these passages is not to give more emphasis to one of the schools with respect to the permissibility of dhikr in the toilet or its being forbidden - rather we quote them in order that you might realise how the imams permitted dhikr even in such a place, which is acknowledged absolutely as the worst place. If you find someone in a similar situation mentioning Allah, do not look on him as strange and consider him an innovator gone astray, because ash-Shafi'i and Malik supported its permissibility and both of them are adequate examples of holding to the rope of Allah and holding to the Sunnah of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and give him peace. Without doubt, it follows from this passage and the like of it that the 'Alawiyyun have been wronged by your reproach, provided that recklessness does not lead them to extremes in dhikr,

which permissibility ultimately leads to, so that someone mentions that he does not stop dhikr even in the toilet. The most that is reported of any of the 'Alawiyun is that when someone sees him he says 'Allah', and when he sees someone else he says 'Allah' and so on. According to my understanding, the like of this does not bring one nearer to what is disliked. We do not say to you that it is of importance to the Sunnah, and even if on appraisal it is not of the Sunnah, it still resembles the truth more than the false.

Someone might say, "Surely the Names of Allah are too exalted to be used to gain access to anything other than the things of the next life, so it is not permissible to use them for stimulation and attracting attention or the like." This would be true if it were not that the Law concedes, or we could say commands, its like. If you search out the most likely areas of resemblance in these cases you will find what the Lawgiver wants from us and what is nearer to straightforwardness. For example, consider the form of the call to prayer. You will find it used to make known the beginning of the time of prayer and to command attendance to the performance of a duty - yet it is nearer or more appropriate to the situation that one should call, "the prayer is now" or, "the time of prayer has begun". Why does the call to prayer reproduce the shahadah completely instead of some succinct words which could represent it? Do you ask, "Why are the names of Allah used to summon those who pray?" Questioning the legitimacy of calling out "Subhanallah" to make the imam aware of a mistake in the prayer is comparable to this. That some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would arouse others by means of the takbir is also relevant to this. This is testified to by what is said in the two Sahih collections concerning the river valley. When they slept through the dawn prayer, the first to awaken was Abu Bakr, and 'Umar was the fourth, and he took to calling out "Allahu akbar" until the Prophet awoke, may Allah bless him and give him peace. Consider, may Allah have mercy on you, how they used dhikr to awaken those asleep and the like.

What Ibn Rushd specified in Khalil's account resembles this, "Boasting is permitted when shooting arrows, naming and in the outcry (of battle) - and the preferable thing is dhikr of Allah." Ibn 'Arafah adds, "? and when shooting arrows, if a direct hit on the target is achieved, it is preferable to mention Allah." Just consider how they chose dhikr of Allah for drawing attention to the striking of the target - they only chose it because they knew the desire of the Lawgiver is increase in dhikr in all conditions.

Since it is possible that you will consider what we deduce from the texts insufficient in clarity or proof, I must mention some of what is said concerning asking permission to enter, which is demanded by the Law, by means of dhikr of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, so that by it the noble brother might realise the desire which necessitates his study of the terms of the Lawgiver in this case. His saying, may Allah bless him and give him peace, "When you reach the doors of your houses make yourselves known by dhikr of Allah," is one of the clear traditions met with in this field. The distinguished as-Sanusi, author of Tenets, transmitted it in his book, Assistance of the Needy One. What most of the commentators have mentioned as the meaning of 'asking permission' is His saying, may He be exalted, "Oh you who believe, do not enter houses other than your own until you ask permission and greet its occupants," which reinforces this passage. Fakhr ar-Razi, after speaking about 'asking permission' from many aspects in his commentary al-Kabir, said, "? d'Ikramah said it means magnification and glorification and their like," meaning other dhikrs. What is in the commentary of an-Naisaburi, Gharib al-Qur'an, is exactly the same as what ar-Razi transmitted. From Abu Ayyub, and published by Ibn Abi Shaibah, at-Tirmidhi, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Mardawiyah, and at-Tabrani, there is, "I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, how do you see the saying of Allah, '?til you ask permission and greet its occupants?' We know about this greeting, so what about asking permission?" He said, "The man glorifies, magnifies and praises, and clears his throat, thus letting the occupants of the house know'." As-Suyuti transmitted it in his book, The Published Pearls in Commentary on the Qur'an by what has been transmitted.

By citing the preceding we are saved from pursuing the clear proofs of the legitimacy of seeking permission by means of dhikr of Allah which showed up in this chapter. It is undisputed among the imams that dhikr in seeking permission is preferable to calling out and knocking loudly on the door.

O brother, when you created a great distance between the Sunnah and us, however closely and justly you examined what we have set out, in our view you typified the form of innovation. For this reason we rose to combat it, and Allah inspired us, without any knowledge on our part, and may He guide us and you. Amin.

Before the conclusion of this essay, blessed for us and you if Allah wills, I will mention some traditions relevant to this area - I hope you will give them due attention as is your business. Each of these two noble traditions, among other things, summarises all that we have set out concerning the necessity of filling one's time and place, and the structure of all moments, with dhikr of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic.

First, a tradition which Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Ibn Abi'd-Dunya, an-Nasa'i, and Ibn Habban published. In the wording of Abu Dawud, "He said, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, 'If someone remains in an assembly without remembering Allah, it is counted against him as being frivolous towards Allah.'" Al-Hafidh 'Abd al-'Adhim said, "At-tirah (being frivolous), ta' with a kasra and a single ra', is a defect and something to be answerable for." Second, the tradition which Abu Dawud and al-Hakim published from Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, "He said, 'If any people stand up from a gathering in which Allah was not remembered, they stand up from something like the corpse of a donkey, which will be a source of regret for them on the Day of Resurrection'."

Here the answer is concluded - success is in the hand of the One to Whom one turns, and returns. May Allah bless Sayyiduna Muhammad and his family and companions and give them peace. Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all creatures.

Foundations of the Spiritual Path (Source: Seasons Journal)

By Sidi Ahmad Zarruq Translated by Shaykh Hamza Yusuf

The noble scholar, the unique of his age, the regulator of the scholars and the saints, Sidi Ahmad Zarruq al-Barnusi al-Fasi, may Allah be pleased with him, wrote the following:

If anyone is asked about the foundations of his path, he should reply,

The foundations of our path are five:

- **Taqwa – mindfulness of Allah, privately and publicly**
- **Adherence to the Sunna in word and deed**
- **Indifference to whether others accept or reject one**
- **Contentment with Allah in times of both hardship and ease**
- **Turning to Allah in prosperity and adversity.**

The realization of mindfulness of Allah is through scrupulousness and uprightness. The realization of adherence to the Sunnah is through caution and excellent character. The realization of indifference to others' acceptance or rejection is through patience and trust in Allah. The realization of contentment is through acceptance of what one is given and turning over the management of one's affairs to Allah. The realization of turning back to Allah is through praise and gratitude in times of prosperity and taking refuge in Him in times of affliction.

The foundations of the preceding five are in the following five:

- **Exalted aspirations**
- **Maintaining Allah’s reverence**
- **Expending oneself in excellent service of others**
- **Fulfilling one’s resolves**
- **Magnifying one’s blessings.**

He whose aspirations are exalted is raised in rank. Allah maintains the respect of he who preserves His reverence. He whose service is for others is ennobled by it. He who does that which he resolves to do is assured continual guidance. He who deems blessings to be great by his own eye has shown gratitude. And he who is grateful ensures an increase in blessings from the Giver of gifts according to the promise of the Truthful One.

:The foundations of right conduct are five:

- **Seeking sacred knowledge in order to fulfill Allah’s commands**
- **Keeping company with spiritual guides and the fraternity of aspirants to gain insight into one’s faults**
- **Foregoing dispensations and interpretations concerning injunctions for one’s own protection**
- **Organizing one’s time with the remembrance of Allah to maintain presence of heart**
- **Suspecting the selfish soul (nafs) in everything in order to free oneself from its whimsical desires and to be safe from destructive circumstances.**

The pitfall of seeking knowledge is the company of sophomoric people, whether due to their age, intellect, or deficient religious practice – in other words, those who do not refer to sound principles of guidance in their actions. The pitfall of keeping company with the spiritual guides and the fraternity is elitism, deception, and self-righteous meddling in the affairs of others. The pitfall of foregoing dispensations and interpretations concerning injunctions is self-pity due to hardships. The pitfall of organizing one’s time with devotional works is ostentatious practice and ritualized perfunctory devotion.

The pitfall of constantly suspecting the selfish soul is inclining towards its upright states and goodliness, yet Allah says, “Were he to offer every kind of compensation, it would not be accepted from him” (Quran 6:70).

Moreover, the noble son of the noble one, Joseph the son of Jacob, peace be upon them both, says, in the Quran, “I do not say the selfish soul was free from blame. The selfish soul indeed commands to evil acts – except for those on whom my Lord has mercy” (12:53).

The foundations of what will cure the sickness of the soul are five:

- **Moderation achieved by lightening the stomach’s intake of food and drink**
- **Taking refuge in Allah from harm when it actually occurs**
- **Vigilantly avoiding places where one fears misdeeds will occur**
- **Continually asking forgiveness of Allah coupled with devotional prayers upon the Prophet, peace be upon him, in both solitude and gatherings of people**
- **Keeping company with one who guides to Allah. Unfortunately, such a one no longer exists!**

Abu Hasan Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him, said, My beloved counseled me not to put my feet anywhere except where I hoped for Allah's reward, not to sit anywhere except where I was safe from disobedience to Allah, not to accompany anyone except someone in whom I could find support in obedience to Allah, and not to select anyone for myself other than those who increased my certainty, and how rare they are to find! He also said, may Allah be pleased with him, Whoever directs you to this world has cheated you; whoever directs you to deeds has exhausted you; but whoever directs you to Allah has truly counseled you.

He also said, may Allah be pleased with him, Make piety (taqwa) your abode, and the delight of your selfish soul will do you no harm so long as it is discontent with its faults and does not persist in acts of disobedience nor abandons the awareness of Allah in solitude. I say that being content with the self, persisting in disobedient acts, and abandoning awareness of Allah are the foundations of all illnesses, tribulations, and pitfalls.

I have also seen that the seekers of this age are afflicted with five things:

- **The preference of ignorance over Knowledge**
- **Being deluded by every spiritual impostor**
- **The inability to prioritize important matters**
- **Using the spiritual path as a means to inflate the selfish soul**
- **Attempting to expedite a spiritual opening without fulfilling its prerequisite conditions.**

This has resulted in five other afflictions:

- **Preferring innovations as opposed to the tried and true prophetic practice (Sunna)**
- **Following the people of claims and conceit as opposed to the truth**
- **Acting on capricious desires in all of their affairs, even the most celestial**
- **Preferring fantasies to realities**
- **The manifestation of claims without sincerity.**

From these last five, five more have emanated:

- **Obsessive compulsive thoughts in acts of devotion**
- **Laxity in matters of habitual practice**
- **Perfunctory devotional gatherings of invocation and chanting that lack inspiration**
- **Inclination toward people of rank and authority**
- **Companionship of those immersed in worldly matters, even mixing with the opposite sex and childish companions.**

based upon far-fetched rationalizations they extrapolated from witnessing the like among real people of the

path. They will even mention such people's states and stations as a justification. On the other hand, had they had true enlightenment, they would have understood that seeking one's provision is a dispensation for those lacking certainty, and that includes only the necessities of life without exceeding the necessary. Anyone lax in these matters is distant from Allah. As for devotional gatherings, they are permitted for people overpowered by their states or as a respite for people of excellent character. Indeed, such practice is akin to settling upon the carpet of truth if done in accordance with its requisite conditions among suitable people and in an appropriate place, not to mention fulfilling its required courtesies and protocols.

Obsessive-compulsive thoughts arise from innovation, the basis of which is in ignorance of the prophetic practice or in some psychological affliction. Any propensity toward creation is by nature the lack of such toward the truth. This is especially so coming from an obsequious chanter, a heedless tyrant, or an ignorant sufi. The company of the immature is harmful, as well as a worldly and otherworldly shortcoming, and an acceptance of such company even worse. Shaykh Abu Madyan said, "The immature' means anyone who is not in conformance with the spiritual path you are on, even if it were someone who reached ninety years of age."

I say the immature are those who are not firmly rooted in principle; they accept things at face value and are impassioned by them. The vast majority of such people are those who are pretentious in their associations with a spiritual group and prefer conversations to real spiritual work. Avoid them to the utmost of your ability.

Anyone who claims to have a station with Allah while any of the following five happen to emanate from him is either a liar or deluded:

- **Allowing any of his members to fall into sinful disobedience**
- **Affectations in his devotional practice**
- **Expectations from the creation**
- **Backbiting against the people of Allah**
- **Lacking the proper respect for Muslims in accordance with the commands of Allah. Indeed, such people rarely die in a state of grace.**

The qualifications of the spiritual guide with whom the seeker may safely entrust his self are the following five:

- **Unadulterated spiritual experience**
- **Sound outward knowledge**
- **Celestial aspirations**
- **A pleasing state**
- **Penetrating inner perception.**

Whoever has any of the following five cannot be a true spiritual guide:

- **Ignorance of the religion**
- **Disregard for the reverence of other Muslims**
- **Engaging in matters of no concern to him**

- **Following his caprice in his affairs**
- **Unashamed displays of bad manners followed by lack of remorse.**

The spiritual courtesies of a student with his or her spiritual guide and fellow wayfarers are also five:

- **Following the directions of the guide, even if it is contrary to one's own preference**
- **Avoiding what the guide forbids, even if it would appear to be highly adverse to the student**
- **Maintaining utmost reverence for them in their presence and absence, during their lives and after their deaths**
- **Giving them their due according to one's ability without stint**
- **Relinquishing one's own understanding, knowledge, and leadership to that of the teacher, unless these are already in accordance with one's teacher.**

Should the seeker not find a guiding teacher or find one who is lacking in any of these five conditions, he should depend on him only in those conditions the teacher fulfills. As for areas he is wanting in, he should treat him like a brother regarding them. Thus ends the five foundations with the praise, help, and perfect success of Allah.

It is necessary to read this every day, once or twice, and if that is not possible, then at least once a week until its meanings are imprinted on one's soul and manifest in one's behavior. Indeed, it contains that which enables one to dispense with many books and much advice, and it is said, "Surely they have been denied arrival by their neglect of the foundations." Whoever reflects deeply on what we have said will acknowledge its truth, and he will continue to have recourse to it, using it as a reminder for him.

Success is ultimately by Allah.

(Translator's note To follow) next post

The counsel of imam nawawi

[Translator's note] In addition to the above work, there is a large portion about the path to Allah that appears in the great Imam Nawawi's al-Maqaasid, which Sidi Ahmad Zarruq did not mention in his work; it is a wonderfully succinct summation of the path to Allah. Imam Nawawi, may Allah sanctify his secret, says....

The counsel of sidi ahmad zarruq

From al-qawaa'id Our Shaykh Abul 'Abbaas al-Hadrami

The counsel of imam nawawi

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One reaches Allah Most High by repenting from all things, unlawful or offensive;
 seeking sacred knowledge in accordance with one's needs;
 maintaining ritual purity;
 performing the obligatory prayers in the first of their time and in congregation, including the Sunna prayers

that correspond to each of the obligatory prayers;
adhering to the eight raka'ats of the midmorning prayer (Duha) and the six raka'ats after the sunset prayer and before the night prayer;

Performing the night prayers (tahajjud) after awaking from one's sleep; fulfilling the witr prayer;

fasting on Mondays and Thursdays and on the three days of the full moon – i.e. the 13th, 14th, and 15th of the lunar month – and also the days of the year in which fasting is recommended;

reciting the Quran with the heart's presence coupled with reflection upon its meanings;

frequently asking forgiveness of Allah (istighfar);

maintaining prayers and blessings upon the Prophet, peace be upon him; and, finally, adhering to the meritorious invocations of the morning and the evening that have come to us from the Sunna (adhkaar as-sabaah wa al-masa').

To Follow

The counsel of sidi ahmad zarruq -Translator's note by Hamza Yusuf

The counsel of sidi ahmad zarruq

[Translator's note] Finally, we add an extraordinary counsel from Sidi Ahmad Zarruq, may Allah sanctify his secret, taken from his two books *The Poor Man's Book of Assistance* (Kitab al-'laana) and *The Principles of Tasawwuf* (Qawaa'id at-Tasawwuf). It is as follows:

Know – may Allah give you and us success, rectify our worldly and otherworldly lives, and grant us adherence to the way of the Truth in our journeys and our sojourns – that repentance (taubah) is a key, piety (taqwa) is vast, and uprightness is the source of rectification.

Furthermore, a servant is never free of blunders, shortcomings, or lassitude. Therefore, never be neglectful of repentance; never turn away from the act of returning to Allah; and never neglect acts that bring you closer to Allah. Indeed, any time you fail to do one of these three things, repent and return. Any time you make a mistake, listen and obey.

Anytime you display shortcomings or show lack of enthusiasm, don't desist in your efforts. Let your main concern be to remove from your outward state anything displeasing, and then continue to work on your outward state through continuous counsel.

Continue doing this until you find that fleeing from anything outwardly displeasing is second nature to you and that your avoidance of the boundaries of prohibited things is as if it has resulted from a protective net that was placed before you. At this point, it is time to turn inward toward your heart's presence and to its reality with both reflection and remembrance.

Don't hasten the end result before you have completed the beginning, but, like wise, don't begin without looking toward the end result. This is so because the one who seeks the outset at the end loses providential security, and the one who seeks the end at the outset loses providential guidance. Act in accordance with principles and the appropriate legal rulings and not in accordance with stories and fantasies.

Don't even consider stories of how things went with others except as a tonic to strengthen your resolve,

certainly not as a reference based upon their outward forms or what they seem to be revealing. In all of this, depend upon a clear path to which you can refer and a foundation

upon which you can rely no matter what your state. The best of these is the path of Ibn ‘Ata Illah because it gives clear direction to Allah. Do not take from others’ words unless it is in accordance with your own path, but submit to their implications if you desire realization.

Avoid all forms of vain and foul speech to your absolute utmost. Put aside anything if unable to discern its benefit immediately. Beware of being extremely hard on your selfish soul (nafs) before you have obtained a mastery over it, but also beware of being too lax with it regarding any of the sacred rulings. This is so because it is constantly fleeing from moderation in everything, and it inclines toward extremism in both matters of deviance and guidance!

Seek out a companion to help you out in your affair, and take his counsel concerning matters that occur from both your inward states and your outward affairs. If you do indeed take his companionship, then treat him in a manner commensurate with his state, and give him of yourself based upon his inabilities and abilities because the perfected companion can no longer be found.

indeed, in these times, even a suitable companion who is agreeable rarely lasts.

Furthermore, beware of the majority of people concerning both your religious and worldly affairs, unless you have ascertained they have a sound relationship with their Lord, rooted in knowledge which is free of caprice and love of leadership, and they are in possession of sound intellect, free of the pitfalls of hidden agendas. Do not be heedless of the machinations of others or their hidden states. Consider these two from both their origins and their actions.

People of high character and family distinction are almost always beneficial; on the other hand, excruciating circumstances compel a person of low character and origin to forsake others in need. Be extremely vigilant of the dominant qualities of a given people in any given land,

And don’t be heedless of the Divine wisdom in the creation; notice gathering in separation. Some of this we have already covered in the book, al-Qawaa’id, so study the subject further there.

Organize your hours in a manner appropriate to each time’s specific needs, using a gentle and tolerant approach all the while being very wary of the extremes of rigidity and laxity. With laxity, this is especially necessary given that too much latitude in permitted matters sets the heart back on its journey to such a degree that even a man of resolve ends up looking like a foolish child.

Work for this world as if you will live forever, but work for your next life as if tomorrow you die.

In other words, do not neglect the externals of your worldly needs, all the while keeping in mind your end and final resting place. Be extremely vigilant about avoiding positions of leadership, but should you be tried with such matters, know your own limitations.

Be absolutely sincere to Allah with the sincerity of one who knows full well the One who is placing demands upon him. Surrender completely to His decree with the submission of one who knows he can never overcome Him. Have a firm foundation in all of your affairs, and you will be safe from their pitfalls.

Organize your devotional practices, and you will find your time is extended due to the grace that pervades it. Never be fanatical about anything, whether it is the truth or not, and your heart will remain in a state of soundness toward others.

Never claim anything to which you are entitled, not to mention that to which you are not entitled, and you will be safe from Connivance and treachery.

Indeed, anyone claiming a rank above his own will fall, scandalized and humiliated. Moreover, those who claim a rank they warrant will have it stripped from them.

Conversely, those who claim a lesser rank than their own will be elevated to an even higher one than they deserve.

Never reveal to your companion anything of your state other than what his own state warrants.

The reason is that if you go down to his level, he'll have contempt for you;

whereas if you attempt to raise him up to your level, he'll forsake you.

Never demand a right from anyone, whether an intimate or a stranger.

The reason is simple: a stranger owes you nothing, and one close to you is too important to direct your blame toward. Never assume that anyone in this world can really understand your circumstances other than from the perspective of his own circumstances, because, in reality, people see things only in accordance with their frames of reference and their personal path.

However, when aims, purposes, and aspirations are similar, people tend to work together toward a common goal.

Never belittle any talk that concerns absent people even if there is no harm in it due to the likelihood of harm entering into it. Guard your secrets even if you feel safe with someone because the one to whom you divulge your secret is not a safer vessel than your own heart before you revealed it.

Never leave an atom's weight of your regular devotional practice. Never be lenient with yourself in either relaxed times or those of high resolve. Indeed, should you miss some of your practice at a given time, redress it later.

If you are not able to do your usual practice, at least occupy yourself with some other similar practice. Never obey your selfish soul even for a moment nor believe any of its claims no matter what it says. To the utmost, guard your resolve in all affairs;

and should you resolve to do something, do it immediately before it abates or dissipates. Examine your soul constantly in matters you are obliged to do or those that you should do.

Leave off anything you don't need to do, even the recommended

in short, do not involve yourself in anything other than the absolutely necessary or that in which a real discernible need exists.

Treat others just as you would want to be treated, and fulfill what is due.

All of this is epitomized in the words of the poet when he said,

*If you desire to live such that your religion is safe
And your portion is full and your honor is sound*

*Guard your tongue; never mention another's faults
For you too have faults and others too have tongues!*

*Take care the eye, when it reveals another's faults
Saying, "O my eyes, remember the eyes of others!"*

*Live treating well all others and avoid aggression
And should they oppress, repel it but with kindness.*

The source of these words is in fact the traditions of the Prophet, peace be upon him, when he said,

“Be vigilant of Allah wherever you are, and follow a misdeed with a good deed, and it will remove it; and treat others with the most excellence of character.”

In another, he, peace and blessings of Allah upon him, said, “Every child of Adam makes mistakes, and the best of those who make mistakes are those who seek to redress them.”

He also said, “The Holy Spirit inspired my heart’s core that no soul will die until it fulfills Its decreed portion of this world and its appointed time here, so be conscious of Allah, and make your requests with dignity.”

In summation, repentance, awareness of Allah, and uprightness are the foundations of all benefits. The truth is manifest, and its details are weighty and significant. The affair belongs to Allah.

Success is in His hands. Peace.

From al-qawaa'id Our Shaykh Abul 'Abbaas al-Hadrami - Translator's note by Hamza Yusuf

From al-qawaa'id Our Shaykh Abul 'Abbaas al-Hadrami said:

Spiritual training was elevated [to a science] due to the development of a Technical vocabulary, but benefit from it is derived only as a result of aspiration and spiritual states, so adhere to the Book and the prophetic practice without omitting or adding anything.

This applies to all of your transactions with your Creator, the creation, and yourself.

As for what is between you and God, three matters are concerned:

fulfilling obligations, avoiding prohibitions, and submitting completely to His decrees.

As for dealing with the self, this also involves three necessities:

an unbiased approach to the truth;
abandoning defence mechanisms, such as self-justification;
and guarding against the dangers of the self in respect to its attractions and aversions, its acceptances and rejections, and its comings and goings.

As for dealing with people, this concerns three requirements also:

ensuring their rights are fulfilled;
virtuous lack of desire for their possessions;
and absolute avoidance of anything that adversely affects their hearts unless it concerns an obligation to the Truth that cannot be ignored.

Any aspirant of this path who inclines toward the following preoccupations will perish:

horseback riding;

general self-interests;

occupation with changing social wrongs or with fighting in military jihads while neglecting the acquisition of personal merit and virtue believing that he is in no need of rectifying his own soul or that he can obtain all of the virtues;

seeking out the faults of his brothers and others;

excusing himself by claiming abandonment of the world;

spending all of his time in religious devotion;

spending a good deal of time in public gatherings or seeking company, not for teaching or learning but simply for human companionship;

inclining toward the people of wealth, claiming he is doing so for religious reasons;

preoccupying himself with spiritual matters of the heart before learning the basis of sound transactions or the rectification of his faults;

thrusting himself forth as a spiritual teacher without being appointed by a true spiritual master, scholar, or Imam;

mindlessly following anyone who says, "follow me," whether his words be true or false, without ascertaining the details of his state;

belittling someone who is among the people of Allah, even if he should deem that person insincere based upon some proof he has;

inclining toward dispensations and interpretations;

putting the inward before the outward;

being satisfied with the outward to the detriment of the inward;

extracting from one what contradicts the other;

being content with knowledge devoid of action or with action devoid of an inward state or knowledge;

believing that an inward state suffices without the other two;

or having no principle to which he has recourse in his actions, knowledge, states, or religious practices from the accepted principles in the books of the Imams, such as the books of Ibn 'Ata Allah concerning inward matters, especially at-Tanwir, and, concerning outward manners, the book of Ibn al-Hajj, Madkhal, and those of his Shaykh, Ibn Abi Jamrah, as well as of others who follow the same path from among the realized masters; may Allah have mercy on all of them.

Any aspirant who is of the above mentioned types is in fact ruined and has no salvation on this path, but whoever holds to the Book and the prophetic practice will be safe and Godspeed arrive. Protection is from Him alone, and success is by Him.

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, was once asked about Allah's words, "Tend to your own souls."

He replied, "If you see covetousness obeyed, passions and whims followed, and every opinionated person marvelling at his own opinions, then tend to your own soul."

He, may Allah grant him peace and blessings, also said something to this effect:

In the Tablets of Abraham, upon him be peace, it is written, "An intelligent person should know the age in which he lives;

he should hold his tongue and mind his own business.

An intelligent person should have four portions of his day for the following: a portion to take his soul to account, a portion to converse with his Lord, a portion to spend time with his brothers –

meaning those who help him to see clearly his faults and direct him to his Lord –and a portion to indulge in his own personal recreation from the permissible appetites of man."

May Allah provide us with that and help us to fulfill it. May He always maintain us in a State of grace, for we cannot survive without His bestowal of grace and prosperity. Allah is enough for us, and God is the best of protectors.

May prayers and peace be upon our master Muhammad and his family and his companions

Some principles in al-Qawa'id by Zarruq

The demands made on a person should be according to his rank and he should be addressed according to his background.

A common man is not expected to have more than taqwa.

A faqih is not expected to be anything other than correct.

The murid is expected to have sincerity as well as the **first two qualities**.

The gnostic is expected to have scrupulousness. A common man without taqwa is corrupt.

A faqih without correctness is incompetent.

A murid without truthfulness is a fraud who is amusing himself.

(This is one of the principles in al-Qawa'id by Zarruq.)

Principle

Something that is common practice among ordinary people can constitute a shortcoming in the elite. That is how things are.

The imperfection of the age, the imperfection of the people and the blameworthiness of the rulers, qadis, and false pretenders to piety does not mean that there has to be general corruption.

Among the community of Musa there was a group who were guided by the truth and judged by it.

This group continued to base themselves on the command of Allah and those who opposed them did not harm them until the command of Allah came.

There is a poem on this:

Except for a group of them with virtue and restraint. There is in respect to the common people, a people who are elite in the sight of Allah. This elite adorns the land as gems adorn the rings of kings.

"People are mines." In every land there are masters and in every region there are leaders.

An individual is measured by his character.

That is why it is said that people are the creatures of their character.

As a general rule, no one is blamed unless there is a reason for it. (This is from al-Qawa'id by Zarruq with some additions)

Things are judged according to what is intended by them. Anyone who learns knowledge for its own sake acts on it. Anyone who learns it for sane (i think that should say sake) other reason is only out to disparage others.

Referring to this, **Ahmad Zarruq said in the 'Umda al-Murid as-Sadiq**, "One instance of using a thing in the wrong way is when people use their knowledge to examine others, but do not use it to judge themselves.

What you find is that when one of these people hears about a harmful matter into which ordinary scholars, fuqara' and others have fallen, he says, 'This is the state of people today. This is the way they act.' But he does not look at the same thing in himself.

He is blind to his own faults, but sees the faults of his brother. That comes from him having a good opinion of himself and considering himself blameless.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, indicated this state when he said, 'There are those among you who see the speck in their brother's eye and do not see the tree trunk in their own eye.' (Hadith)"

The only thing that stops a scholar from acting by his knowledge is the fact that he learns it for the sake of other people.

The only thing that will give them true fame is learning it for their own betterment.

Anyone who learns knowledge for his own betterment is guided and given insight.

Anyone who learns knowledge for the sake of someone else rarely benefits by it.

If someone seeks this world by actions pertaining to the Next World, the punishment of his knowledge is the death of his heart, as traditions have indicated.

So learn knowledge in order to apply it.

Do not learn it for the sake of gain thereby making it an argument against yourselves rather than an argument for yourselves and against other people.

text taken from

Kitab at-Tahir: Formulation of the Principles of Political Insight

by Muhammad Bello ibn Shaykh ibn Fodio

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[This is a translation which was done in 1984 and recently turned up. I no longer have the Arabic to check it against to see if there are any mistakes.]

In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful

May Allah bless our master Muhammad and bless his family and his Companions and all the people of his religion. Thus speaks the Amir al-Mu'minin, Muhammad Bello ibn 'Uthman ibn Fodio, may Allah forgive them all and cover them with His mercy by the rank of the interceding Prophet!

Praise be to Allah who has removed the darkness of ignorance from His awliya' by the lights of gnosis and has given them knowledge of the correct criteria in the arena of the true and the false. I testify that there is no god but Allah, the King, the Eternal, and I testify that our lord and master Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger, sent with the best of all religions. He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, lifted the darkness of all ignorance and removed all doubts. He made the path clear for the travellers and gave the most eloquent indications and proofs. May Allah bless him and grant him peace and bless all his family and Companions.

I have entitled this book "Formulation of the Principles of Political Insight". These are important principles and provide extremely useful lessons, and anyone desiring insight should learn them, and strive to memorise them so that the way will not be unclear for him, something that has happened to most of the people of the various conflicting convictions. We ask Allah to make the way easy and give success. He is the One who brings the answer.

Preface

Principle:

Any general matter is made up of various elements, and discussion of a matter can only come after formulating what it actually is. What a matter is in its essential nature is what is indicated by its totality, and knowledge of this comes by its being defined, described or explained.

Principle:

What is ascribed to matters can vary either according to the difference of the matters themselves or according to the varying degrees of possibility contained within one particular matter. Thus something can be correct because of what is intended by it in one instance and incorrect because of what is intended by it in another. This matter is permitted in this first instance and forbidden in the second permitted at one time and not at another permitted in one place and not in another permitted in one state and not in another. This must be understood.

Principle:

Every matter, whose rulings refer to single fixed meaning, is either entirely praiseworthy or entirely blameworthy. These essential matters are matters like belief and disbelief. Judgements about them do not vary according to what is ascribed to them, making them praised in one instance and blamed in another.

There are also matters that are relative. The former category comprises few things and the later many. Thus it has been said that there are only a few essential matters which are entirely blameworthy or praiseworthy. Most things are relative and subjective and vary according to different individuals, goals, times, places and states. Understand this properly. (Refer to a discourse by al-Hasan al-Yusi.)

Principle:

Although these relative matters incur differing judgements, most of them have a predominant element and most judgements about them are based on the fact that they are fundamentally either praiseworthy or blameworthy. The exceptions are rare and due to some temporary condition. A man's mentioning himself, lying, anger and slander are basically blameworthy qualities. They can, however, sometimes be praiseworthy due to some temporary condition. For this reason, in his book, *Nuzul ar-Rahma fi't-tahaduuthi bi'n-ni'ma*, as-Suyuti says, "Scholars, may Allah be pleased with them, find it proper for a man to praise himself by mentioning his own good qualities in certain situations. This is an exception to the general rule, which is that man should be harsh on himself and not praise himself. Among the things that show this is that speaking about Allah's blessing is obeying the words of Allah, 'As for the blessing of your Lord, speak out!' (96:11) They have said that a man speaking about his own good qualities falls into two categories: praiseworthy and blameworthy. The blameworthy sort is to do so boastfully, displaying ones rank and superiority over his peers and similar things. This is not permissible since Allah says, 'So do not claim purity for yourselves.' (53:32) It

is praiseworthy if it contains benefit ﴿﴾ for instance, when someone commands the correct and forbids the objectionable, gives good counsel, points out something of benefit, teaches, disciplines, warns, reminds, makes peace between two people, averts evil from himself, or similar matters. In that case, he can mention his good qualities for that might make his words more likely to be accepted and people might be more inclined to rely on what he says." Other people have also said this, so remember it. (cf. Bahjat an-Nufus)

They have stated that something forbidden (mamnu') can be permissible if that will prevent something worse happening ﴿﴾ as is the case when a man tells lies in a gathering in order to break up the unity of the unbelievers to make peace between people for the common good or to protect the property, honour, lineage, or person of a Muslim or on his own behalf when he is questioned about an act of rebellion he has committed, some property which someone is trying to seize from him by force, or from someone else. This is because truthfulness would have a detrimental effect in this instance and would lead to worse results. This is also the case when he fears that his wife and child would be alienated by the truth. In other words, it is permissible to do this to avert corruption or in order to bring about a beneficial result.

It is the same with slander. It is permissible when cautioning, seeking help or other such things. The Imams have mentioned this. (See at-Tamhid and al-Qawa'id by Zarruq).

Again it is said that anger is blameworthy except when it is on behalf of Allah or His Messenger. For instance, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, became angry when the honour of Allah was insulted. Then nothing could stand against his anger until the truth was victorious. In other words, anger has its proper place just as forbearance has its proper place. (See the Fath al-Mubin by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami)

It is also said that modesty is one of the noblest qualities and most perfect states. However, the dictates of the Shari﴿﴾a must be observed in it. There are times when modesty can be blameworthy ﴿﴾ for instance, when it prevents someone from commanding what is right or forbidding what is wrong if the necessary preconditions for doing this exist. This is a case where there is no room for modesty. It is the same when there is modesty concerning knowledge that prevents someone from asking about basic questions of the deen when they are unclear to him. Thus 'A'isha, may Allah be pleased with her, said, "How excellent are the women of the Ansar! Modesty does not prevent them from asking about things concerning their deen." Another hadith says, "In this deen of ours, it is not correct to be modest (i.e. this is blameworthy modesty) nor to be proud." (See al-Fath al-Mubin)

They said, "If someone has true belief, he fears Allah in what he says with his tongue. He speaks as little as possible, especially at those times when it is forbidden to speak ﴿﴾ like after 'Isha' ﴿﴾ except when there is some benefit in it related to the deen, such as conveying what Allah or the Prophet said, or teaching knowledge, or commanding the right and forbidding the wrong, providing it is based on sound knowledge, or making peace between people, or saying that which is better, or speaking well to people. The best words are when you speak the truth in the presence of someone in authority whose power you fear, using words which are firm and to the point. Also included are speaking with one's wife or guest or speaking about worldly things when they are connected to a man's needs or his well-being.

Principle:

Many matters that are considered relative are neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy in themselves. Therefore it is said that what is not blameworthy in itself can be praiseworthy, but not because of something intrinsic to it. This refers to things like possessing rank, leadership and similar things, which are neither blameworthy nor praiseworthy in themselves. Sometimes they are praiseworthy and sometimes blameworthy according to the circumstances. That is why the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, stated that this world was blameworthy when he said, "This world is cursed and everything in it is cursed." But he made it praiseworthy when he said, "It is an excellent mount for the believers." Allah Almighty praises people who seek leadership in this world by their saying in the Quran, "Make us imams for those who are fearfully aware." (25:74) Ibn 'Umar used to say, "Oh Allah, make me an Imam for those who are fearfully aware."

Principle:

Malik, may Allah have mercy on him, said, "The reward of those who are fearfully aware is immense, so what about the reward of their Imam?" The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "I ask You for mercy by which I will obtain the honour of Your favour in this world and the Next." A man said to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "Show me something I can do which will make Allah love me and will make people love me." He said, "Make do with little of this world and Allah will love you. Make do with little of what other people possess and they will love you." (Hadith) The truthful one (Yusuf, peace be upon him, said, "Put me in charge of the storehouses of the earth. I am a knowing guardian." (12:55)

Therefore it is necessary to examine the circumstances in each case in order to ascertain whether something should be permitted or forbidden. (See at-Tamhid.)

Principle:

Although two things might appear outwardly similar, it does not necessarily follow in many cases that the inward reality is the same. It is necessary to differentiate between things that appear similar. Each thing should be clearly defined or qualified according to its own specific requirements. For instance: is it good counsel or castigation; is it proof of disputation; or similar things. One person defends the truth, another destroys it; one is a friend of Allah, another a false pretender, and there are many other examples for this is a large subject.

As for good counsel, its aim is to benefit the person who is being counselled, and it springs from compassion and kindness whereas the point of castigation is to condemn, show disdain, censure and revile someone under the guise of good counsel.

As for proof, which is a convention based on certain definite premises, its aim is to prove a case by means of certain clear evidence whereas the aim of disputation, which is a convention based on commonly known premises, is to defeat an opponent or to convince someone who is not capable of grasping the principles of the proof, even when it is not true.

As for rhetoric, which is a convention based on accepted premises coming from a trusted person, or from premises supposed to be true, its aim is to stimulate people to do what will be of benefit to them in their livelihood or what will help them in the Next World as preachers do, while poetry is a convention based on premises by which the self is expanded or contracted through use of metre and recitation with a sweet voice, whose aim is to stimulate the self to terror or desire. Fallacious reasoning is a convention based on using false premises which resemble the truth or what is commonly known, or which is based on false hypothetical principles, whose aim is to cause doubt and preference for things which are doubtful or to make someone else fall into error by making an error correct even though it is not correct.

There are different types of this fallacious reasoning which vary according to the person who uses them or what they are used for. Anyone who makes the common people imagine that he is a wise man who draws from proper proofs when he is not actually doing so is called a sophist. Whoever sets himself up to argue and to deceive the people of verification and to confuse them by fallacious reasoning is called a disputatious troublemaker (or subverter). One variety of this is that which is used by ignorant people is when one of two opponents enrages his adversary by using words which will distract his thoughts and make him angry. For instance, he might abuse him, find fault with what he says, expose a fault he recognises in him, interrupt him, use an unusual expression against him, or divert him away from the subject of the debate. This is called extrinsic fallacious reasoning. Although it is the worst type of fallacious reasoning because the aim of the one who uses it is to injure his opponent or to deceive the common people into thinking that he has defeated and silenced him. It is the type most frequently used in our time since most of the people of this time lack any real knowledge of basic principles but love winning and cannot distinguish between truth and falsehood.

The sign of someone who defends the truth is that he is familiar with both logic and tradition. He is very precise in transmitting traditions and bases himself on clear evidence. True knowledge does not come from

hearsay or bigotry or dissension or dispute. Only someone who has clear evidence and who is precise about what he says is worthy of being consulted. If he is not like that, what he says should be refuted. The sign of the former is that he only speaks about a thing when it actually exists, but not when it does not exist, and only when it is a real possibility and not when it is not. He only speaks with a clear purpose, and he intends by his refusal to talk about other things to make things clear to anyone desiring to follow him. He does not intend by it to rebuke or criticise. He is careful that his words should not be a means of disclosing people's secrets or lead to preoccupation with their faults, or become a means of injury or castigating them, causing doubts about the people of truth or attacking them, or making sport of the honour of Muslims in gatherings of foolish people. One should be kind and merciful to ignorant people even if they are slaves, unless it is specifically necessary to speak the truth because of a judgement against them in the Shari'a. In this case, there is no room for silence or showing respect.

The clearest sign of someone who destroys the truth is that even if he knows the truth, he pretends to be ignorant of the prejudice inherent in his own opinions although that is transparent to him, vying for position or wealth by using the previously mentioned types of fallacious reasoning. His aim is abuse. This is what Sayyiduna Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Qadir al-Jilani said, "The type of person who should be the most hated is the corrupt faqih. He sees nothing but his own point of view and is only satisfied with his own understanding and his own illusions. When he speaks, he wrongs people. When he is silent, he betrays them. He uses generalisations when he should be specific. He lets common people speak although they do not have a proper understanding of language and he does not warn them against using words outside of their proper contexts nor rebuke them for showing bias against people."

Another sign is that he does not comply with the conventions of good counsel and does not give advice in the correct situation. He offers advice to a particular person openly and publicly in order to disgrace him or does something similar to actually naming him ❖ like mentioning qualities which could only refer to that person. There is no such thing as a generalisation when, in fact, knowledge of the circumstances or understanding of the situation indicates a particular individual.

As regards the difference between a friend of Allah and a false pretender, it would require a lengthy explanation because of the many varieties of false pretenders and the great divergence of their states. It would take a whole book to deal properly with this difference.

What we have mentioned about this principle should be adequate for anyone whose insight has been illuminated by Allah so that he recognises similar things which are ambiguous and which usually confuse people and misguide those who are ignorant. Since my object in writing this book is to give insight into affairs of the deen, I have presented you with these premises and given you the basis of this precept so that you will have insight into problems as they arise.

After this, we will deal with five areas showing by examples how the above principle can be applied to them. This principle is that there are different judgements about what is praiseworthy or blameworthy according to different considerations and circumstances. Allah is the One who grants success and we ask His help.

Chapter One: Principle:

Things are judged according to what is intended by them. Anyone who learns knowledge for its own sake acts on it. Anyone who learns it for some other reason is only out to disparage others. Referring to this, Ahmad Zarruq said in the 'Umda al-Murid as-Sadiq, "One instance of using a thing in the wrong way is when people use their knowledge to examine others, but do not use it to judge themselves. What you find is that when one of these people hears about a harmful matter into which ordinary scholars, fuqara' and others have fallen, he says, 'This is the state of people today. This is the way they act.' But he does not look at the same thing in himself. He is blind to his own faults, but sees the faults of his brother. That comes from him having a good opinion of himself and considering himself blameless. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, indicated this state when he said, 'There are those among you who see the speck in their brother's eye and do not see the tree trunk in their own eye.' (Hadith)"

The only thing that stops a scholar from acting by his knowledge is the fact that he learns it for the sake of other people. The only thing that will give them true fame is learning it for their own betterment. Anyone who learns knowledge for his own betterment is guided and given insight. Anyone who learns knowledge for the sake of someone else rarely benefits by it. If someone seeks this world by actions pertaining to the Next World, the punishment of his knowledge is the death of his heart, as traditions have indicated. So learn knowledge in order to apply it. Do not learn it for the sake of gain thereby making it an argument against yourselves rather than an argument for yourselves and against other people.



Principle:

There are various types of things which are basically permissible but which vary greatly according to the intention behind them. It has been said that any permitted thing can, according to the intention or intentions behind it, become one of the things that bring you closest to Allah. Clothes and food are two of those things.

Section:

As for clothes, if the intention behind them is pride or to show superiority over others, there is no doubt that this is forbidden because showing-off and boasting are great wrong actions. Allah ta'ala says, "Allah does not love anyone vain or boastful." (4:36) And it says in a sound hadith, "While a man was letting his waist-wrapper trail on the ground out of pride, he was swallowed up by the earth and he will be tossed about in it until the Day of Rising." We read in another hadith, "If someone eats something to the detriment of another Muslim, Allah Almighty will give him the same from the boiling water of Jahannam. If someone wears a garment to the detriment of another Muslim, Allah Almighty will give him to wear a garment made of the fire of Jahannam. If someone gains a good reputation at the expense of another Muslim, Allah will appropriate his reputation on the Day of Rising." If someone's aim in dress is luxury and delight in permitted things, that is allowed, even though this is one of the qualities of women and idlers. It is not permitted to blame anyone who does that since Allah says, "Say: 'Who has forbidden the fine clothing Allah has produced for His slaves?'" (7:32) Imam Fakhru'd-din ar-Razi said, "This general statement applies to all types of adornment, That includes all types of dress and jewellery. If it were not that a text had come forbidding men to use gold and silk, these would be included under this general statement as well. However, a text has come forbidding them to men, but not to women." One of the commentators said that in general, all that can be enjoyed is included in this and there is no exception for any sort of food either unless there is a text which specifically forbids it. (See the Tafsir al-Khazin.)

I say: The following ayat confirms this interpretation. Allah says, "My Lord has forbidden indecency..." (7:33) Ibn 'Abbas said that it means: "Eat what you like and drink what you like as long as you avoid two characteristics: extravagance and arrogance." (See al-Khazin on the words of Allah, "Eat and drink but do not be profligate." (7:33))

If, however, his intent is to display Allah's blessing to him in order to show gratitude for it  since the display of a blessing is a sign of gratitude for it  then this is a duty for every rich man. It is stated in a sound hadith: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'When Allah blesses a slave, he should display the mark of Allah's blessings on him. '"

If his intent is to receive delegations and those he loves, wearing good clothes is recommended for leaders of the people who can afford them. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, commanded the great Companions to wear good garments when receiving delegations and he encouraged them to do that. (See al-Iktifa' by al-Kila'i.)

If the aim is adornment for the 'Id prayer, wearing good clothes for the 'Id is recommended for everyone who can afford it. It says in one tradition, "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, commanded us to wear the best clothes we could find for the day of the 'Id." (See the Gloss on at-Taqyid.) Then he said, "It is prescribed that you should exalt the deen and strike terror into the enemy."

If the intent is for studying or teaching, it is as Ibn Hajar al-Haythami said in his commentary on the Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi: "When a man with very white clothes and very black hair came to us" It can be taken from this that students and teachers should wear good clothes, especially white ones a student because he is asking questions and a teacher because he is teaching you your deen." And he said in the Commentary on the Waghlisiyya that both scholars and students should adorn themselves with good clothes, particularly white ones, but did not oppose wearing other colours. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, wore red, black, white and green, but not blue. However, it is not related that either disapproved or approved of blue as a colour.

If the aim is to avert harm from yourself and your property or something similar to that, and it is only possible to do this by wearing fine clothes, then this is an obligation for anyone who can afford it. If, however, the intent is to gain some benefit, there is disagreement about whether that is permitted or forbidden like a horn when there is a need for it. (See Bahjat an-Nufus by Ibn Abi Jamra.)

If the aim is to be attractive to your family so your womenfolk will find you handsome and therefore be content and not be on the lookout for anyone else, this is recommended for everyone who can afford it. Observing the rights of the family is part of the Shari'a. We read in a sound hadith, "Your family has a right over you."

If the aim is to promote the best interests of the Shari'a, this is more strongly recommended like establishing particular forms of dress for rulers, qadis and governors even though this is contrary to what happened in the time of the Messenger and Abu Bakr because outward embellishment only occurred in the time of 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, when the Companions conquered Syria. They had dealings with non-Arabs and the non-Arabs only showed respect for good garments and outward forms. Some of the Companions thought that they should unite these people and put awe for the people of Islam into them by using every permitted type of clothing. On the other hand, some of them thought that scrupulousness would have a better effect on the self, as they feared its deceitfulness. If there is a specific benefit to be gained, there is no disagreement about wearing a garment which will bring that about. Therefore it is said that when 'Umar came to Syria and found that Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan had appointed a chamberlain, was using fine horses, wearing sumptuous clothes and acting like a king, he questioned him about it. Mu'awiya said to him, "We are in a land where this is necessary." Then 'Umar said, "I neither order you to do that nor forbid you from it." He meant, "You have the best knowledge of your state and know whether you really need to do this, thus making it a good thing, or whether it is unnecessary and so not a good thing." This indicates that Umar and others thought that the states of rulers and governors vary in different cities, times and circumstances. That is why it is necessary to institute new adornments and political systems that did not exist in the past. It could even be that they are necessary in certain cases. (cf. Sunan al-Muhtadin by al-Mawwaq)

Al-Qarafi said, "The innovations which are recommended are derived from the principles which govern recommendation and evidence for them in the Shari'a like the Tarawih prayers and establishing forms of dress for rulers, qadis, and governors, even though this did not exist at the time of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This is because the aims and benefits of the Shari'a can only be obtained if there is respect for the governors in the minds of the people. At the time of the Companions, people respected them largely because of their respect for the deen. This was the case until that social order became unsettled and that generation disappeared. The next generation only respected the outward forms. For this reason, it was necessary to embellish the outward forms so that the best interests of the people could be served."

Chapter Two: Principle:

Every age produces new situations and creates specific requirements. It is therefore necessary to re-examine matters so that they do not fall outside the dictates of the Shari'a. The Shari'a demands that corruption be rejected and benefits be encouraged. It is stated by the men of knowledge that at the beginning of man's history, in the time of Adam, peace be upon him, people were in a weak state, so sisters were permitted to marry brothers, and many other things were permitted by Allah at that time. When the situation was expanded and there were many people, those things were forbidden in the time of the Israelites. Saturday, fat, camels, and many other things were made unlawful. They were under obligation to do fifty prayers a day and one kind

of repentance entailed killing oneself. Impurities could only be removed by excision and there were other harsh requirements.

Then another time came when people's bodies became weaker and their stamina decreased, so Allah showed kindness to His slaves and permitted things that had been forbidden, lightened the prayers and accepted repentance. This shows that judgements and the Shari'a differ according to the time, and this is an aspect of Allah's kindness to His slaves and His continuing custom in His creation. It is also clear that the existence of these laws does not violate the basic principles and that they are not innovations deviating from the noble Shari'a. That is why al-Qarafi said, "There is no doubt that if the qadis, witnesses, governors, and trustees of our time had been alive at the time of the first community, they would not have been appointed or chosen for office. The government of these men would have been considered corrupt at that time. The best of our time is the worst of that time, and government by the worst is corruption. What was ugly then is now considered good and what was narrow is now wide. Judgements differ in different times." (From the Tabsira of Ibn Farhun.)

The men of knowledge have said that if someone is deep in debt and he is entitled to something from someone else deep in debt, judgement is awarded to him according to the dictates of general policy, but not according to the texts of fiqh since in reality, the property does not belong to either of them. However, giving that judgement according to the texts would lead to great corruption. Furthermore, it is well established in the Shari'a that it is actually a duty to choose the lesser of two evils. (This is from an-Nawazil by Ibn al-A[◆]mash.)

The men of knowledge say that every time requires its own judgements inasmuch as the things which are considered permissible can be either recommended, forbidden, or disliked. Something that is recommended or permitted at one time can become forbidden and disliked at another. This comes about because in each case the new judgement is arrived at by using other evidence that requires that judgement. The statement that it is forbidden to gather for dhikr and that doing so is disliked in this time is a consequence of this [◆] as is forbidding women to go out to the mosques and other things which have been forbidden because of what happens in them and because of them. There are two positions about these things. Some people say that because of the principle of cutting off the means, everything leading to a forbidden thing is forbidden on account of the thing itself. That is according to the school of Malik, may Allah have mercy on him. Others do not say this, but say that only the thing that takes a forbidden form is forbidden. This is according to the school of ash-Shafi'i and others. (See at-Tamhid.)

Al-Mawwaq said, "There are two permitted ways of honouring people. The first is what has come in the Shari'a, like offering the greeting "as-salamu 'alaykum". The second is what is not based on a text and was not done by the Salaf because the occasion for it did not arise at that time. It has only arisen in our time. Therefore it is now an obligation for us because the occasion for it has developed. This is like the types of address used by kings and men in high position, and standing up to honour people. All these and things like them are matters of custom which did not exist in the time of the Salaf, but which we do today. They are permissible."

Then he added that if it were not that there were recently developed reasons for these things, they would be disliked, but not haram. But after these reasons have developed, abandoning these customs would occasion a break in continuity which would itself be haram. When the disliked and the forbidden come into conflict with each other, then the decision has to be taken against the haram, even if something disliked occurs because of that. The ruling of these matters should be divided into the five categories of the Shari'a (i.e. wajib (obligatory), mandub (recommended), mubah (permissible), makruh (disliked), haram (forbidden)). (cf. Sunan al-Muhtadin.)

Chapter Three: Principle:

Custom is when a particular usage predominates within an entire country or part of it. Coinage, furniture, weddings, the oaths of Muslims, indirect ways of declaring divorce, sales transactions and wills come under that heading. In other words, judgements about these things are based on customs. If those customs change, then the judgements change. If a new custom develops, that is taken into consideration. If a custom is abandoned, the judgements based on it disappear.

Ibn Farhun said about this in the Tabsira, "You find fatwas based on this principle, in other words, certain judgements are always based on custom. If a new custom develops, it is taken into consideration and if a custom is abandoned, judgements based on it disappear and you never need to refer to the texts in the books. When a man comes to you from outside your area to ask you for fatwa, do not answer him according to the customs which exist in your land. Ask him about the customs of his land and act accordingly following his customs rather than the customs of your own land and what is written in your books. This is clearly the truth. Rigidity regarding texts is always misguidance in the deen and ignorance of the goals of Muslim scholars and the Salaf.

Oaths about divorce and setting free are derived by means of this principle, both in their explicit and their indirect forms. Explicit statements can become allusions that require an explicit intention. And in the same way, allusions can become explicit statements that do not require an intention.

In the Kitab al-Ahkam, al-Qarafi said about the difference between fatwas and judgements (Question 39):

"The sound rulings concerning these matters in the school of Malik and ash-Shafi'i and others are based on habits and customs which then attain to the state of being legal precedents for the 'ulama' in these rulings. If these customs change and begin to indicate the opposite of what they indicated in the first place, are the fatwas which are written in the books invalid, thus necessitating a fatwa according to what the new customs demand, or should we say, "We must follow what went before (taqlid) and not invent Shari'a, because we are not worthy of making ijtiḥad, and therefore we can only give fatwa according to what is in the books transmitted from the mujtahids"?" The answer to this is that when these judgements based on customs are faced with a change in those customs, they then become contrary to legal consensus (ijma') and in this case, keeping to them amounts to ignorance in the deen. Rather, the rulings concerning everything in the Shari'a which follow custom have to change when the customs themselves change according to what the change in custom demands. This does not mean a new ijtiḥad on the part of those following what came before (muqallidun) which would necessitate their being qualified to make ijtiḥad as a precondition for doing so. It is rather a principle about which 'ulama' have already made ijtiḥad and they have agreed that it should be applied. We follow them in that without having to make any new ijtiḥad.

"It is also not a precondition that the custom has to change. For if we leave one land for another land where the custom is different from the custom of the land where we were at first, we must give fatwa according to the custom of that land, even though the custom of the land where we were has not changed. It is the same when anyone comes to us from a land whose custom is different to that in our land. We can only give him a fatwa according to the custom of his land.

"This being confirmed, I will present rulings by the people of the School which were made according to custom, thus making custom the basis of their fatwa. What happens today is different, so the ruling must be specific to what the new custom demands. You should know that in this case the meaning of custom is when the uttering of a phrase and its use tend to have a particular meaning so that when that phrase is used, that meaning is understood, even though the words themselves do not necessarily indicate it. This is the meaning of a custom where phrases are concerned and the true meaning of customary usage. It is the generally understood meaning which dominates, and this is what the fuqaha' mean when they say that customary usage takes precedence over literal meaning when there is conflict between the two. The Mudawanna states, "When a man says to his wife, "You are haram for me" or "let go" or "free" or "I have given you to your family," the use of those phrases makes the treble divorce binding. It is no good him claiming that he meant less than three." This is based on the fact that according to customary usage; these phrases are known to untie the bond of marriage and known to bring the divorce about. What is understood from the statement that the woman is haram is changed from what it normally means because if the phrase retained its literal meaning, the man would definitely be a liar, since by general agreement she is in fact lawful for him. The statement that she is haram is clearly false. The sense of this phrase taken literally does not mean that she is haram for him and that the state of her being haram existed before he made this statement. This is definitely not the truth. Therefore it must be said that it is custom that has changed the meaning in three ways ♦ it dissolves the knot of marriage, signifies a treble divorce, and makes the divorce effective. On the other hand, some of the phrases used for

divorce do not effect it although they are meant to and the marriage-knot is not definitively untied. Observing this principle is the reason for the apparent difference between the later people and the Salaf concerning this matter.

"This being confirmed, you know how you will not find anybody using these earlier forms for divorce. A long time has now passed and you do not hear of anyone using these phrases to dissolve the bond of marriage nor to signify a treble divorce. Therefore the custom involving these phrases is absolutely discarded. When the custom no longer exists, only the literal meaning remains, and in normal language, these phrases are not used to mean this and no one claims that they do mean this except for someone who does not know the language. If these phrases do not convey this meaning either literally or by custom or by intention or by extension, then these rulings are without any foundation, and fatwas without foundation are null and void by legal consensus and haram for anyone who pronounces them or believes them. In fact, the expression "haram" according to our custom today does dissolve the bond of marriage, but does not signify a treble divorce. It is well known that it now means this, unlike the other expressions mentioned at the beginning, and it can only occasion a ruling of divorce which is not final. If a man uses the other expressions for divorce, he must have a specific intention. If he does not make an intention or clarify it, nothing is binding because they are hidden allusions. However, most of the people of the School and the people of this time do not agree with this and do not acknowledge it. I believe that their position is contrary to the consensus of the community regarding it. These words are clear for anyone who reflects on this matter and has a sound intellect and good opinion, and is free of fanatical adherence to anyone of the schools, a state which is not fitting for the character of those who are fearfully aware of Allah ta'ala.

"The strange thing about them is that when they are asked the question: "If a man says to his wife, 'You are divorced (taliq),' does he need an intention?" They say, "No, because it is a linguistically clear statement intending to dissolve the bond of marriage because the word ta'-lam-qaf means "to set free" without qualification. That is why one says, 'a general (mutlaq) statement,' unreservedly (talq) halal,' 'an open (talq) face,' 'and so-and-so was freed (utliq) from prison' and 'his stomach was emptied (intalaq).' The tie of marriage is a type of bond. When any bond, including the bond of marriage, is undone, then the bond of marriage must necessarily be undone." But when it is said to them, "The expression 'You are free (muntaliqa) contains all of this," their only answer is that this has been abandoned in customary usage and can only be used in divorce when a specific intention is made. When it is said to them, "If it happens that someone utters the expression "muntaliqa" and this is know as meaning to dissolve the bond of marriage at that time or in that place while 'You are taliq' is not known to dissolve the bond of marriage according to their custom, then what is the ruling?" They have no choice but to say that the divorce is binding by the expression "muntaliqa" rather than "taliq" unless by using "taliq," the man intends to untie the marriage-knot, and this is the opposite of our position today. Then it must be said to them that it is the same with the phrase "haram" and what is said in fatwas regarding it must apply to the other expressions mentioned with it whether or not they are known by custom. Anything that is well known can be used without an intention whereas something which is not well known must be accompanied by an intention. As far as being well-known is concerned, it is not enough that it is just taken to have that meaning for that comes from the study of the School and investigation into it. Rather, well-known means that the people of that place only understand that phrase to mean that thing. It is not something which comes from what the fuqaha' say. They use the expression to mean that. This is what 'being well-known' means and it changes the meaning of an expression by customary usage. And Allah knows best."

Section:

The same rule applies to dress. Clothes are neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy in themselves. They can be praiseworthy or blameworthy with to different individuals and in different places. Thus it is said that one of the earlier people related that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, forbade the Arabs from trying to look like non-Arabs. But it has not been related that he commanded any foreign delegation that came to him to abandon their clothes in favour of the clothing of the Arabs. This is the basis of Ibn Rushd's approach to the Murabitun. He said, "There is no harm in what they wear because they are known by the way they dress and are the protectors of the deen." And he said, "Allah created people and he separated them in different lands and gave them different kinds of clothing. He did not oblige any of them to abandon his own clothing for any other kind of dress. The veil of the Murabitun is their garment and it is recommended

for them to keep it and disliked for them to abandon it." He said, "There is no objection if any of them prays wearing a veil which is not the case with other people." (cf. Sunan al-Muhtadin by al-Mawwaq.)

The 'ulama' say that nothing that non-Arabs wear is forbidden unless it is forbidden in the Shari'a and basic principles indicate that it should be abandoned. What was meant by the non-Arabs it was forbidden to imitate were those who followed the way of life of Khosrau at that time. The prohibition was specific to what they did which was contrary to the demands of the Shari'a. If people do something which is in harmony with what is recommended, obligatory, or permitted in our Shari'a, we do not reject that simply because they use it, because the Shari'a is not prejudiced by virtue of resemblance. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, dug the ditch around Madina imitating the Persians. (See the above-mentioned book.)

It is said that when 'Umar came to Syria and found that Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan had appointed a chamberlain, was using fine horses, wearing sumptuous clothes and acting like a king, he questioned him about it. Mu'awiya said to him, "We are in a land where this is necessary." Then 'Umar said, "I neither order you to do that nor forbid you from it." He meant, "You have the best knowledge of your state and know whether you really need to do this, thus making it a good thing, or whether it is unnecessary and so not a good thing." This indicates that 'Umar and others thought that the states of the rulers and governors differ in different cities, times, and circumstances. That is why it is necessary to institute new adornments and political systems which did not exist in the past. It could even be that they are necessary in certain cases. (Refer to the book mentioned above. That has already been stated.)

Chapter Four: Principle:

The demands made on a person should be according to his rank and he should be addressed according to his background. A common man is not expected to have more than taqwa. A faqih is not expected to be anything other than correct. The murid is expected to have sincerity as well as the first two qualities. The gnostic is expected to have scrupulousness. A common man without taqwa is corrupt. A faqih without correctness is incompetent. A murid without truthfulness is a fraud who is amusing himself. (This is one of the principles in al-Qawa'id by Zarruq.)

Principle

Something that is common practice among ordinary people can constitute a shortcoming in the elite. That is how things are. The imperfection of the age, the imperfection of the people and the blameworthiness of the rulers, qadis, and false pretenders to piety does not mean that there has to be general corruption. Among the community of Musa there was a group who were guided by the truth and judged by it. This group continued to base themselves on the command of Allah and those who opposed them did not harm them until the command of Allah came. There is a poem on this:

Except for a group of them with virtue and restraint. There is

in respect to the common people,

a people who are elite in the sight of Allah.

This elite adorns the land as gems adorn the rings of kings.

"People are mines." In every land there are masters and in every region there are leaders. An individual is measured by his character. That is why it is said that people are the creatures of their character. As a general rule, no one is blamed unless there is a reason for it. (This is from al-Qawa'id by Zarruq with some additions.)

Chapter Five: Principle:

If undue hardship would result, things are made easy. Grapes can be cultivated in this world even though that might lead to winemaking and wine-drinking. In the same way, you have to go out to get the necessities of life

and go into the marketplace even though that might lead to you seeing a woman unrelated to you, falling into argument or indulging in forbidden behaviour. This and things like it are means which could lead to wrong action, but which it is not considered necessary to ban them on that account. This is the case when the Shari'a makes it easy for the nursing woman in respect of impurities which get onto her as a result of the child, provided they cannot be seen on the nursing garment. Things are also made easy in respect of mud resulting from rain, even if there is impurity and filth in it. It is also the case when someone has impurities on him as a result of being wounded in many places, for the fighter in respect of the urine of his horse, and for the person with haemorrhoids in respect of any discharge resulting from them. It is also permitted to abandon the pillars of the prayer and the conditions applying to it when you are under constraint as in the fear prayer or in the case of a sick person who cannot pray properly or other cases of that nature.

Ash-Shafi'i said, "Whenever there is constraint, there is an accompanying dispensation," indicating these instances when dispensation is allowed. The same thing applies when we are in a state where it is difficult to avert corruption. Then allowances are made as they are made in the previously mentioned instances. (Ibn Farhun said that in the Tabsira.)

An example of that is discovering the truth about a person who is accused of something and who is notorious for corruption according to how strong the suspicion is and the extent of his notoriety. It might be done by beating and imprisonment or by imprisonment without beating according to how notorious he is. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya al-Hanbali said, "I have not heard of any of the Imams of the Muslims saying that a person against whom accusations of this sort are made can give an oath and be released without going to prison or undergoing some other form of punishment. The release of someone like this after his giving an oath is not a ruling given by any school of the four Imams nor anyone else. If we were to let any of them take an oath and release him and let him go on his way in spite of knowing that he is notorious for corruption and has committed many thefts, and were to say that we could only arrest him if we have evidence from two just witnesses, that action would be contrary to the direction of the Shari'a. Whoever thinks that the position of the Shari'a is that someone like this gives an oath and is then released is terribly mistaken and opposes the texts of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and the consensus of the community. Because of this terrible mistake, rulers have dared to oppose the Shari'a under the false apprehension that the direction of the Shari'a is not capable of dealing with people and the best interests of the community. They overstep the limits of Allah and abandon the Shari'a by rebelling in various ways and imposing innovations in government in a way that is not permitted. The reason for this is ignorance of the Shari'a. There is a sound hadith from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in which he states, "Whoever holds to the Book and the Sunna will not be misguided." The actions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and grant him peace, indicating punishment and imprisonment of the suspect, have already been mentioned. Know that it is permitted to beat and imprison this sort of suspect and there is evidence in the Shari'a to establish that.

Another example is the punishment of someone who accuses righteous people of something not commensurate with their state. This is to protect the honour of the innocent from the people of evil and enmity. Asbagh said, "If the accused is someone known for righteousness and innocence, the accuser is punished whether or not he intended harm. "

Another example is stopping people from obduracy in telling the truth. This is one of the great sicknesses and its cure is recognition of the situations where the truth must be stated. Even if backbiting is true, it is still prohibited. Even if scandal-mongering is true, it is still prohibited. It is also forbidden for a man to talk about what he does with his wife in bed when he comes to her, even if it is true. Talking about this is one of the great wrong actions. Even if good counsel to someone in an assembly is true, it is humiliating. Only ignorant people do that because the point of giving legitimate good counsel lies in it being put to good use and reinforcing the ties of affection. If it is given in a gathering, it will not gain acceptance and it will bring about enmity and incur the blame of Allah. The person doing this should be too embarrassed to give good counsel in a gathering because when he counsels someone in a gathering, he forces the person to lie when he makes excuses for himself and to develop a grudge against him. That is a cause of great corruption. If, however, he gives him good counsel in private, when just the two of them are present, in a sympathetic manner and shows him how he is at fault regarding the matter in question with the intention of teaching him if he is ignorant of it

shamefulness, the person who is counselled will thank him and love him for that and supplicate on his behalf. That will bring him good and will weigh in his favour in his balance. Telling the truth in every instance is neither commanded nor recommended either by Shari'a or by custom except when the recipient is someone who does not accept counsel because of his insolence. This person must be told the truth because his state demands it. Anyone who removes the veil of modesty from his own face should be censured. But if civil strife occurs and the scholar remains silent, then the curse of Allah is on him.

Yet another example of this is that when travelling, someone rebelling against Allah is not allowed to shorten the prayers nor is he granted any allowance to eat carrion in case of necessity. This is to act as a restraint in order to root out the rebellion in which he is involved, whether it is highway robbery, or extortion or fleeing from justice or simply disobedience. There is disagreement about whether he is permitted to eat carrion or forbidden from it to the point that he dies of hunger. Some of the 'ulama' have given permission to eat carrion. Ibn al-Faris and Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr said that and it is the sound position.

Conclusion:

If someone has an objection, their objection must be either based on ijihad or intended to prevent something which might lead to the haram or due to lack of verification or weak understanding or insufficient knowledge or ignorance of the point or confusion in the presentation or sheer stubbornness. The way to guidance in all these cases is to refer back to the truth in what was said except in the last case. A stubborn man will not be impartial in the matter. As for the person whose objection is based on wanting to prevent something which might lead to corruption, if he refers back to the truth he will find that by maintaining his objection, which is intended to avert corruption, he is bringing about the very corruption which his objection is intended to prevent. An example of this is the warning which Abu Hayyan in his book, "The Sea" and "The River" and Ibn al-Jawzi in his "Tablis" and others have claimed and sworn to. What they have said indicates that this has been done by ijihad on their part. Ibn al-Jawzi puts margins in his books containing the statements of various people and his rejection of them. That shows that his intention was to prevent something which might lead to the haram. Allah knows best.

Praise be to Allah in the first and the last. May Allah bless Sayyiduna Muhammad and his family and Companions and grant them much peace. Oh Allah, forgive me and all of those who say, "There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace."

Qawa'id al-Tasawwuf - book release 2007/8

Description:

Qawa'id al-Tasawwuf, "The Principles of Sufism," is one of the works of Ahmed Zarruq that all biographers list among his most

important. Zarruq himself gives his reasons for undertaking this work in its opening pages as: "...to introduce the principles

and foundations of Sufism in a manner that integrates the Sacred Law with the Truth, and links the principles of religion and

jurisprudence with the Path."

Zarruq's purpose in this is not to prove Sufism's orthodoxy to its critics, but to maintain Sufism's integrity by using the

criterion of the Law to expose dangerous perversions of practice.

Qawa'id al-Tasawwuf is a monitor's handbook. ...

The Basic Research : by Shaykh Ahmad ibn 'Ajiba (Qutb)-Darqawiyah: Basic Research

The Basic Research : English translation of al Futuhat al Ilahiyya fi Sharh al Mabaahith al-Asliyya

Description from the publisher: "To travel the path of courtesy and instruction is before everything and the mightiest means to Allah. The most direct access for the slave of his Lord is to keep company with the gnostics, those who have high yearning and prophetic instruction, and to have courtesy between the hands of the shaykhs who have noblemish and are pure and who know the stations and states of worshippers, zahids, fuqara and sufis. Research their behaviour and states. and take on their highly pleasing courtesy. Realise their behaviour and their pure good manners."

This book is the commentary by Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ajiba al-Hasani on the poem of Ibn al-Banna of Saragossa.

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.....Then the author begins to speak about the subject itself, and he says:

O you who inquire about the practices of the faqir, you have asked about something which is difficult to elucidate.

Practices is the plural of practice. It is the Tariqa. When it is written in another way, it means the Shari'ah. Both are correct with respect to this instance. The faqir is the one who has taken a direction towards the Real on the carpet of sincerity. Sahl, may Allah be pleased with him, said. The faqir is the one who does not own and is not owned. He sees nothing except the time he is in.' As-Suhrawardi said, 'Poverty is the basis of sufism, and by it, it stands.' Another said, 'Poverty is an attribute which is abundant. The human nature of the self flees from it. It is one of the means by which the slave sits between the hands of Allah on the carpet of purity.' There is disagreement about whether the faqir is higher than the sufi.

The faqir is the one in whom there are no remains. Or we can say the sufi is higher because the sufi is the one whose states are pure and there is no turbidity in him contrary to the faqir. The faqir is he who takes a

direction to Allah, by the lights of direction. The sufi has the lights of encounter. So the sufi is higher than the faqir because he has arrived and the faqir is travelling. The sufi is the one who has clear threads, and the faqir is the one between ascent and descent. The sufi is the one who does not see in either of the two houses anything but Allah, and does not witness otherness with the Real. The Real has prepared everything for him, and he has not prepared anything. He takes from everything and nothing takes from him, and so on from of what he has of perfect attributes.

On the contrary, the faqir is in the path of struggle. The end of the faqir is the beginning of sufi, and Allah knows best. It is said that the sufi and the faqir are the same. The practices of the faqir are the paths that he travels and the courtesies that he takes on. In another explanation of this, the meaning becomes 'O you who ask about the path of the faqir which he travels until he reaches his Lord...'. It can also indicate the conditions of the faqir and his courtesies because these are part of the way on which he travels. As for his conditions, they are eight:

1. A sound purpose,
2. Clear sincerity,
3. Pleasing courtesy,
4. Pure states,
5. Protection of honour,
6. Excellence of service,
7. Intense yearning,
8. Determination to attain fulfilment.

1. Sound purpose is that his desire for keeping company with the Shaykh is the realisation of slaveness and the fulfilment of the rights of Lordship with out any miracles, or arrival at stations or degrees, or for desires of the self.

2. Clear sincerity here means to believe in the secret of election in the one whose company he keeps. It is the basis of the path. The one without sincerity does not travel, even if he stays with the Shaykh a thousand years.

Sincerity is the knowledge of the secret. Each knows of the secret of the Shaykh According to his sincerity. It is the prize for which the faqir spend his spirit and heart and secret. He who does not sincerely trust his Shaykh has nothing to spend on his secret. We have an indication from Asharqi, may Allah be pleased with him,

The one who does not trust has nothing to spend|
The one who does not realise brings no sign.

3. Courtesy is the key to the door. He who does not have it does not enter. The one who has bad manners with the lovers will be turned away from the door and into realm of animals.

One of the awliya used to order the people who wanted to enter and keep company keep his company to go and keep company with the authorities until they had gained manners. We will speak about courtesy if Allah wills, in its place. The one who has no courtesy with the Shaykh and the brothers gains nothing but deprivation from their company.

4. Pure states must be in accord with the Shari'ah so that the faqir does not harm any one of the People. The faqir who does not have states does not reach the Stations of the Men. Travel to the Presence of the Perfectly Pure does not occur except by going against the self.

It says in the Hikam , 'Were it not for the battlefield of the selves, meaning war on it, the travel of the traveller would not be realised.'

In this instance, states mean breaking the habits of the self and the destruction of its outward. The faqir must practice what will diminish the self and obliterate its might. These practices must be permissible. These are the

pure and pleasing states. States that are contrary to Shari'ah, and these are the states of darkness, only increase the man who has them in darkness.

In the same way that it is not proper to bury seeds in bad land, it is also not permissible to bury the self in obscurity in a displeasing manner. Pure states are those in which there is no harm for anyone and which are not contrary to the order of Shari'ah.

5. Protection of honour means protection of the honour of the Shaykh, present or absent. Alive or dead. He must not sit in a place where his Shaykh is mentioned with harm or is being diminished. He must also protect the honour of the brothers. He must take responsibility, and be patient if they avoid him. He must exalt the old among them and be compassionate to the young among them. He who is broken by the brothers is not put together by the Shaykh. The one who is broken by the Shaykh may be put together by the brothers. The faqir must protect and trust in the honour of all the Muslims, especially the scholars and people of right actions.

It is said that the pillars of sufism are gathered in four things. They are:

- 5.1 To stop harm.
- 5.2 To put up with being left.
- 5.3 To witness purity.
- 5.4 To put this world behind one's back.

6. Excellence of service is not sound except by service to the Shaykh and to the brothers. The hadith says, 'The master of the people is the one who serves them'. Excellence of service is also made sound by the service of the Truth, and that is the great goal.

7. Intense yearning is not to let his purpose be to seek this world or the next, but the gnosis of his Lord.

8. Determination to attain fulfilment means that the faqir is determined to continue to travel until arrival is realised to the gnosis of his Lord, not only for blessing and honour. If he is determined about something, he does it.

His courtesies are five:

- 8.1 To remove the veil.
- 8.2 Humility and brokenness.
- 8.3 Sacrifice and preference.
- 8.4 Keeping company with the right-acting gnostics.
- 8.5 To increase strength of obedience and invocation.....

..... Then the author mentioned the contents of the book, mentioning that it is divided into five chapters. He said:

The first is its basis.

The second is its benefit until the end of time.

The third chapter is about its rules, and when it is standing on its feet.

The fourth is a refutation of those who reject it and do not know its worth and its purpose.

The fifth is knowledge of how it changed until it became denied among people.

He says, may Allah have mercy on him, that he has mentioned in this book of the principles of sufism four matters. They are the subject and its composition, the merit and the benefit. The subject and its composition are taken from its basis. The merit and the benefit are taken from its overflow because the excellence of a thing is not perfected except by its fruit.

What remains of the principles are six, so the total is ten. They are in every art among the arts of knowledge. The finest of the people of knowledge include them as an introduction before actually beginning in the art

itself. Some of them have done this and said, The limit and the subject, then its composition and the name, and taking support is the wisdom of Shari'ah. To visualise excellent matters and where good benefit comes from.

It is a condition on the seeker of knowledge to surround by understanding the ten, and their discrimination. He must know it before he starts to seek so that he knows what he is seeking. The meaning of ' **rules** ' is what is necessary of courtesy in actions and dealings for the murid. The author has mentioned these rules and summarised them in nine points which we will deal with later on. When he says 'when it is standing on its feet, first he mentions the chapter on the rules of sufism and its courtesy to the end, and if someone knows this, then he knows sufism and he stands on his own feet. That is to say, he has gnosis.

The phrase beginning 'The fifth... ' means that he mentions in the fifth chapter how sufism has been changed until it became denied among people though it is known and famous. Then he mentions the name of the book, because it is one of the necessary introductions, and an important matter. He said: After I have divided it into chapters, and the cut in its rope has been joined I have called it ' **The Basic Research** ' concerning the whole of the sufic path.

The reason why he called it ' **Research** ' is that it is a field of research and examination about the states of the sufis and their behaviour. It is as though he says, may Allah have mercy on him, 'After having divided this book into five chapters, and I have strung the pearls after they had been scattered, these pearls became the chapters, and when the pearls were gathered, I called it The Basic Research because it is research into the foundations of the path and an examination of how it was built.

This is what the path of the sufis is. It is built in order to prune and to discipline the hearts, and to purify them of every vice and to enrobe them with every virtue so that by that they are prepared for the gnosis of the Real, Exalted is He. This gnosis is the real gnosis by way of eye-witnessing and taste and finding.'

There is much disagreement about the origin of sufism. The best derivation is that it comes from purity. It is concerned with purification. One of the sufis indicated this by saying, People have disagreed about the sufi and gone different ways. They all say something unrecognisable. I do not give this name to anyone but a man who is pure. And who has been purified until he was called a sufi. Abu Hamza al-Baghdadi said, 'The sign of the genuine sufi is that he becomes poor after being rich. He becomes humble after being mighty, and he is unknown after being famous. The sign of the false sufi is that he becomes rich after poverty and takes on might after he was humble, and becomes famous after being unknown.'

(Chapter 3 -The Rules section 9 - Education and Instruction)

.....Then the author mentions the way that the deeds move to the inward, and he

says:

Once he has grasped the outward knowledge and they have seen preparedness in him outwardly, They show him what had been ambiguous until then of the attributes of the self. Know, if you deny them, these attributes are ninety-one, and some say more.

I say that the Shaykh is still ordering the murid to outward actions like prayer, fasting, isolation, silence, invocation with the tongue until he sees that he has perfected the outward knowledge and tasted his secret and sweetness. This means that the murid has tasted the sweetness of prayer and fasting and the sweetness of isolation and silence, until isolation becomes sweeter to him than mixing with people, and silence becomes sweeter than speech to him, and invocation of Allah is mixed with him to the point that he cannot stop it even if he wants. This is the sign of the perfection of the outward wisdom.

Then the murid is ready for the inward knowledge. At that time the Shaykh shows him the attributes of his self which were hidden from him - like love of reputation, or leadership, or love of wealth, or anger, or impatience, and so on of the attributes of the self which we cannot number. One of the sufis said, 'The self has imperfections in the amount of Allah's perfections.' The author said that they are more than ninety.

As-Salmi, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'The behaviour of the self is pride, vanity, boasting, emptiness, hatred, treachery, rancour, greed, false hope, holding a grudge, jealousy, irritation, worry, restlessness, expectation, accumulation, withholding, cowardice, ignorance, laziness, aversions, antipathy, following desires, mockery, demanding, conceit, impetuosity, love of comfort, heedlessness, quarrelsomeness, domination, tyranny, enmity, discord, opposition, contradiction, fighting, rivalry, slander, false accusations, lies, backbiting, foolishness, bad opinion, obscenities, blame, insolence, betrayal, swindling, maliciousness, debauchery.'

It is obligatory on the murid to know these things so that he can avoid them and struggle to eliminate them and to exchange them for what is best. The one who does not know them will stray. The murid must exchange pride for humility and harshness for affection and lies for sincerity, and success is with Allah.

**Shaykh Zarruq, may Allah be pleased with him, said,
The roots of blameworthy behaviour are three:**

- 1. To be pleased with the self.**
- 2. To fear creation.**
- 3. To be concerned about provision.**

From the first comes desire, forgetfulness and disobedience.

From the second comes anger, rancour and jealousy.

From the third comes greed and expectation and avarice.'

He also said, 'To hold onto one thing will eliminate all of these, and that is not to be pleased with the self in any state, and to beware of it at all times .'

It is said in the Hikam , 'The root of every disobedience and desire and forgetfulness is contentment with the self, and the root of every obedience and wakefulness and abstention is your not being content with it .'

The worst thing is to keep company with a scholar who is content with himself. It is better for you to keep company with someone who is ignorant but is not content with himself. What knowledge does a scholar have who is content with himself? What ignorance does a man have who is ignorant but not content with himself? When the author says 'once he has grasped the outward knowledge' he means that the murid perfects the deeds of the outward knowledge, and this is the result of keeping company with the Shaykh, as we have seen before. Allah the Exalted knows best.

Then he mentions how the self dies, and he says:

They force it to drink the glass of death, and it screams, 'How can you kill me?'

This means that if the Shaykh wants to move the murid to inward action, he orders him to eliminate the self. That is the cause of the life of their spirits, as Ibn al-Farid puts it, 'In death there is my life'. The Shaykhs make the murid drink the glass of death, against the will of the self.

That is done by **breaking its habits and stopping it from its desires** . The greatest habits are might and reputation. It does not move to humility and obscurity and humbleness except after a great struggle and a fierce death. If humility and might, and obscurity and appearance are the same to it, then it is dead.

Muhammad ibn Khalif, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'A man is not perfected until his heart is even with regard to four matters: withholding and giving, might and humility.'

Shaykh Abu Madyan said, 'The one who does not die does not see the truth.'

Shaykh Abu'l 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'There is no entering upon Allah except by two

doors: by the great annihilation, which is natural death, or by the lesser annihilation, with which this group is concerned.'

One of the sufis said, 'One does not enter upon Allah until one has died four deaths:

1. **The red death, which is to oppose the self.**
2. **The black death, which is to endure trials and harm from creation.**
3. **The white death, which is hunger.**
4. **The green death, which is to wear the patched robe.'**

Shaykh Zarruq, may Allah be pleased with him, said, '**The death of the self does not occur except by three means:**

1. **To isolate it from its willing, so that it neither moves nor remains still except by the realisation of intention that is in accord with knowledge with out desire.**
2. **To turn away from everything that it appreciates in the world of bodies and natures, knowledges and deeds, meanness and realities, and basics.**
3. **The third is to leave whatever is left to which it still inclines.'**

This is why Shaykh Abu'l 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'The wail does not arrive at Allah until the desire for arrival is cut off from his self.

This means with courtesy and submission, not from boredom, as Ibn 'Ata'illah, may Allah be pleased with him, mentioned.

This is why Shaykh Abu Muhammad 'Abd as-Salaam ibn al-Mashish said in his supplication, ' O Allah I seek refuge in You, from the coolness of pleasure and submission, like others seek refuge in You from the heat of disobedience and management.'

Al-Wasiti', may Allah have mercy on him, said, 'To find obedience sweet is a deadly poison.' The author's phrase 'and it screams, " How can you kill me? " 'is the tongue of the state of the self, which is near the tongue of its speech.

Man hears it from the inward of the self like it was a sensory speech. The self would choose sensory death by preference and it stays that way until it is tamed and disciplined. This is the sign of its death, and Allah the Exalted knows best. Then the author indicated the actions of the people

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The seventh rule concerning travel and visiting Shaykhs

Know that travelling has courtesies which are requested at the beginning and courtesies which are requested afterwards. **The courtesy of the beginning is 'Istikhara' because the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'The one who does Istikhara will not be turned away, and the one who asks counsel will not regret it.'**

Al-Bukhari said from Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, used to teach us Istikhara in the same way that he taught us the Fatiha.

He said that if anyone wants to do something important, let him do two raka'as and then say, 'O Allah, I seek good from You by Your knowledge, and I ask You for strength by Your power. I ask You for some of Your great and sublime overflowing. You have power and I do not. You know and I do not know, and You are the Knower of the unseen. O Allah, if You know that my situation is of benefit to me in my Deen and in my life, and my final end, be it sooner or later, then decree it for me and make it easy and bless me in it. But if you know that my situation is bad for me in my Deen and the rest of my life, then divert it from me, and divert me from it, and destine the good for me wherever it may be and accept it from me. You have power over all things.'

The two raka'as must be done using the Surah of the Kafirun and the Surah Ikhlas and Istikhara must be repeated three times, or seven times if the matter is very important.'

And one must ask counsel if one has a Shaykh, and must not travel without his permission, and if one does not have a Shaykh then it is best to seek advice from someone who is known for right action among the right-acting scholars, and from the parents.

One must travel with good intention and must not travel for this world and just to make an excursion. We will speak more about this if Allah wills. There is goodness according to intention.

The Pole, Shaykh al-Mashish said to Abu'l Hasan, 'Do not move your feet except where you expect the turning of Allah. Do not sit except where you are safe from disobeying Allah. Do not keep company except with the one who will help you to obey Allah. Do not choose for yourself anyone except the one who will increase you in certainty, and they are very few.'

Part of the courtesy of travelling also is to take a companion. In some hadith it is said, 'Take the companion before the path.' The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, advised against travelling alone. He said, 'A single rider is one shaytan. Two riders are two shaytans, and three are a procession.'

He must not travel except with his own people, nor keep company with any except those who bring him near his Lord. In the hadith, when the Companions asked, 'Who shall we keep company with, O Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'The one who when you see him reminds you of Allah, and whose speech increases your knowledge, and whose actions remind you of the next world.' The meaning of 'to sit with' is to keep company with in general, and is applicable to travelling.

Another part of the courtesy of travelling is to pay debts and to return what has been left with you, or if there is no hurry, to leave someone in charge of it. If he has done something wrong, he should go and free himself of it, because he does not know whether he will return or not. He should also be prepared to take a skin of water from which to do wudu.

As-Salmi said, 'The traveller must take a water-skin for purification.' Then he said, 'I heard my father, may Allah have mercy on him saying, "One of the Shaykhs, if he met travellers, used to greet them. Then he would check their hands and fingers to see if they had the traces of carrying the water-skin and if he found these traces he would welcome them well, but if not, he would not welcome them well." '

One of the sufis said, 'If you see the sufi and he does not have water with him, then know that he is determined to leave the prayer and to reveal his private parts, whether he wants to or not.'

The traveller must also take with him the stick, needle, thread, scissors, knife, those things that will help him fulfil his obligations as he is requested. If he wants to travel he must also go around his brothers and tell them of his journey, and say goodbye to them. He must also visit the ones with whom he has been keeping company. This was the courtesy of the Shaykhs with regard to what was required at the beginning of travel.

Also required was four raka'as of prayer before beginning. Adh-Dhilmī reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, **when he wanted to travel used to pray four raka'as, and in every raka'a he read Surah Fatiha and Surah al-Ikhlas.**

When he had said the salam he used to say, 'O Allah, I come nearer to You by them so make them my khalif for my family and my wealth.' When he rose from sitting down to travel he said, 'O Allah, by You I spread, and towards You I am oriented, and by You I am immune. O Allah, You are my trust and my hope.

O Allah be enough for me above what bothers me and that with which I am not bothered and above what You know better than me, and give me a provision of taqwa of You, and forgive me my wrong actions and direct me towards goodness wherever I turn.' Then he would read the Surahs al-Kafirun, al-Ikhlâs, and the last two surahs. He would say goodbye to his family and Companions and neighbours. He would say, 'I leave you in the hands of Allah, and whatever is stored with Him is not lost.'

They would say to him, 'May Allah provide you with taqwa and forgive your wrong action and make goodness easy for you wherever you are.'

There is also the recitation of the wurd of travel which is:

10 - Astagfirullah

10 - The short prayer on the Prophet

10 - Allah is enough for me and there is no power and no strength except with Allah.

This is how we learned it from our Shaykhs. And our Shaykh added ten repetitions of '**In the name of Allah the Merciful the Compassionate**', and said it must be said after the prayer on the Prophet.

This wurd is a protection and a fortress in every travel, it is said, even if it is only a short trip. It is better to say it before saying goodbye.

If he has a mount, he says when he puts his foot in the stirrup, 'In the name of Allah', and when he is seated on its back Praise belongs to Allah. Glory be to the one who provided this for us, and to our Lord we will return. Glory be to You, I have wronged myself. Forgive me no one forgives wrong actions except You.' This is how at-Tirmidhi reported it.

Another one added, 'Praise be to Allah who carries us on land and sea and has provided us with goodness and has preferred us over much of what He has created. O Allah, we ask You in this, our travel, right action and taqwa and actions with which You are pleased. O Allah, make our travel easy and make us obedient after it. O Allah, You are our companion in travel, the Khalif of our family O Allah I seek refuge by You from the hardships of travel and the sadness of the return, and from bad vision in wealth and family'

He must then say, '**Allah is Great**' and '**Glory be to Allah**' and '**Praise belongs to Allah Thirty three times each and sav There is no God but Allah**' once When he has started to travel he is requested to invoke Allah and to reflect and to look at the Majesty of Allah.

As soon as he sees some thing, he knows Who made it, and Who is its Master. If he goes up on a high hill he says, 'Allah is Greater' and when he descends into a valley he says, 'Glory belongs to Allah' .

If his mount slips away from him, he says, 'O slaves of Allah, stop it'. If he sees a village or a town he says, 'O Lord of the seven heavens and what they shade, O Lord of the seven earths and how insignificant they are and the Lord of the Shayateen and how they have strayed off the path, and O Lord of the wind and what it has blown, I ask of You the benefit of this village and of its people, and I seek refuge in You from its evil and the evil of its people and whatever evil there is in it.'

Once he arrives at the town or village he puts his hand on its wall and reads three times Surah al-Quraysh If he says that, his body will remain sound until he leaves it.

When he enters it he says, O Allah, bless it for us' three times, 'O Allah provide us with its fruits and protect us

from its contamination, and make us likeable to its people and make us like the right-acting one among its people.'

We will see the rest of this courtesy The faqir must have a firm grip on this courtesy of the Prophet, it is a proof of love. Allah the Exalted said, 'Say: If you love Allah then follow me, and Allah will love you.' And Allah the Exalted knows best Then the author talks about the wisdom of their travel and its purpose and he says:

Their School in travel through countries is to visit the Shaykhs and the brothers. Then, to acquire knowledge and hadith or for repayment of obligations or contemplation, Or for obscurity, or to negate position, or to the Prophet or to the House of Allah.

I say that the practice of the fuqara at their beginning, is to travel in various lands and not to stay in their homeland. The author has said ten things concerning this:

1. The first is that they travel to visit the Shaykhs

1. The first is that they travel to visit the Shaykhs. This the greatest reason after Hajj and to visit the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace. This is because of what is in it of increase and acquiring praiseworthy attributes and getting rid of blameworthy attributes, and the acquiring of knowledge and States. The amount of overflowing in it is so great that only Allah knows its extent.

We will examine some of it if Allah wills. Abu Razeen, may Allah be pleased with him, said that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'Visit for Allah. Whoever visits for Allah **seventy thousand angels** go with him saying, "O Allah, unite him as he has united in You." And a caller calls, "May you be ennobled, and your steps, and may you have a chosen place in the garden." '

What the author has mentioned refers to a visit from people who are alive. As far as the dead are concerned, whoever has a Shaykh of Instruction does not need to visit anyone else, dead or alive.

At-Tujibi said, 'To visit the dead ones is not the path of the sufis.' I say that is so, because the sufis are rich with the live ones, and they only visit the dead ones to supplicate for them and ask mercy on them. **Whoever has no Shaykh of Instruction must visit the dead ones a lot because the most that the dead can do for him is to guide him to the truth.** On this subject, the right-acting Shaykh Abu Ishaq Sidi Ibrahim at-Tazi said:

To visit the masters of fearful awareness is a cure
And the key to the doors of guidance and goodness.
It brings to the empty breast a will,
It opens a breast which has shrunk from the
vastness of the burden.
It gives victory to the one who has been wronged and it raises the one unknown.
It acquires the non-existent and it heals the one who is broken.
How many times it has freed a murderer from the abyss
of wrong action,
And thrown him into the ocean of those who
The Basic Research
are deputies and right-acting.
How many a murid has it made win an instructor,
Expert, with insight into the trial and into what cures.
So he puts over him a Yemani robe, embroidered
With Fatihah, success, and victory.
So hurry to it, people have declared its secret.

They have counselled with it, O friend,
in secret and in the open.
Visit and be courteous, after clarifying your purpose,
The behaviour of the owned one with the free owner.
There is no difference in its rule from the wayfaring
Instructor and a majdhoub, or those alive and those dead.
Or between one who is zahid and a worshipper,
each receives overflowing.
But the sun is not like the moon.

2. The second reason for travel is to visit the brothers.

2. The second reason for travel is to visit the brothers. There is no doubt that travelling to visit the brothers is a great nearness, and is the best sort of travelling. Allah the Exalted said, 'Whoever befriends Allah and His Messenger, and those who believe - the party of Allah are the victorious.' The meaning of 'Those who trust' is those who support the Deen, who give counsel of the slaves of Allah, and these are the fuqara who are oriented towards Allah. Whoever meets them receives counsel from them and is made to remember Allah. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'Allah the Exalted says, "My mercy becomes written for those who love each other for Me, those who sit with each other and visit each other for Me, those who exchange for Me." ' This was reported by Malik. He also said, may Allah bless him and give him peace, that, 'In the garden there are houses whose inward can be seen from their outward, and whose outward can be seen from their inward. Allah has prepared them for those who love each other for Him, visit each other for Him, and exchange for Him.' Tabarani reported it.

From Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, 'A man visited a brother of his in another village, and Allah the Exalted sent an angel to him, and when he came to him he said to him, "Where are you going?" "I want to visit a brother of mine in that village."

He said, "Do you have anything that you want back from him?" The man said, "No, I love him in Allah." Then the angel said, "I am a messenger from Allah to you. Allah loves you like you love your brother."

Reported by Muslim. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, also said, 'Whoever visits a sick man, or his brother in Allah, a caller calls on him and says, "May you and your steps be ennobled" ' The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, also said, 'Any slave who visits his brother for Allah, is called by a caller from the heavens who says, "May you be pleased, and may the Garden be pleasing to you." ' Allah the Exalted says that 'In the Unseen Kingdom of My Throne, My slave visits me, and I will reward him.' And He is not pleased with any reward for him but the garden.

'Abdullah ibn Nasa'ud said to his companions when they came to him, 'Do you sit with each other?' They said, 'We never do otherwise.' He said, 'Do you visit each other?' They said, 'Yes, O Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman, a man among us who loses his brother goes walking to the end of kufr until he finds him.' He replied, 'You are well as long as you are doing this.'

3. The third reason the sufis travel is to acquire beneficial knowledge

3. The third reason the sufis travel is to acquire beneficial knowledge. There is no doubt that travelling to acquire knowledge is obligatory. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'To seek knowledge is an obligation upon every muslim.'

He also said, 'The one who has travelled a path in order to find knowledge, Allah makes easy for him the path

to the Garden.' He also said, 'Anyone who goes out of his house seeking knowledge, the angels lay down their wings in pleasure with what he has done.'

From Qubaysa, may Allah be pleased with him, who said, 'I went to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, and he said to me, "What has brought you, O Qubaysa" I said, "I have grown old and my bones have become brittle, and I have come to you so that you may teach me what will benefit me with Allah." He said, "O Qubaysa you have not passed by rocks or trees or earth but they have asked forgiveness for you." 'The Prophet also said, may Allah bless him and give him peace, 'Whoever sets out wanting to learn knowledge for Allah, a door upon the Garden is opened for him and the angels lay their shoulders down for him, and the angels of the heavens and the fish in the oceans pray upon him.

The scholar has more benefit than the worshipper, like a full moon compared to the smallest star in the sky. The scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets. They did not inherit a dirham nor a dinar, but they inherited knowledge.

Whoever takes knowledge has taken an abundant portion. The death of the scholar is a disaster that cannot be healed, and a crack that cannot be repaired. The death of a whole tribe may more easily be borne than his death.'

The meaning of 'knowledge' in the hadith is beneficial knowledge. That is the knowledge of the Presence of Allah and His Attributes. The meaning of 'the worshipper' that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, compared the scholar to, is the one who knows how to fulfil his obligations. There is no doubt that the worship by the ignorant is not equal to that by one who knows. The scholar who has knowledge of Allah is the friend of Allah, and the scholar who has knowledge of wisdoms of Allah is the scholar who is acting and who is sincere. Allah the Exalted knows best.

4. The fourth reason that the sufis travel is to acquire the hadith of the Prophet may Allah bless him and give him peace

4. The fourth reason that the sufis travel is to acquire the hadith of the Prophet may Allah bless him and give him peace. To travel in order to acquire these hadith is like travelling to acquire knowledge, because they are the source of knowledge. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'May Allah give excellence to a man who has heard from us something and transmitted it as he heard it. Perhaps, the one who transmits it is more aware than the one who hears it.'

5. The fifth reason to travel for the sufis is to stop wrong action.

5. The fifth reason to travel for the sufis is to stop wrong action. To travel for this purpose is an obligation, and for the faqir it is Deen or a settlement, or one of the rights of the slaves. He travels to stop it or to free himself of it. This is how as-Salmi mentioned it. He went on to say, 'Then to seek hadith and to reflect, then for the exercise of the self, and then for hidden invocation.' Shaykh Zarruq said in his interpretation, 'To stop some slaves from wronging others and to change evil for good is for those who can, as long as it does not diminish them in Deen.'

I say that if he explained it as to stop the matter with forgiveness and putting things right, it would have been nearer. That is for the perfect ones among them. Then he said, 'One wants to flee from wrong-action because the mumin does not diminish himself. And Allah the Exalted said, " O My slave, those who have trust - My earth is vast, so worship Me." And he also said, "Is not the earth of Allah vast, that you may travel in it." One wants to flee from the place where wrong action happened, like Ibrahim ibn Adam's flight, may Allah be pleased with him, from his land, and others.'

There is a hadith about the man who killed ninety-nine people. When he killed the hundredth, he was guided to turn to Allah, and it was said to him, 'Leave your land. It is a land of evil.' All of this is acceptable, but what the author has said is the purpose. And Allah the Exalted knows best.

6. The sixth reason that the sufis travel is contemplation

6. The sixth reason that the sufis travel is contemplation of what he sees in his travel of mountains, rivers, springs, oceans, trees, fruits, different created beings. We have already seen that he must intend this at the beginning of his travel.

7. The seventh reason that the sufi travels is for the purpose of burying himself in obscurity or to negate reputation

7. The seventh reason that the sufi travels is for the purpose of burying himself in obscurity or to negate reputation. Sincerity is not realised until a man is diminished in the eyes of people, and they are diminished in his eyes. There is no doubt that if a man is alone in lands where he is not known, he will be secure from appearance. To bury oneself in obscurity is the purpose of the sufis in the beginning. It is noticed in the end.

8. The eighth reason for which the sufis travel is to negate reputation

8. The eighth reason for which the sufis travel is to negate reputation. This is very near to burial in obscurity. The difference is that the one who is buried in obscurity is one who has no reputation anyway, and wants to remain like that, and to negate reputation is for the one who has a reputation and wants to remove it. If he travels to a place where no one knows him, then his obscurity is realised. He must keep his name secret and hide his state so that he is not known. If he is known, whatever he fled from will come to him. The meaning of 'harmful reputation' is what is not straight or the reputation from which one fears evil or occupation or the reputation to which the self inclines. To be content under the shade of might is a great obstacle.

9. The ninth reason for which the sufis travel is to visit the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace. This is one of the great nearnesses and the highest degrees

9. The ninth reason for which the sufis travel is to visit the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace. This is one of the great nearnesses and the highest degrees. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'Whoever visits me in Madinah must have my intercession.' And the one upon whom we ask blessings and peace also said, 'One does not get ready for travel except for three things: The mosques of Makkah, Madinah and the 'Aqsa.'

10. The tenth reason the sufis travel is to visit the House of Allah and to stand on 'Arafat, and this is an obligation for whoever can, and is desirable for the others, once they have performed the other obligations.

10. The tenth reason the sufis travel is to visit the House of Allah and to stand on 'Arafat, and this is an obligation for whoever can, and is desirable for the others, once they have performed the other obligations. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'Whoever comes as a pilgrim to this House and was not immoral or obscene, will leave his wrong actions until he is like the day he was delivered from his mother.' Shaykh Zarruq, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'All of these things need the renewal of the intention to realise the purpose, because the self is treacherous, and there are disasters.' Contemplate this in the story of Ahmad ibn Arqam.

His self sought Jihad and he became amazed, and he said, 'Really, my self, you are ordering me to good. This is amazing.' Then he asked Allah the Exalted, saying, 'O Allah I believe in what you say, that the self bids to evil and that it lies. So reveal to me the reality of this matter.' Then the self said, 'O Ahmad, you kill me so many times a day that nobody notices me, so I wanted one death so that it might be said, "He died as a Shahid."' The Imam Abu Hamid, may Allah have mercy on him, said, 'Look how it accepted pride after death.'

I say that one of the benefits of travelling is good health of the body and of the heart. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'Travel and you will gain good health and you will find goodness.' Another of the

benefits of travel is to die as a stranger. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, also said, 'The stranger is a Shahid and his grave becomes vast.

Then the author mentions what we have already understood and he said:

Their travels are not excursions, their direction is towards Allah. Their travel is not without permission from the Shaykh, the fathers, or the brothers. It is not for asking charity, or for a man who gives and is praised.

I say that their travel was not for excursions in the land, but to please the Merciful. The purpose is concerned with gravity and realisation and discussion and fineness. They do not move their feet, except where they will find the pleasure of Allah. Their elevated yearning is connected only to Allah They are totally absent from other than Him and they face nothing with their yearning except the Beloved. They do not travel by their hearts except to the presence of the Near One who answers.

On the contrary the common folk are overpowered by the self, and their desires control them. If they move towards obedience, the self mars it and spoils their intention. It outwardly shows them obedience, and it inwardly hides treachery.

It is reported that a man came to say goodbye to Bashar al-Hafy when he wanted to go to Haijj He said 'I intend to go on Hajj, is there anything you want? Then he said to him, 'How much have you prepared to spend?' He said to him, 'Two thousand dirhams.' Then Bashar said to him 'What is it that you want out of your Hajj, an excursion, or yearning for the House desiring the pleasure of Allah?' He said, 'Wanting the pleasure of Allah' Bashar said to him, 'If you find the pleasure of Allah the Exalted, and you are in your house, and spend two thousand dirhams and are certain of the pleasure of Allah, would you do it?' The man said, 'Yes.'

Then Bashar said, 'Go and give the money to ten people who want to pay back their debts, or a poor man who wants something to live by, or to one who has a family he wants to feed or the one who is looking after an orphan and wants to make him happy If your heart is strong enough to give it all to one person, then do so If you bring happiness to the heart of a muslim man, or rescue someone who is needy or remove the affliction of someone who is needy, or help a man who has less certainty, it is better than one hundred Hajjes after the obligatory one.

Then he said to him, 'So get up and do as we order you, or tell us what is in your heart.' Then he said to him, 'O Aba Nasr, travel is stronger in my heart.' Bashar smiled and said, 'If wealth is gathered from dirty business, the self decides to spend it on something which is outward good action, and Allah the Exalted has said He will not accept any but deeds out of taqwa of Him.'

Shaykh Abu'l Hasan ash-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'If Allah the Exalted is generous with His slave in his movements and his stillnesses, He prepares for him worship for Allah and hides from him the desires of the self so that he begins to move in His worship and desires are hidden from him and he pays no attention to any of them, as if he were completely separated from them.'

If Allah the Exalted diminishes a slave in his movements and stillnesses. He prepares for him desires of the self and hides from him His worship. So he moves by his desires, and the worship of Allah is completely separate from him, even if outwardly there is some worship in him. These are the cases of wilayat and humiliation.' But immense sincerity and great wilayat find desires and rights for those who have inner sight because such a man is by Allah in whatever he takes or gives. Their travel is not without asking permission of the Shaykh and the parents, because travel without permission of the Shaykh has no baraka, and no journeying to Allah in it, but is a break of the contract which he has taken with his Shaykh, that he should not move except with his permission. The fuqara in the past used to ask permission about even smaller matters than this. One of the fuqara found some broad beans and brought them to the Shaykh and said, 'What shall I do with these, O master?' The Shaykh said to him, 'Break your fast with it.' Some of those who were present said, 'O master, does he even ask your counsel concerning vegetables?' He said, 'Yes. If he goes against me in anything he will not succeed.'

This concerns travel to far away places, but near travel which one must perform is an easy matter. To ask the permission of the parents is strongly recommended. Shaykh Zarruq, may Allah be pleased with him, says, 'The right of the parents is obligatory by Shari'ah except in one matter. Seeking knowledge of his state, and Jihad, and the Hajj if he has not much time left and has the means.' As-Salmi said, 'One must not travel without the agreement of the parents and teacher, so that there is no disobedience in the travel and so that there is baraka in it.'

I say that this is if they do not stop him from visiting the Shaykh. But if they do stop him from visiting the Shaykh of Instruction and keeping his company, then there is no benefit in asking them. Al-Bilali has mentioned it in the summary of the Ilhya. He mentions it in the chapter of the reality of the inward knowledge. Shaykh Sanussi said in the commentary on al-Jaziri, 'But if the self is victorious it is like the enemy. Otherwise, it must be fought with strength of knowledge in action. In this case there is no question of asking permission from parents or others.' This is confirmed by the saying of Allah the Exalted, 'If they fight you to make you associate with Me what you do not know, do not obey them.'

Association is in two categories, a larger one and a lesser one. The lesser association one cannot be free of, except by keeping company with one who is free of it, and that is the Perfect Shaykh. The Qur'an is a vast ocean, and everyone takes from it according to his capacity. What is appropriate in disobeying the parents and keeping the Shaykh company is in this poem,

I do not listen to whoever counsels me
and I have a deaf ear for the jealous one,
I risk desires in Your love,
and I leave father and mother for Your pleasure.

I have heard from our Shaykhs and from others that a young man used to attend the circle of the Shaykh of our Shaykhs, Sidi Yusuf al-Fasi. The young man's father used to counsel him against it and reprimand him. Sometimes the father used to go to the Shaykh and say 'Leave my son alone.' The Shaykh used to say to him, 'My son, obey your father in everything except with regard to coming to us and being present at our circle.' This means that he had taken the path of al-Ghazali, who considered that learning the knowledge of sufism was fard 'ayn (obligatory at the source). And Allah the Exalted knows best.

When as-Salmi said, 'so that he might not be disobedient to his parents', know that to be disobedient to the parents is not merely going against their will.

Parents are in three categories:

the first are parents with abundant intellects and vast breasts. They do not get angry about things.

The second group have very little intellect and very narrow breasts. They are offended by the slightest matter. They become angry over nothing.

The third group of parents are those between the first two groups.

The first ones are disobeyed if the son travels without asking permission, even if they do not become angry. The second group are not disobeyed when he travels without permission even if they are angry. The third group, when they are angry, it is a sign that they have been disobeyed.

I heard this explanation from some of the scholars of Fez, and it is a good one. And Allah the Exalted knows best.

Asking permission of the brothers is a good thing, because they may accompany him on this journey. Their travel should not be in order to seek charity but for the pleasure of the Merciful or to remind the brothers or to exercise the self. The one who travels for this world has no worth with Allah.

Whoever's yearning is for what enters his belly, his worth is what comes out of it. It is better for the one who has this yearning, to remain in his house. But if there is a gift that was given to him, and he took it with the intention of the Shaykh, and he spends of it whatever is necessary, this is alright.

Travel for the one who is generous and known to be giving is bad for him because people will seek from him, and greed is very ugly and scrupulousness is very beautiful.

Sayyiduna 'Ali, may Allah ennoble his face, entered Basra and found people in the mosque and he told them to leave, until he came to Hasan al-Basri, and he saw upon him containment and guidance. He said to him, 'I will ask you, and if you answer me, I will give you. If you do not answer me I will ask you to leave as I have asked your companions.' Hasan said to him, 'Ask whatever you want.' He said to him, 'What spoils the Deen?' Hasan replied, 'Greed.' Sayyiduna 'Ali said to him, 'What builds the Deen?' And Hasan said, 'Scrupulousness.' He said to him, 'Remain seated, the likes of you should speak to people.'

As-Salmi, may Allah have mercy on him, said, 'The faqir does not travel just to make an excursion or to be arrogant among people, or to seek this world, or to persevere in following desire.' Abu Turab al-Naqshabi, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'There is nothing worse for the murid than travel in order to pursue his desire. No murid has been spoiled except by idle travels.' Allah the Exalted said, 'Do not be like the ones who went out of their villages with pride, to show off to people.' The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'There will be a time when the rich ones of my community will take the Hajj as an excursion, and the middle ones as a business, and the respected ones among them to show off, and the poor ones of them to beg.' Abu Hafis Nishapuri said, 'The traveller must have three things: Avoidance of being occupied with providing sustenance and to judge the path, and to know that Allah is protecting him.'

Then the author mentioned the courtesies of arrival, and he said:

When they arrive it is better that they go to the Shaykh and then to the fuqara.

I say that part of the courtesy of the fuqara is that if they arrive in a place, whether it is the land where their Shaykh is or not, first they should go to visit its Shaykhs and great ones, and then they should go to visit its fuqara.

To visit someone first is a mark of respect, according to his Station, and the one who does not show respect will not be respected. If the fuqara go to visit a Shaykh, they must not enter his presence except believing the perfection of his wilayat. They must not enter in order to test, for then they would be deprived of the baraka. Whoever goes to see the awliya with a scale in his hand gains nothing but deprivation. Whoever goes to see them with respect and excellence of belief will get from Allah perfection of love and excellence of affection.

He must separate himself from his knowledge and his deeds and his states in the same way that he does this with his own Shaykh. He must do the same with the fuqara. He must not go to them except believing their perfection, and he must step aside from his knowledge and deeds and follow their actions and what they indicate. He must not pretend to that knowledge in their presence but must see that they have actions which are more perfect than his and a knowledge which is more perfect than his, and that he depends upon them, even if he is higher than them in the outward. He must see their deeds as more complete than his own, even if he has more completion in them.

Everything depends upon the realities, and they are inward, in the heart. He must drink from them according to his belief. He must take from their support, according to his sincerity. What we have mentioned applies to the cases where there is choice, but if there is no choice, then the fuqara must be visited first. The author's phrase 'it is better that' means that it is definitely proper courtesy to visit the Shaykh first and the fuqara afterwards, and Allah the Exalted knows best.

Then the author mentions the courtesy of meeting the Shaykh and sitting with him and speaking with him. He said: The People have courtesy here because they make their speech an answer. If the Shaykh asks them to say something, they speak, otherwise, silence is best. I say that meeting with Shaykhs has its own courtesy. When the fuqara come close to his house, they recite, 'There is no god but Allah' and invoke Allah with loud voices, and they continue in this until they arrive at the Zawiyya. That is because they glorify the relation with the sufis. Also, they do this when they are near to villages because it wakes the forgetful and the shayateen.

Part of the courtesy also is to wait for the Shaykh to come out without calling him and without sending a messenger to him, because Allah the Exalted said, 'Those who call to you from behind walls, most of them have no intellect.'

Another part of the courtesy is to kiss the hand of the Shaykh. It is a mark of respect and it is an instruction in courtesy and fear, and the poet said,

O you who want the wine of love
Take it from me, it is permitted
O you who want to drink a draught of it
Lower yourself to the feet of men
I have lowered my head to every Shaykh
They are the Lords, they gave me a cool drink.

Another part of courtesy to the Shaykh is to sit between his hands in stillness and respect with a lowered voice and their heads and eyes lowered. They do not speak to him until he begins to speak to them.

Shaykh Harraq said, may Allah be pleased with him, 'If one of the fuqara is requested to speak, and if the speech is ordinary, then he should speak with a low voice. If the speech was about knowledges and realities, he should reflect and if his self is present, he should leave it, otherwise he should speak about it with the fewest words possible, because speech in the presence of the teacher is aversion.'

Then he said, 'One of the most amazing things that I have seen was that some people come to the man of perfection so that they may benefit from him, but then employ their tongues speaking about realities thinking that perhaps by that they would be near to his heart and be loved by him. I do not know whether that is because they believe that that will bring them nearer to him or whether it is to show him that they understand and taste.

All of it is ignorance, may Allah protect us from it.' I say, that in the state of discourse there is no harm if he speaks from his knowledge to help the Shaykh, but this must be done with humility and humbleness, and he must not go against his speech. If he does not understand the speech of the Shaykh, or thinks that it is against his point of view, he should say, 'I am sorry, I have not understood this. It appears to me like this and that, and

so-and-so has said this and that', and all this expecting an explanation from them, not going against them.

If there is a disagreement between the Shaykh and some of the fuqara or others, he must support the Shaykh as much as he can, because this can bring affection from the Shaykh to him. If the Shaykh asks one of the fuqara to speak, then the least should be said, with humility, otherwise, silence is better. I have indicated this courtesy with some additions in my 'Aynia which I composed about courtesy. I said,

With the Shaykh there is a courtesy, if the murid does not have it, he is lost in the river of separation.

Humility, fear, sincerity, love, intellect, and perfection is gathered in him.

Do not raise your voice if he is present

Do not laugh, there are disasters in laughter.

Do not ever go against him, he is following by the light of the witnessing of the inner sight.

Do not glance at a water other than him,

Or you will be thrown, broken, wasted with thirst.

Do not leave the cover of an instruction which

Supports you with lights from it, successively,

Until you see that the time of maturity has come

And in fixity you have become known.

You will be supported by lights from every aspect

And you will give drink to the people who are following.

Then the author indicated the courtesy of those receiving them with respect to those arriving, and he said:

It is an obligation on those who are resident to treat the newcomer with generosity. He visits the People in the protected zone, and that is only a mark of respect. They must greet the newcomer first, then feed him, then make him comfortable. Then they speak to him after that with light conversation, following the action of Ibrahim. They dislike questioning the newcomer, except about his Shaykh and students.

Here the author mentions six courtesies concerning those who are receiving the guest:

1. The first is to receive the one who is arriving with generosity, and this means to go and meet him with good care, and happiness, and to make him at ease. They should take him to a place where he is shown respect, like a house or a Zawiyah - and a house is better. When he is in the house, those who did not go out to meet him should come to see him, because the one who is visiting has more right to be greeted first, except in Makkah. In that case, the visitor must go first to greet those who are living near the Protected House of Allah, as a mark of respect to the House. This is what is meant by the verse.

2. The second courtesy of those who are receiving the guest, is to begin by greeting him first. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'Anyone entering who is startled or perplexed should be greeted first. Whoever is feeding someone who is hungry should give him something to eat first.' This is what was indicated in the phrase 'they must greet the new comer first'.

3. The third courtesy is quickly to give him something to eat. This food is called 'Qiran,' which means whatever is ready without effort. This is something which should be hurried. One poet made a composition on this and said:

Hurry - with turning-to-Allah, and whatever is ready for the guest, and burial,

To marry a virgin, and to repay a du'a.

4. The fourth courtesy of those who are receiving the guest is to show generosity in food without effort and without negligence. The sufi does not burden himself, nor does he put a burden on others. There should not be over spending. As-Salmi says, 'When Abu Hafis arrived at al-Junayd's he made a large effort to serve him. Abu Hafis denied it and said, "If you come to Khorrasan, I will show you what is the proper thing to do." He was asked what it was, and he said, "You turn my companions effeminate by giving them all sorts of food and treats every day The proper thing to do with us is not to make effort." Then he said to him, "If the fuqara come to you, serve them without great effort, so that if you become hungry they become hungry with you, and if you are full they are full with you, so that they come and go the same way you do." '

5. The fifth courtesy is to speak to him with a light speech, as Ibrahim, peace be upon him, did. He began by greeting them, and then he gave them food, and then he spoke with them, as is mentioned in the Qur'an concerning the guests of Ibrahim. Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said, 'What is it that you desire, O messenger?' The author indicated this by saying, 'Then they speak to him after that with light conversation, following the action of Ibrahim.'

6. The sixth courtesy of those who receive the guest is that they should not ask him about the states of this world. This is not interesting, and it hardens the heart. The author indicated this when he said, 'They dislike questioning the newcomer'. The source of what the author has mentioned is what as-Salmi, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'The residents must greet him first. The one who arrives must be greeted first, except if he is in Makkah. He must visit the ones who live near the House of Allah.'

Then, whatever is present of food must be given to him, without effort, so it is said that the courtesy to the guest is to greet him and then to give him something, like the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, did. They entered upon him and he brought them a calf. Allah the Exalted said, 'You have an excellent example in Ibrahim and those with him.' The guest must not be questioned about the affairs of this world, but must be asked about the news of his Shaykhs and companions and the brothers who help each other to good deeds.'

Then the author indicated that awrad must be continued during travel, and he said:

They dislike preventing him from doing his awrad, how could they do this when he came for increase?

I say that awrad are what is made a practice for the murid by the Shaykh or whatever the murid has taken as a practice for himself. The meaning here is that whatever he used to do before travelling he should continue to do when he travels. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'The most loved action to Allah is what is done regularly, even if it is a little.'

This of course is according to what is possible as otherwise travelling would be very difficult. Something becomes difficult during travel which was not difficult when at rest. He will have his reward anyway, even if he does not do it. In the hadith we find, 'If a man is sick, or travelling, he must do whatever he used to do when he was healthy or at rest.' Yes, reflection and consideration must not be left if he is one of its people.

The same is true of discourse. How can he leave his awrad completely when he is travelling to seek inward increase? One of the Shaykhs used to say, 'Invoke Allah when you are in expansion, and reflect when you are in contraction, and praise Allah in every state, and do not leave your wurd. If you miss it at night, then make it up in the daytime. If you travel, do all the invocation of your wurd, or leave it.'

Then the author said:

He who travels for the desire of the self will be ordered to remain seated.

I say that this is very clear. We have already seen this meaning many times, especially in the narration concerning Abu'l Hasan ash-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him. In most cases, the one who does not have a Shaykh of Instruction travels for the desire of the self, except for the extraordinary. No one leaves the desires of the self except by keeping company with the one who has left them, and Allah knows best. As-Salmi

said, 'If the faqir enters a town in which there are many Zawiyas, he must go to the biggest one, where the most fuqara are.' I say that this is if they are all part of his Tariqa.

Otherwise, he goes to the people of the same Tariqa as his. The faqir must camp in places where there are pure places and running water. I have heard from Abu Tahir al-Ashqar who said, 'I have a fine faqir who keeps me company. Every time we go to a place, he goes to check on the places of purification. If he finds them clean and sound, he feels at ease in the place and will eat whatever food he is given. If he does not find it this way, he does not eat the food of the place, and says, "This is a disaster, there is no lavatory here." '

If he enters a town in which there are no fuqara, he goes to the ones who love fuqara and have the best trust in them and the strongest inclination. If he enters a house, he must take a place and take off his clothes in secret. When he removes his clothes he must begin with the left hand side, and then the right hand side, and when putting them on he must begin with the right hand side. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'If one of you puts on his shoes, let him begin with the right one, and when he removes them, let him begin with the left.'

Then the faqir must go to the place of purification and do wudu and then he must pray two raka'as. If there is a Shaykh there, he must go to him and kiss his head, unless the visitor is an adolescent, in which case he must kiss his hand.

Part of the courtesy of travelling is that whoever wants to travel must learn the wisdom of travelling. This refers to shortening the prayer, the rules of tayammum, etc. of what is necessary to the traveller. Shaykh Abu Yaqub as-Soussi, may Allah be pleased with him, said,

'The traveller needs four things in his travel, otherwise he should not travel:

- 1. The first is knowledge that will regulate him.**
- 2. A scrupulousness that will veil him.**
- 3. Behaviour that will protect him.**
- 4. A certainty that will carry him.'**

Abu Ru'aym was asked about the courtesy of the traveller, and he said, 'His yearning must not precede his footsteps, wherever he stops is his house.' Part of the courtesy of travelling is, if there is no Muqaddim among them and no Shaykh, they must choose one as Muqaddim to which they refer.

As-Salmi said, concerning the courtesy of keeping company, 'Part of their courtesy if they gather is that they bring someone forward so that they can refer to him and rely upon him. He must have the best intellect, the highest yearning and the highest state. He must be the one with the most knowledge of the School and the noblest.' The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'The Imam of the people is the one who most reads the Book of Allah. If they are all equal, then the one who has more knowledge of fiqh.

If they are all equal, then the oldest. If they are all equal, the one who migrated earliest, then the one with the most excellent behaviour and the most perfect courtesy.' Following this, we would say that the one who met the Shaykh first should lead. Part of the courtesy is that none of them say, 'This is mine and that is yours', or 'if it were not for this, that would not have happened' or 'perhaps...!', or 'why did you do this and why did you do that...!' and so on.

This is the behaviour of the common people. There is no exchange of insults among the sufis. It is said that the sufi neither insults nor is insulted, and fighting does not happen among them, nor heated discussions, nor mockery. Everyone among them is like a son of a great one or like the father of a small one, and to the equal like a brother, and to the parents and to the teachers like a slave.

This is not merely specific to travel but is the courtesy in keeping company all the time. But it applies especially to travel because travelling reveals fault and defect. No one remains in his state during travelling, except the truthful ones.

Part of the courtesy of travelling is that when one is near a town he says, 'There is no god but Allah alone, with no associates. And He is powerful over all things. To Him belongs the Kingdom and to Him belongs the praise. Returning, worshipping, prostrating to our Lord, and Praising Him. Allah is truthful with His promise, and He gives victory to His slaves and defeated the parties alone.' The traveller continues to say this until he enters the town itself. When he enters the town he says, 'O Allah, give us stability in it and give us Ihsan.' When he enters upon his family he says, 'Returning to our neighbours, according to what is possible for him.

He should enter at the beginning of the day and not at night-time. If this is not possible, he must send a messenger to tell his family. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, counselled against visiting one's family at night, and Allah the Exalted knows best, and success is with Allah.

Then the author indicated the eighth rule, which is the rule of begging, and he said:

Ibn Ajibah on the Hadhrah

Ibn Ajibah on the Hadhrah
Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim
Peace and blessings on Muhammad, his family and companions

Ibn Ajiba said,

Dancing is divided into three categories:

- 1. The forbidden.**
- 2. The permissible.**
- 3. The recommended.**

1. The forbidden category is the dancing of the common with ladies and youths present. This can lead to spoiling and uncontrolled lower natures, and satanic selves and so on. Its purpose is to show off and to exhibit a state, which is not real. This is also forbidden. This is why certain people have said that dancing is forbidden.

2. The permissible category of dancing is the dancing done by the right-acting ones and the fuqara without ecstasy or finding. They do it as a relaxation to the self and energy for their hearts, fulfilling the conditions of time and place and the brothers. No women participate in it, nor youths. This is permissible, and it does not call for prohibition, because the causes of forbidding dancing are what was mentioned before. The latter case is free of these conditions. If this dancing is compared to what the Samiris did when they worshipped the cow, it is seen that their dancing was forbidden because their was spoiled. Their purpose was to glorify the calf, and to be happy with it. This is kufr. If their dancing had been free of that it would not have been forbidden for them.

It is confirmed that Ja'far ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, danced in the presence of the Prophet may Allah bless him and give him peace, when he said to him, 'You resemble me in creation I and in behavior' This was mentioned by Shaykh Sanusi in his Musrat al Faqir.

Ibn Layun at-Tujibi said, 'As for dancing in the mosque, it is in the Sahih Muslim collection from A'isha who said, "An army came from Ethiopia beating drums on the day of the feast in the mosque. The Prophet may Allah bless him and give him peace, invited me and I put my palms on his shoulders and watched them play." ' Ibn 'Aynia said that 'zafaf' was to dance. So it is confirmed that dancing is permissible. If it was forbidden in its essence, it would not have been done in the presence of the Messenger of Allah.

3. The category of dancing which is recommended is the dancing of the sufis, the people of taste and state, whether they are in ecstasy or seeking ecstasy, whether that is in the presence of the dhikr, or in sama'. There is no doubt that the cure of the heart of forgetfulness and gathering with Allah is sought by whatever means there are, as long as they are not forbidden with a clear and definite declaration of them as forbidden. We have seen the speech of al-Junayd when he was asked about sana'.

Al-Fasi said in commentary on the Hissn of the Shaykh of Islam, al-Suyuti, may Allah have mercy on him, 'How can standing be denied when Allah the Exalted has said, "Those who invoke Allah standing, sitting and reclining on their sides"?'

A'isha, may Allah be pleased with her, said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and give him peace, used to invoke Allah at all times. If he was standing he swayed.' So there is no denial to the one whose delight is witnessing and ecstasy-It is reported in the hadith about the dancing of Jafar ibn Abu Talib in the presence of the Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless him and give him peace, when he said to him, 'You resemble me in creation and in behavior.'

That dance was because of the delight he found in the speech of the Prophet. The Prophet may Allah bless him and give him peace, did not deny it and this is the source of the dance of the sufis. It is confirmed that people stand up and dance in the circles of dhikr and sama'.

Among these people are great Imams, and one of them was the Shaykh of Islam, 'Izz ul din ibn 'Abd as Salam, as is mentioned in the Ihya. This is also confirmed by the hadith reported from A'isha, may Allah be pleased with her, and the people from Ethiopia who were dancing. The Prophet may Allah bless him and give him peace, said to her, 'Would you like to look at the dance of the Ethiopians?' Ibn Zakri mentioned it in the commentary of the Nasihaj. It is reported from previous times, from both the east and the west that the sufi is used to gather to remember Allah and that they used to dance. It is not reported that any of the worthy scholars denied them. I have seen in Fez, in the Zawiyya of as-Siqilli, a group who used to do dhikr and dance from the 'Asr on the day of Jumu'ah until the 'Isha, with a lot of scholars around. No one denied what they were doing. It has reached me that our Shaykh, the Shaykh of the group Sidi at-Tawdi ibn Sudah used to be present with them sometimes. He did not deny anything to the fuqara, except someone who was a cold imitator or an argumentative competitor.

Doctors of the Heart

Excerpts from "Openings from Allah" by Shaykh Ahmad ibn Ajiba, a commentary on the Andalusian Sufic text, "The Basic Research".

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He is a herbalist, a pharmacist, an ophthalmologist, and a master of kohl, an expert physician.

It is a condition upon the doctor of the hearts to know the composition of the cures of the heart, and its beverages, and the food of the spirits. He must also know the benefits of invocation and its tastes, the results of reflection and its gnosis. Invocation is like food for the hearts, and knowledge is like its drink. Discourse is like food for the spirits, and reflection and the glance are like its drinks. To keep company with the Gnostics is of great benefit to the hearts, and the spirits, and the secrets. It is their food and their drink and in it is their cure, every one according to his sincerity and his love and according to his degree and station. Every tribe knows its drinking place.

The Shaykh must know how to cure the inner sight. If it is bad because of doubt or *kufir* or hypocrisy, he must extract from it this impairment of trust. He must give it tranquility and clear certainty. This cure belongs to the people of great light and great care. They make one independent by a glance, even if the inner eye is apparently sound, but is shut because of the sickness of the sensory and illusion, or is blinded by meanness and disturbance and carelessness. The sign of this is that the one who carries it struggles to get what has been given to him and does not fulfill what is required of him. He cures him with the *kohl* of the unification of actions until he becomes certain that the one who is singled out with creating and forming is the one who is singled out with judgment and management. The one who planted the tree is the one who will water it and guard it. At this stage, worry will leave him, and disturbance and carelessness and fear, and meanness and avarice. His heart becomes strongly bonded to his Lord, rich from otherness.

When the inner eye has opened and the light is manifest to it, and it sees the nearness of the Real to it, but because of its weakness it cannot witness the light, the Shaykh puts on it the *kohl* of the unification of attributes. If it is open, and it can witness the light which surrounds it, but its own light is not strong enough to join it with the lights surrounding it, he puts on it the *kohl* of the unification of the essence -- then its light connects with the light of the kingdom of power, and it does not witness anything but the light. Only then is its cure complete and successful. This is the commentary upon what ['Ibn 'Ata 'Illah](#) said, 'The gleams of inner sight allow you to witness the nearness of the Real to you, and the inner eye allows you to witness your non-existence because of His existence, and the truth of inner sight allows you to witness His existence and not your non-existence nor your existence.' 'Allah was, and nothing was with Him. He is now as He was.'

The phrase of the author, 'an expert physician', means that the Shaykh must know and gather all the knowledges of transactions. He must have gnosis of all the sicknesses and their cure. The people of his time know this in him, and the people of the art confirm it. This is not really a condition because the people of this art are hidden, and Allah the Exalted knows best.

Then the author goes on to say, concerning the states of the Shaykh,

He has reached expertise in symptoms, and the opposite sicknesses of the stomach, more than Galen or Hippocrates.

He says, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Shaykh must be more expert in the knowledge of hearts than these two famous *hukama* in their field. What he means by symptoms is everything that becomes a barrier for the *murid* in his travel, like his inclination toward leadership and reputation and his coming forward to position before his perfection. Another example would be inclination towards this world or occupation with means before he matures and perfects his going-on, and so on of what interrupts traveling. What he means by the opposite sicknesses are the low desires and purposes. The Shaykh must recognize the desires of the self and *shaytan* and angelic and Lordly desires. He must also know the noble and disgraceful purposes and elevated yearnings and low ones. He must cure the *murid* of mix-ups and gather his heart on Allah and upon being absent from other-than-Him by complete annihilation in Him so that he has a heart which is completely dedicated to Him. He must cure him of low purposes like love of desires by guiding him to realize slave-ness and to fulfill the functions of Lordship which are required of the Gnostics. And Allah the Exalted knows best.

If all these matters are perfect in the Shaykh, then it is appropriate for men to go to him for the cure of what is inside of them of illnesses. The author has explained this by saying,

When what he has is real, the critically ill and the sick seek him. He cures them of sicknesses, and the one whose heart is enraged becomes pleased.

I say that when these matters are realized in the Shaykh completely and perfectly, the sick one and the critically ill seek him out so that he can cure them of the sicknesses of their hearts. The greatest of these sicknesses are anxiety about provision, fear of creation, and management and choice, then anger and impatience when the decree has taken place. The Shaykh cures him by his yearning, the light of his inner

sight, and by his glance until the heart of the sick one is full of the light of certainty. Then he becomes independent, by Allah, of everything else and the lights of reliance upon Allah shine upon him and he rests from the struggle of management and choice.

Then he tastes the sweetness of *Iman*. He is pleased with Allah in every state and time. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, said, 'The one who is pleased with Allah as his Lord, and Islam as his *deen*, and with Muhammad as his Messenger has tasted *Iman*.' In the *Tanwir*, it is said, 'The one who is pleased with Allah as his Lord submits to Him, and the one who is pleased with Muhammad as a Messenger follows him and the one who is pleased with Islam as a *deen* acts according to it.' I say that there is no doubt that the heart, when it is sick, does not taste the sweetness of trust. It does not savor obedience and conversation. The mouth of the sick one cannot savor drink or food. If the heart is sound, then he tastes the sweetness of trust. One of the pillars of *Iman* is to trust in the decree, its good and its bad, its sweetness and its bitterness. He must find everything that comes from Allah sweet, however it may be, because it is all from the Beloved. May Allah reward the one who said:

I am pleased with what Allah decrees,
His order is accepted with openness among the pious
If man is struck by the fire of struggle,
The pure gold is like cast gold
The one who has patience does not fear any matter but
He is happy in the two states, without any doubt.

The phrase, 'the one whose heart is enraged becomes pleased' is the sign of the cure. As long as the slave is in contraction, majesty, and difficulty or is in expansion, beauty, and ease, there is still a remainder of sickness of the heart in him. If all the states are the same with him, that is a sign of soundness and perfection. Then he joins the stations of men.

Dhu'l Nun al-Misri, may Allah be pleased with him, was asked, 'What is the description of *'Abdal*?' He, said, 'You ask me about pitch darkness, to unveil it to you. They are people who remember Allah by their hearts, glorifying their Lord because they know His majesty. They are the proofs of Allah the Exalted over His creation. Allah the Exalted has given them the garment of light from His love. He has raised the banners of guidance to show them how to get to Him, and He has given them the station of heroes by His will, and He has given them some of His fear, and He has purified their bodies with His watching and He has perfumed them with the scent of the people of His transactions. He has given them robes from His love and has placed on their heads the crowns of His good care. He has deposited in their hearts rubies of His Unseen, and their hearts are connected by His union. Their yearnings flee to Him, and their eyes in the Unseen are looking at Him. He has established them in looking at Him and He made them sit on the chairs of the doctors among the people of His gnosis. He said to them, 'If one is sick because of losing Me, or because of being separate from Me, then cure him. Or if one comes to you who is sick because of fear of Me, give him victory. If one comes who thinks he is safe, then warn him. If one comes who yearns for union, then let him hope. If one comes who is traveling towards Me, give him provision. If one comes who is a coward in his transaction with Me, then encourage him. If one comes to you who has given up hope in My bounty, then give him hope. If one comes who hopes for My excellence, then give him good news. If one comes who has a good opinion of Me, be in expansion with him. If a lover of Mine comes, unite him. If one comes who glorifies My worth, then glorify him. Or if one comes who has done wrong action after My excellence (*Ihsan*) to him, reprimand him. If one comes who seeks guidance, then guide him...' to the end of what he said, may Allah be pleased with him.

Then the author calls our attention to the purpose of this knowledge, and says,

This is not the medicine of Galen, it is concerned with selves.

Here, he has brought our attention, may Allah have mercy on him, to the fact that this type of medicine is not the medicine of the bodies which Galen the *hakim* used to know. Rather, it is the medicine of the selves, which makes them suitable for the Presence of the Perfectly Pure. This is the medicine of the heart which

cures it of the sicknesses of forms and which readies it for entrance into the presence of the Knower of the Unseen. It makes it one of those who come to Allah with a sound heart, and makes it a sincere seat for a King of great worth, next to the Generous. May Allah give us the delight of dwelling in His presence in this world and the next.

Ahmad Ibn `Ajiba: Regarding Our Supports on the Sufi Way up to the Prophet (Pbuh)

Know - may God lead you on the way of realization and lead you, and us, on the road to success! - that there is no way to travel the Sufi path (tasawwuf), especially if one is aspiring toward unveiling (kashf) and realization (tahqÓq), without constant and complete obedience and submission to a "realized" (muhaqqiq) shaykh, a spiritual guide (murshid) joining together esoteric truth (haqÓqa) and exoteric law (sharÓ`a). For the spiritual path is perilous and the slightest deviation from the road that is laid out results in missing the goal by a great distance.

Ab° l-Hasan al-ShushtarÓ 1 expressed it this way:

"He (that is, the aspirant) cannot do without placing his affairs in the hands of someone who will command him [to do good], forbid him [what is evil], and watch over him. For the way is perilous: few are the travellers and many are those who cut short the road.

Often, the traveller believes himself to be in the middle of the road when he is already turning his back on his goal. It has sufficed that he deviate by the distance of a finger, and he is already off the path and lost.

The way is narrow, in truth, for him whose soul, following anchored habits, wishes to dispose freely of a body (badan) that it is called to leave. The demon of this road knows well its stations and stages."

Ab° YazÓd is reported to have said the following:

"He who, has no master has Satan as his master."

Al-Daqqâq 2 said:

"The tree that grows by itself, without having been planted, grows leaves but no fruit. If it does grow fruit its fruit is not like the fruit of trees that have been planted.

Ab° `Amr al-ZajjâjÓ 3 said:

"Nothing will come from the man who has no master, even should he have visions of the invisible."

Shaykh Ab° l-`Abbâs al-MursÓ 4 said:

"He who has not had a shaykh on this path [the Sufi path] will not be able to make his neighbor happy. Even were he endowed with great intelligence and a submissive soul, such a man, if he is satisfied with what the master of erudition (shayh al-ta`lÓm) teaches him, he will not reach the perfection of him who places himself in the hands of a master educator (shayh al-murabbÓ).

The soul is always covered with thick veils, strongly inclined to associate [illusory realities with God], and it is inevitably left with the stains of futility (ru`°nât). This state cannot totally cease unless one places oneself in the hands of a third person, and if one places oneself under the person's authority and power.

Such is also the case for those for whom God has reserved special graces, whom He has taken and attracted in His Presence: those individuals will not attain the function of spiritual guide (mashyaha), despite how far they have progressed."

...

notes:

1 Ab° l-Hasan al-ShushtarÓ , an Andalusian traveller on the way and poet

2 Ab° 'AlÓ al-Daqqâq, d. 412 /1021, was al-Qushayri's Sufi master, as well as his father-in-law.

3 Ab° `Amr al-ZajjâjÓ, A Sufi from Nishapour; in Baghdad he was the disciple of Junayd, and spent a number of years in Mecca, where he died in 348 / 959-960.

4 Schaykh Ab° l-`Abbâs al-MursÓ, successor to Imam ShâdhilÓ, d. 694/1296 in Alexandria. One of his disciple was Ibn `Atâ' Allâh.

quoted from:

The Autobiography of a Moroccan Soufi: Ahmad Ibn `Ajiba; ed. Jean-Louis Michon; Fons Vitae; usa;

Ahmad Ibn `Ajiba: On Our Passing to Esoteric Knowledge

Know that esoteric knowledge [Sufism - tasawwuf] aims at purifying hearts of vice and embellishing them with numerous virtues. When hearts are purified of vices and embellished with virtues, lights shine in them, secrets appear in them, intuitive realities (al-haqâ`iq al `irfâniyya) and lordly secrets (al-asrâr al-rabbâniyya) are unveiled in them. It is thus that one reaches contemplative gnosis (ma`rifat al-`iyân) and attains the station of perfect accomplishment (maqâm al-ihsân).*

These are the contents of esoteric science [Sufism - tasawwuf].

*That is, the third - and the highest - degree of religion (al dÓn), according to the famous hadith called "Gabriel's hadith" (Muslim, chap. 1), in which the Prophet defined islam as observance of religious law with its five pillars, imân as faith in God, in His books, His messengers, etc., and ihsân as "worshipping God as if you saw Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you!"

quoted from:

The Autobiography of a Moroccan Soufi: Ahmad Ibn `Ajiba; ed. Jean-Louis Michon; Fons Vitae; usa;

Ahmad Ibn `Ajiba: On The States And Trials On The Way To Deliverance

Know - may God have me, and you, understand what the pathway of His friends is, and may He have me, and you, take the path of the pure! -that the way must necessarily entail a break from one's habits (harq al-'awâ`id), the acquisition of valuable traits (iktisâb al-fawâ`id), and struggle against individualist tendencies (ijtihâd al-nuf`s), so that you might enter into the Holy Presence.

"How is a break with habits going to take place for you if you can not manage to break the habits of your soul?" "If there were no domains of souls (mayâdÓn al-nuf`s), no traveler would make the voyage."

The men of the elite are only distinguished from normal men by the battle they wage against their individual soul. The most tenacious of the habits that must be torn away from the soul are [love of] glory and [of] wealth, such that glory is changed into humility and wealth into poverty. Humility and poverty are two monumental doors for gaining access to God and attaining His Presence.

Ab° YazÓd, via an interior voice, was addressed by God in the following words: "O Ab° YazÓd! Our stores are filled with acts of obedience (khidma); come to Me through the small door of humility and dependence (iftiqâr)!" ...

quoted from:

The Autobiography of a Moroccan Soufi: Ahmad Ibn `Ajiba; ed. Jean-Louis Michon; Fons Vitae; usa;

Peace and Blessings on the Messenger and his family and Companions

Ḥaḳīqah aṭ-Ṭay The Reality of Scrolling A Summary from the Iqādh of Ibn ‘Ajībah (ra)

By: Isma’īl Dhul-Qarnayn

Our Shaykh say that there are six realities (ḥaḳīqah pl. ḥaḳā’iq) of the heart:

1. Jadhb
2. Fayd
3. Tawajjuh
4. Tawassul
5. Ṭay and
6. Irshād

In this issue we’ll focus on the fifth, ḥaḳīqah aṭ-Ṭay. Ibn ‘Ajībah (ra) said in his Iqādh:

True Scrolling is when the world is folded in a way when you see the after life closer to you than yourself.

The Masters divide scrolling or folding in four parts; time, place, dunya and the self. As far as time it is making one time short while at the same time making another long. Like in one place where it has passed for him 60 years while at the same ‘time’ in another place one hour. One story is given that a man made the ritual bath on Friday before sunset in the Euphrates and when he finished he went into Egypt, married there, had children and remained there for 60 years. Then he went one day to the Nile and made the ritual bath. When he finished he continued on the road until he reached Baghdad before the Friday prayer from the same day which he came out. Al-Farghānī gave a long account of this in his commentary of the Tā’iyyah.

With folding time, some saints have this power and they are referred to as ahli l-Khaṭwah. That is when a saint takes one step and it reaches to the horizon. Though this is famous among the saints, like Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, but this can also be performed by those who are not saints who are involved in magic and use it in acts of persuasions and seductions. The main distinction between a saint and one who performs magic in this action is in the next summary, the folding of the world.

The folding of the world is that the world folds for you by the way of asceticism and being ‘absent’ from the world. Therein which he obtains absolute certainty of heart. As the saints say that when the illumination of your heart shines forth you would surely see that the next life is closer to you than if you were to first travel to it by death.

For the self, it is effacement of one of Allāh in which a person obtains the state when he ceases to exist and absolute attachment with his Lord. For the Naqshbandi Masters, teaches us effacement by use of Muraqabah with the Shaykhs. To be dressed with their rūḥānīyyah in order to be delivered to the assembly of the Messenger (saw), this ultimately brings one to the presence of Allāh. This is explained in more detail on the website of as-Sayyid ash-Shaykh Nurjan’s website at NurMuhammad. Ibn ‘Ajībah makes it clear in his commentary of the Hikam saying, “It is not the case that the world folds for you. Like if you are in Makkah then travel to another land in a matter of seconds. The case is that characters of yourself are folded for you and you find yourself in the presence of your Lord.”

He continues, “It is when you leave all of it and nothing remains in you and during this time is when you venture to the realm of the Dominion (or they say the realm of the Soul) and the radiance of the realm of Absolute is revealed to you. This is mentioned in the saying of the Messenger:

The world the trail for the believer

It means that he takes the trail by turning away from the world. It was said to Abū Muḥammad al-Murta'ish, "There is a man who walks on water." And he said, "In my opinion, the one whom Allāh makes one strong to oppose his false desires is greater than walking on water or flying in the air."

He continues, "Defying false desire and to be absent from everything is by ascetism, our Shaykh says, 'don't delight when you find a ascetic who does a lot of litanies, prayers, fasting and seclusion until you see him free from the world and he turns from it and he doesn't have regret in turning from it. At this time, let one delight in such a person, even if his prayers, fasting, litanies and seclusion are little. It is mentioned in the Tanwīr, "Many prayers are not proof for one to be an ascetic or for that matter being consistent in his prescriptions. But what demonstrates this is his light, his knowledge, his effacement with his Lord, how much his heart is enrapture to Him, his emancipation from the enslavement of creed and his embellishment of piety. By these actions the spiritual constitutions are purified.

End quote.

And for Naqshbandi murīds we are reminded:

The best of miracles are the good actions ones done constantly.

Inspiration of the Shaykh

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful Peace and Blessing on Muḥammad and on his family and Companions. All Praise is due to Allah who sends at the head of every century those who revive the religion and the hearts.

The Inspiration of the Shaykh to the Murīd A Short Translation and Summary from the Īqādh, by Ibn 'Ajībah (ra)

By Ismā'il Dhul-Qarnayn:

Don't sit with someone who's (spiritual) state doesn't inspire you
Or his station doesn't guide you to Allāh

Hadīth:

Without a doubt, the best of you in this nation are the ones when they are seen, Allāh is remembered. (Kanz al-'Umāl from Abū Mālik al-Ash'ārī)

(Ibn 'Ajībah): I say, the one who raises you by his spiritual state is the one that when you see him you remember Allāh.

Hence when you were in the state of slumber then you saw him, your state is lifted to consciousness. Or that you were (already) in the state of aspiration and when you saw him your state was lifted to the state of doing without (zuhd). Or you were occupied in disobedience and when you saw him your state was lifted to repentance. This is the way in which his station guides you to Allāh. When he speaks it is by Allāh and (by it) he shows you the way to Allāh. And he eradicates all that is except Allāh and when he speaks he captures where the hearts meets. Even in his silence he raises his station to the knowledge of the unseen because his state (Hāl) affirms to his station (Maqām) and his station matches his knowledge. And an association like this is the sweet medicine that alters the personalities. And this is the meaning of the verse of the Shaykh (Ibn 'Aṭa-Allāh {ra}) "Sit with the one whose state raises you and his station shows you the way to Allāh.

Association in the path of taṣāwwuf is an important matter in the journey to Allāh until the point the Awliya say, "The one who doesn't have a Shaykh, shayṭān is his shaykh." And al-'Abbās al-Mirsī said, "Any person who doesn't have a Shaykh in this manner has no success." Peace and Blessing on Muhammad and on his family and Companions.

Ramadan Discourse Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib

(tafsir on 7:156-157)

This was a discourse which Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib gave in his zawiyya in Meknes in the year he died. He was over 100 at the time.

[This was originally published in the journal, Islam, in 1976. I don't know who did the translation]

I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Shaytan. In the Name of Allah the All-Merciful, Most Merciful. Peace and blessings be upon our Lord and Prophet, Muhammad the Chosen, the Noble, and upon his family and Companions in abundance. There is no power nor strength except in Allah, the High, the Great. Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what you have taught us. You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. O Allah, open to us Your wisdom and cover us with Your mercy, O Possessor of Majesty and Generosity.

Allah, to Whom belongs glory and power, says in His Mighty Book: *"My mercy extends to all things but I will prescribe it for those who have taqwa."* (7:156)

We have started with this sura which we talked about last year when we reached the words of the Almighty, *"My mercy extends to all things."* The name of this sura is Surat al-A'raf. Every sura takes its name from a word in it. So, for example, Surat al-Baqara is called al-Baqara because Allah mentions a cow (*baqara*) in it. It is the same with Ali 'Imran, an-Nisa' and so on. This sura is called al-A'raf. Allah says in it, "on the ramparts (*al-a'raf*) there will be men." Every sura is named after a word in it. This sura was revealed to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in Makka.

In any case, we reached His words, *"My mercy extends to all things."* This mercy, which embraces all things, is a mercy without limit, but there is also a mercy which is confined. This unlimited mercy encompasses animals, plants, angels, Prophets, Messengers, awliya', and even the mushrikun and the kafirun. They all come within the scope of this mercy which entails existence and provision. Allah ta'ala gives them existence and sustains them. But then He makes them differ in their beliefs. Among them are mu'minin, kafirun and hypocrites. They all share in existence and sustenance.

This blessing includes even Iblis. Even he shares in it. Once he was with one of the gnostics (*'arifin*) and said, "I too claim a share in that mercy because Allah says, '*My mercy extends to all things.*' and I am a thing." The gnostic replied to him, "But Allah has limited it by His words, '*I will prescribe it for those who have taqwa.*'" He told him, "You don't know anything." – This was Iblis talking to Sahl ibn 'Abdullah – "because how can something which Allah has made unlimited then have limits imposed on it?"

This mercy without limit concerns existence and sustenance. Everyone is included in it. The kafirun have existence and sustenance, so has Shaytan and so has everything else. However differentiation exists. So what is it in? In *iman*. The people who follow the Prophets and Messengers and trust them have a special place. They will be among the people of the Garden. They will enjoy the vision of the Noble Face of Allah. But the people who have only existence and sustenance without any *iman* will have their payment in the Fire for ever. For ever in the Fire. Because Allah says, "I will prescribe it," i.e. that mercy for whom? *"For those who have taqwa."* Therefore the man who wants mercy must have *taqwa*.

What is *taqwa*? It is obedience to all the commands of Allah and avoidance of all that is forbidden. The things that Allah has commanded us to do are the prayer, zakat, fasting and hajj, and the things He has forbidden us are pride, envy, malice, hatred, bad thoughts about others. These people will taste that mercy because they have *taqwa*. *"I will prescribe it for those who have taqwa."* We have said that *taqwa* means to obey all the commands, and the man who has *taqwa* of Allah like this will receive mercy. He will experience mercy in this existence, in his grave, at his rising, and in the *Akhira*. But the man who does not have *taqwa* will be in

misery. He will be punished in this existence, in his grave, in the *Akhira*, in everything of his. Taqwa gains for you every good quality. Allah ta'ala says, "*I will prescribe it for those who have taqwa.*" Sidi Ibn 'Ashir says:

The attainment of taqwa is by avoidance and obedience,

inward and outward. Thus you obtain it.

It has four divisions for the traveller

on the path of profit.

He lowers his eyes to what is forbidden

and restrains his ears from evil.

He guards his private parts

and fears the Witness.

He delays matters until he knows

what Allah has decreed for him in them.

If you want to do something you should ask about it first. "*Ask the people of the Reminder if you do not know.*" (21:7) No action is left to our own intellects. Not eating or drinking or clothing. The whole business refers back to what? To the Muhammadan Shari'a. "*Whatever the Messenger gives you you should accept and whatever He forbids you you should forgo.*" (59:7)

Then comes taqwa against *shirk*. *Shirk* is the subject of much discussion by the 'ulama' of this time and they ascribe it to people. We divide *shirk* in two: open *shirk* and hidden *shirk*. Open *shirk*: a man must know the attributes of Our Master – *subhanahu* – because if he does not Allah, he cannot make Him one. Sidi Ibn 'Ashir says:

The first duty of the one under obligation

who has been given clarity

Is to know Allah and His Messenger

by the attributes on which the ayats are based.

If people know Allah by His attributes, they will not go wrong. They will know the vastness of the attributes of our Master and that no one has any part in them, neither Prophet nor angel nor wali nor Messenger. If a man does not know Allah, he cannot help but be destroyed. They say, "Sayyiduna Muhammad cured you" or "So-and-so helped me," and so on. But if a man knows Allah – effective power belongs to Him, particularised will belongs to Him, absolute knowledge belongs to Him, particularised wisdom belongs to Him – if he knows Allah in this way he will not be destroyed. If he knows Allah in this way, he will never, for example, associate Him with angel, wali, Prophet or Messenger.

All the 'ulama' are agreed about this: that the first obligation of a man is to know Allah by His attributes. And what are His attributes? There are the attributes of the Essence of Allah, the *salbiyya* attributes, the *ma'ani* attributes, and the *ma'nawiyya* attributes. There are twenty attributes that everyone should know. The first attribute is existence. Our Master has the attribute of existence, but His existence is not like our existence. His existence is beyond-past-time. He has no beginning. Beyond-past-time, no beginning. And His existence is obligatory. We divide obligations into two: the obligations of the Shari'a and the obligations of the intellect.

The obligations of the Shari'a are those things for whose performance you are rewarded and for whose abandonment you are punished. The obligations of the intellect are those things whose non-existence cannot be conceived. This existence of our Master is an obligation of the intellect. His non-existence cannot be conceived, because He is beyond-past-time and going on for ever. If the obligatory nature of His beyond-past-timeness is in your intellect and the obligatory nature of His going on for ever is in your intellect, you will never condition His existence. He has Beyond-past-timeness and Going-on without end. These two attributes apply to the Essence of Allah ta'ala.

Then there are the *salbiyya* attributes. They are Beyond-past-timeness, Going-on without end, Unaffectedness by events, and Oneness of Essence and Attributes. They do not take anything away from Allah, although this is what the *mutakallimun* assert, rather they take away from our intellects all that cannot be applied to Allah. If we know that Allah is Beyond-past-time, we cannot form a picture in our intellects of His coming into being in time, and if we know He is Going-on without end, we cannot conceive of His annihilation. Likewise, if we recognise that He has unlimited wealth, it is impossible for us to imagine Him ever being in need. And so on ... If we recognise that is not affected by events, we know that nothing can be equal to Him, not in His Essence, not in His attributes, and not in His actions. This is the first thing a man should know. Sidi ibn 'Ashir says about this:

The first duty of the one under obligation

who has been given clarity

Is to know Allah and His Messenger

by the attributes on which the ayats are based.

This is where the Wahhabis and others like them go wrong when they say, "You don't know Allah. You are committing shirk." But if a man knows Allah in this way he cannot make any mistake. He will never confuse Allah with anything else.

Our Master has necessary attributes. Beyond-past-timeness to which there is no beginning. Not equal to Him is any Allah or Messenger or wali or angel. *"Nothing is equal to Him. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing." "And not equal to Him is anyone."* No equal, not in His Essence nor His Attributes nor His Actions. If a man knows His Lord he just cannot go wrong. He knows that nothing can be similar to Him. It is Him we serve as slaves, Him we prostrate to, Him we bow to, and Him we glorify.

The whole creation is variegated into many layers. Everything has its own degree. There are the degrees of the angels, the degrees of the Prophets, the degrees of the Messengers, the degrees of the awliya'. Everyone has his own degree. But everyone is a slave to Allah. *"Everything in the heavens and the earth comes to the All-Merciful as a slave."* All of us are slaves to our Master.

"Those who have taqwa" against *shirk* – manifest and hidden. We have been talking about manifest *shirk*. Hidden *shirk* is very common in people. Such as the person who says, "It was so-and-so who helped me," or "that medicine which I took was what cured me of that illness." What is that called? That is hidden *shirk*. Someone says, "It was so-and-so who did that thing for me," or "this material is what gave me warmth. If it wasn't for it, I would have died of the cold." Or again, "That drink that I had was what quenched my thirst." This giving intrinsic reality to the means is known as hidden *shirk*, but only if you give them effective power, not, of course, if you know that Allah is the cause of things when they happen. You could say that the cloth was the means of my getting warm, or this food was the means by which I was satisfied. It is always necessary for there to be a means. Means must always exist, and an unseen witness of them. But most of the time people go wrong. "If it wasn't for so-and-so, I would never have achieved my aim."

What do you mean? It is Allah who gives it to you. *"It is He who subjects to you all that is in the heavens and the earth from Him."* However you must thank the means. Really. Thank the one at whose hands you receive a good thing, thank him either by some good action or by making a du'a'. "If someone has done you a good

service, repay him, and if you cannot, then pray for him until you think he has been repaid." say, "Such a one has helped us and has been the means to good things. O Lord, take his hand! O Lord, give him expansion! O Lord, protect him and his children!"

This we must do, but at the same time we must not forget that it is Allah who benefits us. He subjected the other to us and He turned his heart towards us so that the good thing reached us. But if we ascribe the whole thing to the creature, that becomes hidden *shirk*. Allah says, "*Most of them do not believe in Allah without associating others with Him.*" (11:106) Try to understand this. A man who affirms the Unity must do so inwardly and outwardly. The means have no innate effectiveness, not even if the means is a Prophet or a wali or an angel or a Messenger. If it was not for the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, we would not know Allah. He is His means to our happiness. We will all – insha'Allah – be among the people of the Garden through following him. These things are all means, but Allah ta'ala is the Doer. There is no Doer but Allah.

Allah made these means as His instruments and we must show correct behaviour towards them. You should not let there be a case of anyone doing anything for you or giving you anything without you turning to him in thanks. If you have something to repay him with, then give it to him, and if not, then pray for him until you think you have fulfilled your obligation to him, But if you hold him to be the effective cause and believe that it was really him who caused the thing to be given to you, that he did it with his own power, then this is *shirk* and it might even turn out to be manifest rather than hidden.

He says, "*Those who have taqwa.*" We have been explaining to you the meaning of *taqwa*. Allah says in His Mighty Book, talking about its benefits, "*Have taqwa of Allah and He will give you knowledge.*" "*Allah only accepts from those who have taqwa.*" "*Those who have taqwa will be in Gardens and rivers on couches of sincerity with the King, the Powerful.*"

So you see, *taqwa* is the means to all good, both in this existence and in the *Akhira*. If you have *taqwa* of Allah, He will make your provision easy to obtain, you will be loved by His slaves, and your life will be made easy for you here and in the *Akhira*. When you go to the grave you will find it comfortable, and when you go to the Place of Rising, you will find the same. On the other hand, if you have no *taqwa* you will be in misery both in this existence and the *Akhira*. *Taqwa* is what collects together all the good. Allah, *tabaraka wa ta'ala*, says, "*He who has taqwa of Allah, He provides him with what is enough for him.*" The thing a man needs is *taqwa*. And if you have *taqwa* of Allah, you will carry out the commands and avoid what is forbidden and accompany the people of blessings.

No one can come to anything except by specific means. And as for those people who say that means are unnecessary – where would they get knowledge from it there wasn't an 'alim to teach them? How could they see anything? You must affirm the means. It is necessary to have the means accompanied by wisdom. But watch out that you do not give them innate effectiveness and say, for instance, "If it was not for so-and-so, I would never have attained that thing." No! So-and-so is only the means and Allah is the Doer and Designer. But beware that you do not deny the means, saying that people have no part in it. This is a serious mistake. Why is that? Because it is *haqiqa* without *Shari'a*. The *Shari'a* makes things clear for us and gives everything its due. The Prophet, and he is that created being who is the means to our Islam, said to us, "If someone does you a good service, repay him." Know that he is the means to the good thing you received. All this that I have been saying has been about the ayat: "*My mercy extends to all things but I will prescribe it for those who have taqwa.*" (7:156)

Then He says, "*and pay the zakat.*" This *zakat* is what people today disregard almost completely, and in this they go very badly wrong. They say, "These taxes and rates we pay take the place of *zakat*." But that is not the case. *Zakat* is for those who are weak and poor, and these people still exist. "*Surely your sadaqa is for the poor and the destitute.*" The taxes we pay are to support the administration so that they can guard the roads for you and ensure your safety, and so that you can rest tranquil in your homes. If there wasn't any support for the administration we would live in chaos. If we need the people to guard us and to watch over the roads and these things require financing, from where does the money come? From the people. We cannot say that we do this instead of *zakat*. This support of the administration and the taxes which go towards it are so that the whole

business can be kept going. That is how we can have people to guard us and watch over us and do things to our benefit. We could never do them by ourselves. If there was no administration, we would not be able to manage. The administration over us is from us. This gathering is to their credit. If there was no safety you could not come and I would not see you.

"And so let them worship the Lord of this House who has preserved them from hunger and secured them from fear." There has to be a means to this "securing from fear." There must be a functioning administration which maintains people to guard us and to watch over the roads so that people can travel in safety and so that people who want to come can do so in safety, and so that people can sleep in their houses in safety. We must not begrudge the administration anything we give them and we must realise that what we give is to meet the cost of our security, to pay those who work towards it. But zakat, no, that is exclusively for the poor and destitute. Look out for the weak and destitute and take care of them. Give to them until you have paid what is due from you.

"Those who have taqwa and pay the zakat and those who believe in Our Signs." The signs of our Master are many. He shows them to us through the Revealed Books. What do we believe in? The Torah, the Injil, the Psalms, and the Furqan, and we believe in the angels and in all those things that are hidden from us, the things of the *Akhira*, such as the Rising, the Sirat, the Balance, the Basin, the Garden with its ascending degrees and the fire with its descending degrees.

"Those who have taqwa ... and believe in Our Signs." Then He says, *"and those who follow the Messenger."* Now the Banu Isra'il asked for precepts during the time of Sayyiduna Musa. Allah gave them, but they did not accept them and so He gave them to us, the Muhammadan community. He said, "I give you the whole earth to pray in wherever you go, and I authorise you to recite your Torah without using the Book." They said, "We will only pray in a synagogue – knowing quite well what Allah had told them – and we will not recite the Torah except from scrolls." Allah – *subhanahu wa ta'ala* – says to us, "The earth has been made for Me a mosque and a pure place." This is what Allah has given us. We do not have to look for a mosque when we want to say the prayer. No matter where we are when the time of prayer comes, we can say the prayer there. But as for them, this is veiled from them and they will only pray in their synagogues. Our Master gave them a choice in this matter and they choose the synagogue. And they also chose not to recite their Torah by heart like we recite the Qur'an. Allah made the Qur'an easy for us. We can recite by heart. Some recite by heart and others by the Book. This is veiled from them and they can only recite when the Torah is in their hands. This just goes to show. Allah gave all the easy things to the Banu Isra'il and they did not accept them. When they refused to accept them, who did Allah give them to? To this Muhammadan community. *"Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Injil."*

A complete description of Sayyiduna Muhammad is written down in the Torah and his description is also in the Injil, but the enemies of Allah changed and altered the Injil and changed and altered the Torah. This was so that those in power among them and their 'ulama', or those they call 'ulama', could deceive the majority of the people and keep them under their control. The Torah and the Injil were both full of descriptions of Sayyiduna Muhammad and of this Muhammadan community, but, as we said, the enemies of Allah changed and altered them.

He said, *"Whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Injil, commanding them to do right (ma'ruf) and forbidding them to do wrong (munkar)."* *Ma'ruf* is the best of what is in the Shari'a, and He forbids them what is opposed to the Shari'a. *"Commanding them to do right and forbidding them to do wrong and making good things halal for them."* The things that are good have been made halal for us and other things He forbids us like wine or smoking, for example, like snuff and everything that has a smell. The mu'min is required to give these things up, and if it is not in his power to do so and he cannot find a cure, he should begin to cut down on it and take it like a medicine. Because there are people who are advised against doing something and then they just do not know what to do. There was a sharif with me on hajj who used to smoke, poor man. I said to him, "Now you've performed hajj and visited the Prophet, give this up." So he gave it up. Then we went to get the bus back to Jeddah and he nearly got into a fight with the driver of the bus. I saw that his eyes were red and that he was completely out of control, so I said to him, "Go and take that medicine of yours! But reduce the amount and make the intention of using it only as a cure."

If the protection of Allah is with a man and he manages to give the thing up in one go, then that, of course, is the best thing, but if he knows that he will not be able to, he should take less of it and be aware that he is only doing it to cure himself. This is so that he can put his house in order and so that everything doesn't go sour on him. However, if he just indulges his appetite, taking one after another, then that is a real disaster for him.

Allah ta'ala says, *"and making bad things haram for them and relieving them of their heavy loads and the chains which were around them."* Among the Banu Isra'il if a man committed a wrong action, he would be told, "Go and take your own life," or "Go and wander in the desert until you die," or "Burn your clothes." Their affairs and their *tawba* entailed great suffering. As for us, He has lifted that suffering from us. A man commits a wrong action, then makes *tawba* to our Lord, asks for forgiveness, and Allah accepts his *tawba*. *"It is He who accepts tawba from His slaves and pardons their wrong actions and He knows what they do."* (42:23) In any case, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Tawba erases all before it." It wipes out everything. It removes every single of your wrong actions. But with the Banu Isra'il it was otherwise. Their *tawba* was not like this. Allah told them, "Go and wander until you die" or "Take your own life." Allah ta'ala lifted this hardship from us. *"Relieving them of their heavy loads and the chains which were around them."*

"Those who have iman in him and glorify him." What's the meaning of glorify? Honour him. "To glorify" here means "to honour". These are people who do not honour him and they are mistaken because Allah has ordered us to honour what He has honoured. Allah has said about Sayyiduna Muhammad, *"Those who give their hands to you, give their hands to Allah."* And He says, *"He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah."* Allah has ordered us to honour what He has honoured and we do so to fulfil His command. The exaltedness of his degree is such that no one can hope to attain it.

It is by the hand of Sayyiduna Muhammad, *salla'llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, that Allah has shown mercy to this community – by him we are able to recognise Allah, enter the Garden, and enjoy the vision of the Noble Face of Allah. *"And glorify him and help him to victory,"* against their enemies.

"And follow the Light that has been sent down with him." What was that? *"And follow the Light that has been sent down with him."* What is the light that was sent down? It was the Qur'an. *"And follow the Light that has been sent down with him."* What is it that was sent down with Sayyiduna Muhammad? It is the Qur'an. In this Qur'an Allah has gathered together everything. In it is the meaning the Torah, the meaning of the Injil, the meaning of the Psalms, and every other matter. In it Allah has gathered together for us everything. We need only to focus our hearts – on what? On the Book of Allah! And on the Sunna which makes it clear!

Allah ta'ala made the Qur'an an encircling ocean, but in it there are certain things to which we have no immediate access. The Sunna came and made clear to us the things that were difficult to understand in the Book of Allah. Then after that the right-acting 'ulama' came, and they too elucidated for us the things which were not clear. In any case the Book and the Sunna are the path which leads to happiness. *"He who takes hold of the Book of Allah and the Sunna of His Messenger."*

However the only who can know this is the one who knows its people. The ordinary man who spends all day in idle pursuits, wasting his days – if he wants to learn about the Book and the Sunna he must frequent the people of Allah who are those who will teach him how to perform the prayer and how to do wudu' and how to recognise Allah. If he does this he will undoubtedly gain a great gift. But if, for example, he just stays in his everyday occupations, he will go to the mosque without any knowledge. "Allah cannot be worshipped except with knowledge. "Seeking knowledge is an obligation on every Muslim man and woman." It is the duty of every man to teach his wife how to do wudu' and ghusl and how to do everything she is required to do, what she should do where her periods are concerned. The responsibility for her is on his shoulders. "All of you are shepherds, and all of you will be questioned about your flock." A man should ask his son, "Have you done the prayer or not?" When he comes in, say to him, "Have you come from school, did you perform the prayer there?" If he replies, "No, I haven't," tell him, "You know tomorrow on the Day of Rising you will be asked about the prayer." If he finds his father insisting day after day about the prayer, it is inevitable that he will do it. But if he comes in and no one asks him, he will never say the prayer.

Now in our time there is great laxity. We need teachers who command and fathers who are firm with their children. If the man who teaches commands, and the fathers says to his son when he comes home, "Have you prayed or not?" he will undoubtedly be aware of his Deen and he will undoubtedly perform the prayer. However, if, for instance, the teacher prays but does not tell his pupils to, and similarly a father does not ask his son, he will grow up without a scrap of the Deen and will never perform the prayer.

Allah ta'ala says, *"And follow the Light that has been sent down with him, they are the ones who are successful."* They are the ones who are successful: those who follow Sayyiduna Muhammad, *salla'llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, and follow what came with him, the Book and the Sunna. They are the ones who will reap the harvest both in this world and the *Akhira*.

Ramadan Discourse 2 Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib

(tafsir on 7:168-170)

This was a discourse which Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib gave in his zawiyya in Meknes in the year he died. He was over 100 at the time.

[Transcribed and translated by Abdalhaqq Bewley]

[This has not been finally edited, but people have asked for access to the talks which have been transcribed.]

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168 And We split them into nations in the earth.

Some of them are right-acting and some are other than that.

We tried them with good and evil so that perhaps they might return.

169 An evil generation has succeeded them,

inheriting the Book,

taking the goods of this lower world,

and saying, "We will be forgiven."

But if similar goods come to them they still take them.

Has not a covenant been made with them in the Book,

that they should only say the truth about Allah

and have they not studied what is in it?

The Final Abode is better for those who have taqwa.

Why do you not use your intellect?

170 As for those who hold fast to the Book and establish salat

We will not let the wage of the right-acting go to waste.

Allah *ta'ala* says in His Mighty Book: "***And We divided them into nations in the earth.***" We have already told you that this sura is called *Suratu'l-'Araf* and was revealed to the Prophet, *salla'llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, in the noble city of Makka, except for these *ayats* which we are looking at which came down to the Prophet *salla'llahu 'alayhi wa sallam* in Madina. We know this because there were no Jews in Makka, only idolaters, whereas there were Jews in Madina and all round it for instance in Khaybar and places like that. These places were all inhabited by Jews. So all the references in the Qur'ān concerning the Jews were revealed in Madina.

Anyway Allah, *tabaraka wa ta'ala*, says: "***And We divided them into nations in the earth.***" This is an example of Allah telling us about unseen things in the future because the Jews will never be able to establish themselves as a nation. Allah says: "***We divided them, meaning that Allah***", *tabaraka wa ta'ala*, put some of them in every country. They will never be truly unified. All those Jews in Palestine who came from France and Britain and the West and various other countries will never establish themselves as a nation. Allah says: "***We divided them into nations in the earth.***" Those whom Allah divided into nations did not follow Sayyidina Musa, *'alayhi salam*. No! rather they disobeyed what they were ordered to do in the Torah.

***Some of them are right-acting.*** This refers to the ones who followed Sayyidina Musa, *'alayhi salam*, respecting what he brought and it also applies to those who died during the gap between Sayyidina Musa and Sayyidina 'Isa. Those who died during this gap are also called right-acting, in other words they won't go to the Fire. When there is a gap between Prophets and you die during that period as someone who affirms Allah's unity you will not enter the Fire. This is because there was no Prophet there to be rejected. However, what about those who were alive during the life-time of Sayyidina 'Isa, *'alayhi salam*, and did not follow him, what category do they fall under? They are *kuffar* because Allah sent Sayyidina 'Isa after Sayyidina Musa, *'alayhi salam*. Then after that Allah sent Sayyidina Muhammad, *salla'llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, and very few of the Jews followed Sayyidina Muhammad, *salla'llahu 'alayhi wa sallam* for just 'Abdallah ibnu Salam and Ka'ab al-Ahbari, those two people.

When 'Abdallah ibnu Salam became Muslim the Jews did not know about his Islam. He went to the Messenger, *salla'llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, and said, "I would like you, Messenger of Allah, to put the Jews to a little test," for and remember he was their leader and their great scholar for "I will hide and you ask them what is their opinion of 'Abdallah ibnu Salam. Then when they tell you and mention the respect they have for me, I will come out and say I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

So the Messenger of Allah, *salla'llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, did that. He summoned the heads of the Jews from Khaybar and surrounding areas and he hid 'Abdallah ibnu Salam from them. He asked them, "What do you say about about this man 'Abdallah ibnu Salam, your *'alim*?" They said, "He is our master and the son of our master." He then asked them, "What would you say if he were to become a Muslim?" They said, "God forbid that he should ever become a Muslim." When they said that he came out and said the *shahada*. They immediately said, "He is our enemy and the son of our enemy." One minute they were saying he was their master and the son of their master and the next that he their enemy and the son of their enemy! Enemies of Allah, they will never admit the truth.

In any case Allah says: ***We divided them into nations in the earth.*** Allah split them up among different countries and they will never achieve unity. ***Some of them are right-acting*** for those who believed for ***and some are other than that*** for the kafirs among them. ***We tried them with good and evil so that hopefully they would return.*** What is meant by "good" here are all the good things Allah lavished on them, for example, plenty of rain, plenty of vegetation, and their trading. These are the "good" they had. As for the "evil" that refers to the droughts and illnesses they suffered. These are the "evil" referred to.

Go on! ***So that hopefully they would return.*** But, nevertheless, they did not return. Because Allah firstly tested them by pouring out good things on them, so they might return and cleave to the Torah and the *deen* of Sayyidina (Interruption "Muhammad") No, Sayyidina Musa, not Sayyidina Muhammad. We are only talking about Sayyidina Musa at the moment. They disagreed regarding him as well. Then when Allah sent Sayyidina Muhammad, *salla'llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, they all rejected him outright, with very few exceptions. Like that 'Abdallah ibnu Salam and a few other Jews who followed the Prophet, *salla'llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*.



Go on! ***An evil generation has succeeded them, inheriting the book.*** Up to now we have been talking about the condition they were in. The word *khalf* (evil generation) refers to people of bad character. They are called *khalf* and then we also have the word *khalaf*. We have *khalf* and *khalaf*. *Khalaf* refers to descendants of good character. For example, a man appoints a *khalaf* to succeed him. He is his khalifa, a good successor. But if they are evil people we call them *khalf*. They are successors of bad character, who are no good for anything. That is why Allah *ta'ala* uses the word *khalf* here.

Go on! ***Inheriting the Book.*** What's the book referred to here? It's the Torah.

Go on! ***Taking the goods of this lower world.*** People would come to them for judgement and then they would take bribes and change the laws, which were in the Torah. Why did they do that? Out of pure greed.

Go on! ***and saying we will be forgiven.*** And in one reading adding, "because we do not associate anything with Allah," because Allah does not forgive anything being associated with Him. Allah says: "*Allah does not forgive anything being associated with Him, but He forgives whoever He wills for anything other than that.*" 4:47 But that only applies if they are believers, not if they are idolaters or unbelievers, in that case there is no forgiveness. The only fate for a *kafir* is eternity in the Fire.

Go on! ***But if similar goods come to them again, they still take them. Has not a covenant been made with them in the Book, that they should only say the truth about Allah.*** The truth referred to here is what Allah revealed in the Torah. Because their Book was the Torah, which Sayyidina Musa received from Allah, *ta'ala*. This Torah is a big thing: "*We sent down the Torah, containing guidance and light, and the Prophets who had submitted themselves gave judgement by it for the Jews & as did their scholars and their rabbis & by what they had been allowed to preserve of Allah's Book to which they were witnesses.*" 5:44 In any case the Tora contains sciences and secrets but the Jews destroyed it, may Allah curse them! They added to it and deleted things from it and altered it. They acted on what suited their whims and desires and abandoned everything in it which did not suit their purposes.

Go on! ***and have they not studied what is in it? The Final Abode is better for those who have taqwa.*** "The Final Abode". This advice applies to both them and us. This matter is something that also applies to us Muslims. Allah *ta'ala* says: "*The Final Abode is better for those who have taqwa.*" Those people who have *taqwa* and have fear of Allah, they do not go along with bribery, for instance, because Allah has ordained that the practitioners of bribery, if they don't repent, they too will have an immense punishment. Because if someone is poor and people cheat him through bribery, they will take everything he has got. That's what bribery does. His money will disappear and everything else he has got. How? Through bribery.

Go on! ***The Final abode is better for those who have taqwa.*** You know what *taqwa* is, don't you? We have said on many occasions that *taqwa* consists of following Allah's commands and avoiding His prohibitions. "*Whatever the Messenger gives you you should accept and whatever he forbids you you should forgo.*" 59:7 Allah has given us the injunctions of prayer and *zakat* and fasting and *Hajj*, and ordered us to safeguard our limbs from actions of disobedience, and to safeguard our hearts as well from envy and rancour and pride. If a person is free of this he possesses every good thing, every good thing.

Then Allah says: ***Will you not use your intellect?*** The purpose of the intellect is to examine what will bring us nearer to Allah and so act on it, and to examine what will distance us from Allah and so avoid it. If you have got any intellect, everyone with intellect uses it to examine things. If someone really has intellect they will use it to examine what brings them close to Allah and will act on that. And as for the things that they know will distance them from Allah, they know that the repayment of the Next World is coming. Belief in the Next World gives a person certainty about Allah's control of the decree. All of us are going to die. "*Every self will taste death.*" 3:185 "*Everyone on it will pass away; but the Face of your Lord will remain, Master of Majesty and Generosity.*" 55:24-25 "*All things are passing except His Face.*" 28:88

If someone is certain about their death and what comes after death, such as the Reckoning and the *Sirat* and the Balance, and knows that he himself will have to go through this, he will certainly take this into account. If someone takes these things to heart he will know that when he dies there is punishment in the grave and that

he will be tested at the Resurrection, and on the *Sirat* and at the Balance. These are big tests. But if Allah takes him by the hand, he will counsel himself and say, "Death is definitely something which will come to me. That is clear! And after it comes the Resurrection and after that the *Sirat*, and after that the Balance. And after all those things there is either the Garden or the Fire."

If someone knows this, and confirms it and believes it, he will certainly prepare for it. But if someone wastes their time in complete heedlessness, not knowing where he is at, not being aware of his death or what comes after it. He is going to be in trouble when he dies. He will have trouble in his grave and at his rising and on the *Sirat* and all of us are going to have to face these things. That is why Allah says: "**Will you not use your intellect?**" You should have an enlightened intellect to reflect with on what will benefit you and bring you closer to Allah.

Go on! **As for those who hold fast to the Book.** This is talking about the opposite of those other people - **those who hold fast to the Book**, they are the people who grasped hold of the Torah and acted on it. This *ayat*, however, also refers to us, because everything that is revealed concerning past peoples also applies to us. The commands and prohibitions they were subject to also apply to us, even if there are some differences. "**those who hold fast to the Book**", they are those who obey its commands and avoid its prohibitions.

**and establish salat**, Allah does not say just "do the *salat*"; He makes a distinction between doing *salat* and establishing it. Not everyone who does *salat* establishes it. Establishment includes, for instance, the freeing oneself from impurities which underlies the act of *salat*. Everything is built on freeing oneself from impurity. For instance someone might have urine on him when he does *wudu'*. But the whole purification process is based on being free from urine. And once that basic purification is in place then you have to be absolutely correct in your *wudu'*. You must not leave any dry spot on either your face, or your arms or your feet.

That is why Allah *ta'ala* says: **and establish salat**, And after you have finished *wudu'* you must give the *salat* its full due. Say the *takbir al-ihram* with majesty, and the recitation with clarity, and do *ruku'* until you achieve stillness, and say three times "*subhana'llahi wa bihamdihi, subhana'llahi'l-'adhim*" and if you want to give full measure say, "*subhana'llahi wa bihamdihi 'adada khalqihi wa rida nafsihi wa zinata 'arshihi wa midada kalamatih*" and that is better. It encompasses a huge benefit. And likewise in *sujud*, "*subhana rabbi'l'ala wa bihamdihi 'adada khalqihi wa rida nafsihi wa zinata 'arshihi wa midada kalamatih*". Allah gives a tremendous reward for this *tasbih*.

Go on! **We will not let the wage of the right-acting go to waste.** If anyone is right-acting (*salih*), putting both himself and other people right, Allah will never neglect his reward. It is incumbent on every human being to put himself right and his children and his wife and his close relations, "All of you are shepherds and all of you are responsible for your flock." Do not only think about yourself. What if your wife does not pray  $\text{Ð}$  and maybe does not even fast  $\text{Ð}$  tomorrow on the Day of Rising you will be questioned about that, and also about your children who are living with you: "All of you are shepherds and all of you are responsible for your flock." When they come back from school should ask them if they have prayed and if not they should pray. If you are not strict with them they will never have any *deen*, if you do not remind them they will not do anything, the teacher should be ordering from one side and the father from the other, so that there are two forces, one from the school and one from the home.

Go on! **When We uprooted the mountain, lifting it above them like a canopy**, No, not that yet; we still have not finished with the previous *ayat*. **We will not let the wage of the right-acting go to waste.** We said that the right-acting is someone who puts himself right and his family and close relations, because as we said, "All of you are shepherds and all of you are responsible for your flock." You have your children and your friends and other people you mix with. It is your duty to counsel them for the sake of Allah. Tell them, for instance, that death is coming to us all, and the only thing of any use to us will be our right actions. The first thing that comes to people in their grave are their actions. If they are right actions they will be a comfort to them, if they are other than that they will torment them.

So the first thing to come to a person in their grave is their actions, if their actions are good, they take on a beautiful form and have a pleasant scent. They will ask, "Who are you?" He will reply, "I am your right

actions, and I am going to keep you company until you enter the Garden." And if, and we seek refuge with Allah from it, someone's actions are bad, they take on a hideous form and have a foul smell. An terrifying sight. He says, "Get away from me." "What do you mean get away from you? I am your actions. You are the one who made me look this." Everyone's actions enter their grave with them, if they are right actions they will be a comfort to them, if they are other than that they will torment them. So everyone should wary about that.

Before you go to sleep you should say: "*astaghfirullah al-'adhim alladhi la ilaha illahu al-hayyu'l-qayyumu wa atubu ilayhi*," three times. It has come in a *sahih hadith*: "Whoever retires to his bed and says '*astaghfirullah al-'adhim ladhi la ilaha illahu al-hayyu'l-qayyumu wa atubu ilayhi*,' three times, his wrong actions will be forgiven even if they are as many as the froth on the sea, the grains of sand on the shore, the days of this world and all the leaves on the trees." This *istighfar* should be said by people, how many times? Before sleeping three times. There is no need to do it any more than that. This a *hadith* and it is *sahih*, recorded by the two shaykhs: "Whoever retires to his bed and says '*astaghfirullah al-'adhim ladhi la ilaha illahu al-hayyu'l-qayyumu wa atubu ilayhi*,' three times, his wrong actions will be forgiven even if they are as many as the froth on the sea, the grains of sand on the shore, the days of this world and all the leaves on the trees."

Then Allah says, go on! ***When We uprooted the mountain, lifting it above them like a canopy.*** This is amongst the things which Allah used to discipline Banu Isra'il. When He ordered them to follow the Torah and they disobeyed Him, Allah ordered that mountain to hover above them, He lifted it above their heads. If Allah had ordered it to fall on them, it would have done so and crushed them. He lifted it as if it was a canopy and it stayed up there. It was waiting for the order, whether to fall on them and crush them, or not. But Allah just did it to scare them and didn't send the mountain crashing down on top of them. But they were frightened and some of them returned and held fast to the Torah, and some of, and we ask Allah's protection from that, stayed as they were.

Go on! ***and they thought that it was about to fall on them.*** It was on the point of falling on them but then our Master was kind to them and just caused them fear by it. Some of them returned to the truth and believed in Sayyidina Musa and acted on the Torah; and some of them remained hypocrites.

Then Allah says: ***Seize hold vigorously of what We have given you,*** Now this command, in the same way that it applied to Banu Isra'il, also applies to us. So it is incumbent on us as well to seize hold of the Book, i.e. the Qur'an, vigorously, in other words not neglect any of it. Wherever there is a command we have to comply with it and wherever there is a prohibition we have to observe that. This doesn't just apply to Banu Isra'il; any *sura* or command directed at any previous peoples also applies to us.

Repeat the *ayat*. ***Seize hold vigorously of what We have given you, vigorously not feebly!*** Don't do *salat*: "*da, da, da, da, assalamu 'alaykum*" and that's it! Give it its full due; and safeguard the fast properly; and standing in the night in prayer; and all those things which bring you nearer to Allah. Do these things with energy and vigour, in the knowledge that you are going to leave this world. Here we are all sitting here but where have all the previous generation gone? All gone back to Allah. In any case it is clear that in death we have a great reminder. Allah commands us to remember death and what comes after death; but if we stay wrapped up in the world and our appetites and think of nothing else but it, and is only concerned with working for it, when we get to the Next World we will find ourselves utterly bankrupt. Allah *ta'ala* says: "*Whatever good you send ahead for yourselves you will find it with Allah as something better and as a greater reward.*" 2:109 "*Those who produce a good action will receive ten like it,*" 6:161 or indeed up to seventy, "*Allah gives such multiplied increase to whoever He wills.*" 2:160

Go on! ***and remember what is in it, so that hopefully you will have taqwa. We discussed taqwa earlier.*** Allah mentions *taqwa* in His Book in relation to certain things. So anyone who wants knowledge has to have *taqwa* as well. Allah says: "*Have taqwa of Allah and Allah will give you knowledge.*" 2:281 Those students who pray and have fear of Allah, Allah will open the doors of knowledge for them straight away. Because Allah says, "*Have taqwa of Allah and Allah will give you knowledge.*" 2:281 But as for someone studying at school or college who doesn't pray or do *dhikrullah*, and spends all his time with the heedless or playing football or wasting his time like that, the door of knowledge will never open for him.

So Allah *ta'ala* says: ***and remember what is in it, so that hopefully you will have taqwa.*** Allah *ta'ala* orders Banu Isra'il to remember what is in the Torah and to act by it and He orders us to ponder the Qur'an and act by that. The meanings of the Qur'an embrace every other revelation; it includes what is in the Torah and what is in the Injil and what is in the Zabur; all the Revealed Books have been placed by Allah in the Qur'an. Just as Allah gathered together all good things for Sayyidina Muhammad, he gathered together all good for us in the Book of Allah.

Allah says: ***and remember what is in it, so that hopefully you will have taqwa.*** We said that *taqwa* is obedience to all the commands of Allah and avoidance of all His prohibitions. The first stage of *taqwa* is knowledge of Allah. If you ask someone if they know Allah they say *la ilaha illa'llah*, but this *la ilaha illa'llah* has a meaning, and if someone says it they should know what it means, in order to enter the land of *tawhid*. They must know Allah *tabaraka wa ta'ala* in the correct way, acknowledging the evidence for His existence, either phenomenological or epistemological. Allah *tabaraka wa ta'ala* commands us to affirm His Oneness and to gain knowledge of Him. This knowledge of him is of two kinds, one is based on evidence and proofs and one is from natural things. We might say to someone how did you get to know your Lord. He might reply I found my parents saying *la ilaha illa'llah* and so I said it. That is not enough. If someone says they know Allah they must produce something in support of that statement. A person might say that he was non-existent and then his Lord nurtured him in his mother's womb and continued doing that until he emerged into this world. Then He gave him milk to drink until he grew bigger. What is this called? It is phenomenological evidence and it is sufficient. An Arab was asked how he knew his Lord and he was someone who knew about camels. So he replied that the dung (*ba'r*) indicates the camel (*ba'ir*) and footprints indicate the traveller. And as the poet said: "The sky with its constellations, and the earth with its plant-life, and the oceans with their waves, do they not indicate the All-penetrating, the All-aware?" All that indicates Allah.

Who raised up the sky? Who filled up the seas with water? Who makes the winds blow? Who makes the rain fall? Who makes the plants grow? These are all phenomenological evidence for the existence of Allah. Allah *ta'ala* revealed seven hundred *ayats* in the Qur'an containing this type of evidence. "*Mankind worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, so that hopefully you will have taqwa. It is He who made the earth a couch for you, and the sky a dome. He sends down water from the sky and by it brings forth fruits for your provision. Do not, then, knowingly make others equal to Allah.*" 2:20-21 "*In the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of the night and day, and the ships which sail the seas to people's benefit, and the water which Allah sends down from the sky by which He brings the earth to life when it was dead and scatters about in it creatures of every kind and the varying direction of the winds, and the clouds subservient between heaven and earth, there are Signs for people who use their intellect.*" 2:163 "*Among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and earth and the variety of your languages and colours.*" 30:21 All of us are different. Why is this one black and that one white, this one tall and that one short, this one have a good intellect and that one not? They are all manifestations of who? Of our Master. And in that way they are evidence for our Master, *subhanahu*.

Anyway Allah *ta'ala* says: "*Among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and earth and the variety of your languages and colours. There are certainly Signs in that for every being.*" 30:21 These *ayats* outlining phenomenological evidence for the Divine existence in the Qur'an are many. But as for the epistemological ones it is the logicians who talk about them. They bring, for example, the analogy of exception and the analogy of concurrence, and use linguistic analysis of Arabic. But this is beyond the majority of people. It is enough, in fact, just to have knowledge of yourself. You need only say to yourself, "Who gave me eyesight, enabling me to see? Who gave me hearing, enabling me to hear. Who gave me an intellect, enabling me to think." That is enough. It is what? It is phenomenological evidence for the Divine existence. This has all come from His words, *subhanahu wa ta'ala*: ***and remember what is in it, so that hopefully you will have taqwa.***

Let's leave it here for the time being. I was saying a few words about Ramadan. We said to you that Ramadan is the storehouse of all the actions of the year. Why did we say that? It is because in it the *nafila* has the same status that the *fard* does at other times. So anyone who has missed a *fard* and does a lot of *nafilas* in Ramadan, then each *nafila* replaces a *fard*. If anyone does a voluntary action in Ramadan it counts as doing a *fard* at any other time and if anyone does a *fard* action it counts as seventy *fards* outside Ramadan. So we have a store of wealth in Ramadan which does not exist outside Ramadan. All of our actions are multiplied.

For this reason people should be especially on their guard. They should have all their faculties under control. The most important of them is the tongue because backbiting actually breaks the fast. The companions said, "Messenger of Allah, what if what we say about someone is true?" He replied, "If you say that about him, that is backbiting." If you talk behind someone's back and say, for example, that he is a thief, and he actually is Ð it's not that he is not, he really has got that bad quality Ð what you should do is advise him to his face: "My brother, I love you but I see things in you which people might find objectionable. If Allah guides you and you turn to Your Lord and go back to Our Master, know that the door of tawba is always open." That's a good thing to do. But on the other hand, if you talk behind his back and say that so and so is ignorant and doesn't know anything or keeps indulging in bad actions, and all of it is true, what is that called? It is backbiting. Allah *ta'ala* says: "*Éand do not backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat his brother's dead flesh? No, you would hate it.*" 49:12

The Prophet said to us that we should adopt four traits: two which gain the pleasure of the Lord and two we cannot do without. The two traits which please the Lord are worshipping Him and not associating anything with him. So make sure that the aim of your actions is the Face of Allah, not doing things so that you will be given something in return, that puts you in danger, "*They were only ordered to worship Allah, making their deen sincerely His.*" 98:5 Your actions must be for the Face of Allah alone. And this is what the slave will be asked about and this will be the important thing for the person concerned on the Day of Rising.

Anyway we were talking about the four traits two of which to gain the pleasure of your Lord: to worship Him and not to associate anything with Him. And you know what shirk is, don't you? With us shirk is of two sorts Ð and make sure you understand this Ð there is hidden *shirk* and open shirk. As for open shirk, it is when people worship statues and idols, thinking that they will benefit them, that they can harm them and give to them and prevent them from getting things, like the idolaters of Makka. They had idols and the thought that they harmed them and benefited them. That kind of *shirk* is open, no doubt about it, such people are in the Fire for ever. "*Allah does not forgive anything being associated with Him.*" 4:48

Then there is hidden shirk and that is to attribute effects to their causes. Allah *ta'ala* has set up causes but effects accompany these causes, they are not brought about by them. In all the things that happen to us, Allah is the doer. "*Allah created both you and what you do.*" 37:96 He created your actions, as for the good we link that to Allah but as for the ugly we link that to ourselves. So as for all the things which are good and right we link those to Sidi our Lord. He is the One who helps us, provides for us, gives us, keeps evil away from us, all this we link to Sidi our Lord. As for the ugly actions we say that we are the ones who disobeyed, we are the ones who went against the grain, and we ask Allah to grant us a effective repentance. It is necessary for every human being to know this.

We said that if someone does a *nafila* Ð and the night is very long Ð if you do a *nafila* in Ramadan, it is the same as doing a *fard* in any other month. We have all got some shortcomings in respect of our *fards*; no one completely fulfills all the *fards* he has to do. How many people don't start praying till they are eighteen, how many till they are twenty? And some do not start till they are thirty. So all of us have something to make up. And if you want to do that then every *nafila* in Ramadan has the status of a *fard*.

May Allah give us and you success in what is good and take us and you by the hand.

### **Ramadan Discourse 3 Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib**

(tafsir on 7:171-178)

*This was a discourse which Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib gave in his zawiyya in Meknes in the year he died. He was over 100 at the time.*

[Transcribed and translated by Abdalhaqq Bewley]

[This has not been finally edited, but people have asked for access to the talks which have been transcribed. There are some obvious places where the tape has not been deciphered yet.]

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'Seize hold vigorously of what We have given you

and remember what is in it,

so that hopefully you will have taqwa.'

172 When your Lord took out all their descendants

from the loins of the children of Adam

and made them testify against themselves

'Am I not your Lord?'

they said, 'We testify that indeed You are!'

Lest you say on the Day of Rising,

'We knew nothing of this.'

173 Or lest you say,

'Our forefathers associated others with Allah

before our time,

and we are merely descendants coming after them.

So are You going to destroy us

for what those purveyors of falsehood did?'

174 That is how We make the Signs clear

so that hopefully they will return.

175 Recite to them the tale of him to whom We gave Our Signs,

but who then cast them to one side

and Shaytan caught up with him.

He was one of those lured into error.

176 If We had wanted to, We would have raised him up by them.

But he gravitated towards the earth

and pursued his whims and base desires.

His metaphor is that of a dog:

if you chase it away,

it lolls out its tongue and pants,

and if you leave it alone,

it lolls out its tongue and pants.

That is the metaphor of those who deny Our Signs.

So tell the story so that hopefully they will reflect.

177 How evil is the metaphor of those who deny Our Signs.

It is themselves that they have badly wronged.

178 Whoever Allah guides is truly guided;

but those He misguides are the lost.

Seize hold vigorously of what We have given you and remember what is in it, so that hopefully you will have taqwa. This *ayat* was revealed about the Jews because they abandoned acting by the Tora and so Allah ordered them to take hold of the Tora with seriousness and energy, but they were negligent about it and disdainfully tossed the Book of Allah behind their backs, just as if they did not know. They followed their own whims and desires.

But this *ayat*, although it was revealed concerning the Jews is also true for us. It is incumbent on us to take hold of the Qu'ran with seriousness and energy and to implement the commands in it and avoid its prohibitions and to take to heart what it tells us regarding the matters of the Next World $\bar{\text{D}}$ the Garden and the Fire and the Sirat and the Balance and the Basin and other such things. We shouldn't recite the Qur'an and then it is as if we hadn't heard anything at all.

Seize hold vigorously of what We have given you and remember what is in it, of admonitions, of commands which we should follow and prohibitions which we should avoid. And what is the result of this for us: ***so that hopefully you will have taqwa.*** Because *taqwa* is obedience to the commands and avoidance of all the prohibitions. And Allah has made *taqwa* the cause of many benefits. Allah ta'la says: "*Whoever has taqwa of Allah - $\bar{\text{D}}$ He will give him a way out and provide for him from where he does not expect.*" 65:2-3 He says: "*Have taqwa of Allah and Allah will give you knowledge.*" 2:281 "The people who have *taqwa* will be amid Gardens and Rivers, on seats of honour in the presence of an All-Powerful King." *Taqwa* is that your eyes should not look at *haram* things; your ears should not listen to backbiting and slander; your hands should not do anything which does not belong to you; and your feet should not walk to any inappropriate place, only to some place where there is profit for you. But any place devoted to the wrong action of usury, or slander, or wine or some other such thing, it has *haram* for you to go to it. You will have the anger of Allah on you both going there and coming back. *Taqwa* gives us every good thing, in the sensory and the meaning. Whoever wants the profit of this world must have *taqwa*, and whoever wants the profit of the Next World must have *taqwa*. Seize hold vigorously of what We have given you and remember what is in it, so that hopefully you will have *taqwa*.

Then Allah goes on to mention here things relating to the world of the spirits. Allah says: ***When your Lord took out all their descendants from the loins of the children of Adam*** $\bar{\text{E}}$ Now these spirits we all have were all in another world before, they were in the world of vision and they were aware of everything. And Allah addressed them, ????????, Allah ordered them to be believing, affirming Allah's unity, right-acting, and made them testify against themselves, what were they testifying to? ***That they would affirm Allah's unity and be right-acting,*** in respect of what Allah has ordered them to do, relinquishing what He forbade them to do.

Go on! ***Am I not your Lord?*** He asked them, "Am I not your Lord?" He is affirming to us that He is indeed our Lord. And what is the meaning of "Lord". The word "Lord" has several meanings. It means "Putter right" or "Repairer" and it means the "One who nurtures us". He nurtures us from a drop of water, which was in the loins of a man and is transferred to the womb of a female. Allah says to it, *"Be a drop, then be a clot then be a lump and then be bones then 'clothed the bones in flesh; and then brought him into being as another creature. Blessed be Allah, the Best of Creators! Then subsequently you will certainly die. Then on the Day of Rising you will be raised again."* 23:14-16 All that is subsumed under the meaning of Lord.

Allah mentions the word *rabb* (Lord) in many *ayats*. He begins His Book with *"al-hamdu lillahi rabbi'l-'alamin."* It is as if the word *rabb* gathers together all the attributes. Because you cannot have a *rabb* who is not powerful, willing, knowing, living, hearing, seeing and speaking, gathering together all the attributes of perfection and being free of any defects which are not appropriate to Lordship. The Lord is the one who gathers together all perfection. And that is what is denoted by His words: ***When your Lord took out all their descendants from the loins of the children of Adam and made them testify against themselves*** in that world where they were, asking them who else if not Him was their Lord and they replied that He was indeed their Lord.

But when they emerge into this world some of them remember that pledge, and stick by it and become believers affirming the Divine unity; and some of them, and we seek refuge with Allah from it, those predestined to do that, deny it and do not acknowledge either Lordship or Godhood or anything else. They become what people call atheists, not believing in Godhood or divine attributes, forgetting what we all agreed to in that world when we said we believed and that we would affirm Allah's unity and be right-acting.

'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'We testify that indeed You are.' What does "indeed You are" mean? "You are our Lord." We testified to that against ourselves. We acknowledged Allah's Lordship and our slavehood, which is owed to it. In that world we accepted His Lordship which entails all perfections whereas our slavehood entails all imperfections. But if we want to achieve perfection we must apply ourselves to the worship of Allah *ta'ala*. "My slave continues to draw near to Me through voluntary acts of *'ibada* until I love him, when I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. If he asked Me for something, I would certainly give it to him, and if he sought refuge with me I would certainly grant it to him." Bukhari. If we draw near to our Lord, all good is ours. The good of this world and the Next lies in drawing near to Allah.

Anyway it is vital for a person to know the importance of the Next world, that he is going to die and he is going to the grave and when he is in the grave his actions will appear to him. If they are right actions they will be a comfort to him, if they are other than that, and we seek refuge from Allah, what will they do to him? They will torment him. Right actions will manifest themselves in a pleasant form, a beautiful one. The dead person will ask, "Why has Allah honoured me by sending you to me?" He will reply, "I am your right actions. You did me and I have now come to keep you company." But if he has nothing but bad actions to his credit, they appear in a ugly shape, something terrible to look at, with a foul stench and an ugly face, horrible to behold. The dead person will say, "Get away from me!" The reply comes, "What do you mean get away from you? I am your actions. You're the person who did the bad things, to give me this awful form." Everyone's actions enter the grave with them, if they are right actions they will be a comfort to him, if they are other than that, they will torment him.

Go on! ***Lest you say on the Day of Rising, 'We knew nothing of this.'*** Because on the Day of Rising Allah will question them about the tawhid He ordered them to observe. There will be people who held to that tawhid and belief and right action; but there will be others who failed to do that. The people who failed to do it will address Allah saying, "We found our fathers off the path and we followed," *"We found our fathers following a religion and we are simply following in their footsteps."* 43:22 Is that going to do them any good? No, it won't be any use at all. It is no good for a Jew to say he is a Jew or for a Christian to say he is a Christian. No. All of them have been ordered to enter Islam. *"If anyone desires anything other than Islam as a deen, it will not be accepted from him, and in the akhira he will be among the losers."* 3:84 *"The deen with Allah is Islam."* 3:19 Islam gathers together all good things. It brings together all the actions that bring you closer to Allah and warns you against all the actions which distance you from Allah.

Allah continues: Or lest you say, ***'Our forefathers associated others with Allah before our time, and we are merely descendants coming after them.'*** In other words we simply followed our forebears. For example the Jews at that time, they knew about the existence of Sayyidina Muhammad, and the existence of the Qur'an and the existence of the *sunna*, but they preferred what their ancestors followed and refused to follow the path it was their obligation to follow, and that was the *deen* of Islam. It doesn't matter whether they call themselves Jews or Christians or anything else, everyone who follows anything apart from Islam will be in the Fire. So Islam is the only way.

But it is essential for people to really follow Islam. It cannot be just lip service, saying *la ilaha illa'llah, Muhammadun rasulullah*, and then being someone who doesn't do the prayer and who indulges in shameful actions, or someone who is subject to pride, envy and rancour. Your Islam has got to be a true Islam. Following Islam and its people means mixing with good people, because your state is according to the state of the people you are with. If someone who is not very good mixes with good people he himself will become good as well, and if someone who is ignorant mixes with people of knowledge he himself will become knowledgeable and so on.

The Prophet, *salla'Llahu alayhi wa sallam*, said to us, "You should have good company," because good company has all good in it. Because a person will inevitably have a similar state to those he keeps company with. If they are good he will follow them in good and if they are bad he will follow them in their badness. So everyone should choose a companion who obeys Allah, because a follower follows. The youth nowadays, poor things, are in great danger. If they come across good people who attract them to the good then great good will come from them. But if they meet people who corrupt them they will have a hard time in their lives.

This youth of ours are great, they have fine intellects, but it is necessary for them to mix with people who will teach them *deen* and good character. If that happens there will those among them who will support the *deen* and strengthen Islam at its foundations. But if when they study, they study for the *dunya* alone, just to get some certificate. What is that for? Your *rizq* is bound to come to you. You should work hard for what will bring you close to Allah. Not just work for the *dunya*. In the *dunya* your *rizq* is guaranteed. Even if you had everything in the *dunya*, you would still only take from it your allotted *rizq*.

Anyway, go on! Allah says: ***Or lest you say, 'Our forefathers associated others with Allah before our time, and we are merely descendants coming after them. So are you going to destroy us for what those purveyors of falsehood did.'*** They will be destroyed because Allah made things clear to them but then they followed their forefathers in their lack of *deen*, whether they are Jews, Christians, idolaters or fire-worshippers. The main point is that the only thing that will do anybody any good is to enter Islam. *"If anyone desires anything other than Islam as a deen, it will not be accepted from him, and in the akhira he will be among the losers."* 3:84

Go on again! ***That is how We make the Signs clear so that hopefully they will return.*** This is not just for the Jews. Allah has also made the Signs clear to us. So that hopefully they will return from a bad state to a good state, from lack of the *deen* to having the *deen*, and from bad behaviour to good behaviour. So a person will move away from bad characteristics which distance them from Allah to characteristics which will bring him closer to Allah. The human being has an intellect. Our responsibility for our actions is based on us having intellect. It enables us to differentiate between evil things so we can abandon them and things which bring us closer to Allah and are good so we can follow them.

Go on! ***Recite to them the tale of him to whom We gave Our Signs,*** This is another subject and there is a great lesson in it for our people of knowledge. A scholar, provided he acts on his knowledge, is according to the *hadith*: "The men of knowledge are the inheritors of the Prophets," and there is also the *hadith*: "Whoever hears two words from a man of knowledge, or eats two mouthfuls with him, or walks two paces with him, Allah builds two cities for him in the Garden, each city twice as big as the whole of this world." So we should honour our men of knowledge and realise what extraordinary people they are and the great benefits we get from them. You only have to eat a mouthful with one or exchange a couple of words or take a step with one, and look what a great gift Allah gives you, a bounty with no limit to it and no end.

Go on! ***but who then casts them to one side***, I seek refuge with Allah! He abandoned all the knowledge he had and followed his whims and desires. Continue! ***and Shaytan caught up with him. He was one of those lured into error.*** The *dunya* came and seduced him, love of power came and seduced him, and bad company came and finished him off. Who is this about? A man called Ibnu Ba'ura. He was a man of knowledge, to the point that he was almost a Prophet. But then *dunya* and women came along and seduced him. Then he started making *du'a* against Sayyidina Musa, and that caused the forty years of aimless wandering in the desert for Banu Isra'il, because he knew the *Ismu'l-A'dham*. Allah taught him that *Ismu'l-A'dham* but ??? They had to spend a long period wandering about aimlessly. And all the while this enemy of Allah had all this knowledge and he also had the *Ismu'l-A'dham*. But, and we seek Allah's refuge, in spite of that he cast it aside and followed his whims and desires. The *dunya* deluded him, and its appetites, and its affairs, and devastated his knowledge.

And so Allah says: ***and Shaytan caught up with him. He was one of those lured into error. And if We had wanted to, We would have raised him up by them.*** Those knowledges he had and the meanings. But the Divine will is over everything. ***If We had wanted to, We would have raised him up by them.*** But what was that raising up dependent on? It was dependent on sincere repentance, and doing what Allah ordered him to do and avoiding the things Allah had prohibited for him. But because of that bad state he was in He sent him to the fire, and we seek refuge with Allah from it, where he will stay forever.

Go on! ***But he gravitated towards the earth and pursued his whims and base desires.*** Then Allah likens him to a dog. ***His metaphor is that of a dog: if you chase it away, it lolls out its tongue and pants, and if you leave it alone, it lolls out its tongue and pants.*** Dogs cannot perspire properly. That is why they always pant. Human beings, who can perspire, do not pant like that. But dogs, Allah created them unable to perspire so they have to pant, ***so if you chase it away, it lolls out its tongue and pants, and if you leave it alone, it lolls out its tongue and pants.*** And this is the metaphor Allah uses for this scholar who was stripped of his knowledge and followed his whims and desires.

Allah likens him to a dog and then says: ***That is the metaphor of those who deny Our Signs.*** There you see! This doesn't just apply to this man, everyone who denies Allah's Signs, and knowledge is necessarily connected to action, anyone who does not act according to the knowledge he has, shoving it behind his back, he is also included in this *ayat*. ***So tell the story so that hopefully they will reflect.*** Tell them the story and make it clear to them what happened to previous communities, about the people who won and the people who lost. So they will follow the way of the winners and avoid the path of the losers.

Go on! ***How evil is the metaphor of those who deny Our Signs. It is themselves that they have badly wronged.*** This is because the human being only harms himself. If he goes out and does bad actions he only harms himself. He just exposes himself to the loss of this world and the Next. But if Allah takes him by the hand and enables him to use his intellect, he goes on the Straight Path. So Allah says: ***"This is My Path and it is straight, so follow it. Do not follow other ways or you will become cut off from His Way."*** 6:154

During Ramadan some people go to cafes, some go to??, some go out for a stroll, but the best thing would be to go and do a few rak'ats, or reflect on your wrong actions. This space of Ramadan, Allah has put a great gift in it. I always say it is the storehouse of the year. If someone does a prayer in it, just a *nafila*, it counts as a *fard*. And if he prays a *fard* prayer it counts the same as seventy *fards* at any other time. And not just prayers, every kind of action is multiplied, all good actions count seventy times what they normally do. *Dhikr* seventy times, fasting seventy times, prayer seventy, every action is multiplied. So if someone has any intellect, if he has neglected something outside Ramadan, he makes it up during Ramadan. Ramadan is the place of making up.

Then we have the time of the breaking of the fast, because every fasting person has a *du'a* guaranteed to be answered when he breaks his fast. Do not just say "*assalamu alaykum*" and start eating. There is a proper adab to breaking the fast. You should have a little something and then pray *Maghrib*. Then after that when you want to eat you should say: "*Allahumma laka sumtu wa bika amantu wa 'ala rizqika aftartu faghfir li ma qaddamtu wa ma akhkhartu wa ma asrartu wa ma a'lamtu.*" Then supplicate Allah saying: "*Allahumma inni as'aluka ridaka wa'l-jinna wa ma yuqarribu ilayhima min qawlin wa 'amal wa na'udhu bika min sakhatika wa nar wa*

ma yuqarribu ilayhima min qawlin wa 'amal." This is the best *du'a* it is possible for a person to make, because he has one *du'a* which is guaranteed to be answered.

And you shouldn't over-eat because the whole point of fasting is to cut down on eating. But if when someone breaks his fast, they eat until their stomach is full up, it is as if they haven't fasted at all. Because the purpose of fasting is to train the *nafs*. You should eat a bit and then have some rest and at *sahur* it is vital to eat a bit more. There is the *hadith*: "Have *sahur* because there is a *baraka* in *sahur*. Allah and His angels pray for blessing on the people who have *sahur*." So you should definitely have something for *sahur*, even if it is just rice or something light. Not just sleep through and not get up or you will lose out on an important *sunna*.

You will also miss another time when your *du'a* is guaranteed to be answered because at that time Allah asks who is asking Him so that He can answer him or asking forgiveness of Him so that He can forgive him. That last third of the night, the *sahar* time, is full to the brim with good. It is not a time which is fitting for anyone to sleep through. Allah *ta'ala* discloses Himself during it and says, "Is there any asker so that I can give to him, or anyone seeking forgiveness so that I can forgive him, anyone repenting so that I can turn towards him, anyone wanting My pardon" until dawn comes and the door of the Allah's treasury shuts. No one must waste that time. So have something to eat for *sahur* and turn to Sidi our Lord.

Anyway may Allah give us and you success in gaining good, give us and you love for one another in Allah; and our king, may Allah give him every success, and give him good advisors; and this Israel and those who support it, by the *baraka* of this blessed gathering, may Allah speed their destruction, and give us joy by the Muslims gaining victory over them, very soon.

Letter from Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib

In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most-Merciful

There is no power nor strength except by Allah and may Allah bless our master Muhammad and his family and Companions and grant them peace abundantly

To our brothers in Allah, those we love in the Essence of Allah, our masters of the tribe of Turoug At 'Ata in the Wadi Amagha, each of them by name, young and old, male and female, especially their community and their notable people, their *fugara'* and the people of authority among them. May Allah give you success and help you and may He establish me and establish you in what pleases Him - Glory be to Him! General, complete, all-embracing peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah and His blessings and on all your people and children and all who are from you and to you. May Allah make all of us thrive by the rank of the Interceding Prophet by His favour. Amen.

I have heard about your visit and the help you have given to the *zawiyya* in this blessed month whose worth in the sight of Allah is immense. May Allah accept it from you, turn to you and disburse to you some of His vast treasures which no eye has seen, no ear has heard and which have not occurred to the heart of man, in the sensory and the meaning, outward and inward. We ask Him to bless you in your *deen*, in your faith, in your crops, in your horses, in your water, in your herds, and in everything Allah has granted you by His favour, Amen.

I advise you, my masters, to persevere in doing the prayer at its time and in the recitation of the noble *wird*, morning and evening, and to stay awake on the night before *Jumu'a* without overburdening yourselves and to fill your moments with that whose good and benefit will revert to you in this world and the Next. Allah, *jalla wa 'azza*, says, "*Remind, then, if the reminder benefits. He who has fear will be reminded; but the most miserable will shun it.*" (87:9-11). Allah - glory be to Him - says, "*And as for the blessing of your Lord, speak out!*" (93:11)

Know, masters, that our Master, *tabaraka wa ta'ala*, has honoured you and has bestowed on you some of His pure generosity and nobility in a land full of blessings, possessing abundant bounty, and great good. He has favoured you with mutual friendship, mutual agreement, peace and security. He also favoured you with unity for many long years until your land was the best, most excellent noblest, most luminous, highest, finest and most beautiful of the lands of Allah. Your position was unified and your state was unified. Your mosques flourished and your children recited the Qur'an. You were merciful to your weak and followed the path of your Prophet and repented of your wrong actions. All intelligent people wanted to live with you. Your crops flourished, your fruits were plentiful and the water in your wadis was abundant. There was mercy among you towards one another. It seems to me that Allah, *tabaraka wa ta'ala*, gave you the Garden in this world and let you live in it by His pure bounty and generosity.

Then when the accursed shaytan saw these incalculable and countless blessings which were Allah's bounty to you, he envied you for that and wanted to make you ungrateful and to remove these immense blessings from you by causing you to be ungrateful for them and not respecting and valuing them. He proceeded to make you disobey Allah and His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and to do what angers our Master, *'azza wa jalla*, and does not please Him. What master likes it if His slaves envy one another, are angry at one another and confront one another in front of Him, when He sees them in possession of His gifts?

So we want you, our masters, to stop following Shaytan and not to go with him, even a single step. Allah, blessed is He and highly exalted - says, *"O you who believe, do not follow in the footsteps of Shaytan. Anyone who follows in Shaytan's footsteps should know that he commands indecency and wrongdoing."* (24:21) He, *jalla wa 'azza*, also says, *"O you who believe, wine and gambling, stone altars and divining arrows are filth from the handiwork of Shaytan. Avoid them completely so that hopefully you will be successful. Shaytan wants to stir up enmity and hatred between you by means of wine and gambling and to debar you from remembrance of Allah and from salat. Will you not then give them up?"* (5:90-91)

We want you, my lords, to repent to Allah with the sincere repentance of someone who turns from all that angers Allah *tabaraka wa ta'ala* and from anything with which He is not pleased, especially your mutual opposition and separation from one another. Allah, *tabaraka wa ta'ala*, made you brothers by His words, *"The believers are brothers, so make peace between your brothers."* (49:10) We want Allah to help you to oppose shaytan and disappoint him and not to allow him to achieve his goal among you, because what shaytan wants for you from what you do is something you will definitely not like, meaning the anger and wrath of your Lord towards you.

Beware, my lords, lest you make peace with your enemy. There is no good for you in his company nor in following him nor in obeying him because he is the enemy of Allah. Allah the Immense says, *"Shaytan is your enemy, so treat him as an enemy. He summons his party so they will be among the people of the Searing Blaze."* (35:6) Allah, *tabaraka wa ta'ala*, says, *"Do you take him and his offspring as protectors apart from Me when they are your enemy?"* (18:50)

The end of my advice to you is to renew your contract with Allah *tabaraka wa ta'ala*, to be enemies of Shaytan and not to obey anything he commands and nor avoid what he forbids, because Allah, *tabaraka wa ta'ala*, forbade us to obey him and commanded us to disobey him, oppose him and to be far from him. Praise and thank Allah often for His blessing and His bounty.

Allah the Immense says, *"Remember Allah's blessings, so that hopefully you will be successful."* (7:69) "Speak of Allah's blessings to you and, by the strength and power of Allah, you will obtain everything that delights you and makes you happy and joyous. Allah the Immense says, *"If you are grateful, I will certainly give you increase."* (14:9) Allah has bestowed on you His bounty, generosity and goodness and so you must receive His blessings with increased gratitude and praise in order to ensure that they are always with you. You must set out to get rid of dispute and mutual aversion in all dealings between yourselves and you must also hasten to eliminate the causes of rancour and hatred between you and to show forbearance and mercy to one another. Allah, *ta'ala*, says, *"Those who believe and urge each other to steadfastness and urge each other to compassion."* (90:18) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The All-Merciful shows mercy to the merciful. Show mercy to those who are in the earth and those who are in heaven will show mercy

to you," It is also related: ""If someone does not show mercy to other people, Allah will not show mercy to him, nor will He pardon the one who does not pardon, nor turn to the one who does not repent."

Remember, masters, what occurred to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, when he went out one day to specify the Night of Power to people and found two men quarrelling. The Night of Power was not specified to people because of the quarrel. Allah the Immense says, "*Do not quarrel among yourselves lest you lose heart and your momentum disappear*" (8:46) and "*Hold fast to the rope of Allah all together, and do not separate. Remember Allah's blessing to you when you were enemies and He joined your hearts together so that you became brothers by His blessing.*" (3:102)

We ask Allah *tabaraka wa ta'ala* to undertake to guide us and you by His favour. Make supplication for us, and may you remain in good and well being, and may we and you abide by the contract of Allah and have his love until the Meeting with Him.

Peace.

In the month of Allah, Dhu'l-Hijja 1371 with the *idhn* of our shaykh, Sayyiduna Muhammad ibn al-Habib Amghari al-Husayni, the wali of Allah.

Preface to the Diwan of Shaykh Ibn al-Habib

by Shaykh Abdalqadir as-Sufi

[This is a very old preface to the Diwan, written around 1970.]

The Way

The **great Qutb, our master, Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib** says of himself in the introduction to his renowned Diwan here presented in English, 'Allah the Exalted has destined for this noble Path in every age one who sets right its deviations and manifests its secrets and lights. He is the Shaykh who unites the Reality and the Road (the Shari'a and the Haqiqa), with the permission of Allah and His Messenger, and all the perfected of Allah. He is the Unique Man of Muhammad of whom there is only one in every age. If there are numerous Shaykhs in his age, he rules over them all, whether they are aware of it or not.' He also said, 'By Allah, none has come to me who was not beloved.'

Our Master had tens of thousands of fuqara'. He worked ceaselessly until his death in calling the people to remembrance of Allah. Wherever he went Islam revived and hearts stirred to life and were awakened. He was renowned as the sultan of the 'ulama' of his time. Indeed, such a great scholar of outward learning was he that it caused a sensation when he turned his back on the gifts of reputation which awaited him as a young man to take the path of the Sufis. Nevertheless, within his long life, centred as it was in Meknes and Fes, his vast erudition coupled with his exemplary character and illuminated state, brought many of Islam's scholars to follow his way and take the Sufic method of direct experience over information in accordance with the well-known hadith which declares witnessing to be higher than information.

As he lived for over one hundred years, his life spanned the many troubles of French occupation and persecution of Islam, to be followed by the persecutions of the nationalists who in turn attacked the Sufis who stood in the way of their newly acquired power. With the irony of this world's ways, the Shaykh was first harassed by the French governors, and then, later, by the ambitious politicians who wanted to take the very position that the French had held before them of elitist control. At one point all his fuqara' were under attack and went in danger of their lives. The French governor begged him simply to order them to stop wearing the green turban of the Darqawi fuqara' and they would be left alone. He refused, saying, "In my life I have seen many winds blow. Yours is just another one." As he had indicated, that wind passed and the French left after a bloody persecution of the Darqawi Tariq, especially the Badawiyya branch to which Shaykh ibn al-Habib

belonged. Its zawiyas were bombed and the families of the fuqara' massacred, tombs were desecrated, and whole libraries shipped to Paris under the supervision of catholic priests. These widespread colonialist crimes do not appear in the contemporary historical record perhaps because these records come from France and a Morocco which wants to eradicate the evidence of this great Sufic order's struggle for Islam. It should also be noted that Shaykh al-Kattani who temporarily deposed the French puppet sultan was also a Darqawi master.

Following the departure of the French came the involvement with western political method and pretence. The attacks on the Darqawa were renewed. Green turbaned men were attacked on the street and beaten up, armed groups barred the way to the Sufic meeting places. That phase in turn passed. Within his lifetime there were deep changes within the discipline of the Tariq also. When he had taken the wird as a young man from desert Shaykh, Sidi al-'Arabi al-Huwari, the Darqawa fuqara' were held to strict and difficult obligations. They wore the muraqqa', the patched robe or jellaba and that only as far as just below the knees. Their tasbih-beads were large and heavy wooden balls, so that the whole tasbih hung below the waist. Many went barefoot and carried the staff, some, even, the begging bowl. Under Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Ali of Marrakech the fuqara' were permitted to wear the muraqqa' longer in the bitter winters of the desert. They still recited the two hour long wird of Shaykh Muhammad al-'Arbi, the Master who followed the great khalif of Shaykh ad-Darqawi, Shaykh al-Badawi. When the permission came to Shaykh ibn al-Habib, he changed everything. Breaking with the tradition as the traditional culture itself broke up which supported these things, he issued new obligations. Instead of the muraqqa', he ordered his fuqara' to wear the best clothes their station in life permitted. He rescinded the long wird and replaced it with his own wird, a short but profound and beautiful recitation imbued with his own deep scholarship and gnostic insights. He declared, 'I have received three barakat from Allah: to wear beautiful clothes, to eat beautiful food, and to perform beautiful dhikr.'

There was a vastness in his action and in his pronouncement that affected all who came in contact with him and which altered all who knew him. 'Ulama' bitterly opposed to the Sufis went up the stairs to his small tower room at the top of his great zawiyas in Meknes, fuming with imprecations of innovation and shirk, only to descend, sobbing and transformed, filled with a sense of the majesty of Allah. All this we saw with our eyes, again and again. Throughout all these exchanges he remained the same, serene, humble, eyes lowered, immersed in profound reflective awareness of the Divine Presence. Occasionally from the depths of his being the Great Name would emerge, resonant and deep, Every faqir who served him has experiences to recount, and for each that one can recount there are other deeper ones on which our lips are forever sealed. As the Sufis say, he was an ocean without a shore. He was the great one, and the proof of his greatness double.

The first proof is the perfection of his state in every situation, his balance, deep wisdom, and continual trust in Allah. Everything turned around him, but he in the centre of all the activity that surrounded him, turned only around his own heart, glorifying Allah with every breath. His secrets, his states, and his transmission were subtle and unsurpassed in the whole history of Sufism. He said of himself, referring to his early years as a Sufi when he taught Arabic at the Qarawiyyin in Fez: 'My station when I taught at the Qarawiyyin was equal to the station of Moulay 'Abdalqadir al-Jilani.' When one considers his achievement in reviving the Darqawi Way and steering it through the difficult years of occupation and modernisation that were to follow that period, one realises what a vital figure he was in the history of Islam. Someone came to him once asking for difficult spiritual tasks, dhikrs and retreats and so on, to reach illumination. He told them it was not necessary. They begged to be given some taxing spiritual duty. He answered, saying, 'No. You have seen me. That is enough.' The depths of this Sufi reply is the core of Sufism and the meaning of transmission, and it is not magic.

The second proof of his great place in Sufism is his Diwan. The Darqawi Way has become the Way of the Diwan. As well as celebrating the great Diwan of Ibn al-Farid, the Darqawa in their circle have always loved to sing the beautiful songs of ash-Shushtari, the Andalus Master. Shaykh al-Harraq, whose master was ad-Darqawi, wrote a Diwan that is a remarkable poetic and Sufic achievement. Shaykh al-'Alawi too wrote a Diwan. The Harraqi Diwan declares the haqiqat - the reality of the quest for Allah. It speaks of the secret. The 'Alawi Diwan tells of the man who has the secret, and so in a sense speaks only of the gnostic and not of anything else. What it says is true, but it can be misleading for people who read it. The great achievement of Shaykh ibn al-Habib was that in his Diwan he combined two elements. Firstly, he wrote the work in the flawless and noble Arabic of a great Qur'anic scholar. Secondly, he combined the delight in the inner secret with suluk – clear guidance and counsel for the seeker on his path to Allah. There was no Diwan like it before,

and there has been none like it since.

From this Diwan a new element was introduced into the practice of the Sufis. Where before the Diwans were only sung at the gathering of sama', now it became the practice of the Habibiyyin Darqawa to sing some qasa'id at any gathering in which they met, even if it was only to take tea.

The Diwan has become so renowned and loved beyond the circle of the Darwaqa that it is now sung by Sufis all round the world. We have heard it sung in Makka, to the music of the gamalang from Indonesia, in Western America as well as in England.

The Shaykh

A Tijani faqir came to Shaykh Ibn al-Habib once while we sat with him. He informed the Shaykh that in the Tijani tariqa they did not have a Shaykh and that they did not consider one necessary. It was enough to follow the guidance of Sidi Ahmad Tijani. Our Master was silent for a while before he spoke. Then he raised his eyes and looked at the young man. 'A dead midwife,' he told him, 'cannot deliver a live child.' the faqir turned pale and then buried his head in his hands and wept from the depth of his being.

This kind of exchange we were witness to, and ourselves, experienced, many times, as were all the Shaykh's murids. The counsel was direct, and hit the target, but in every case, the heart was turned over. In his presence hearts were overwhelmed. He did nothing. He spoke in the calm and considered phrasing of the scholar. His voice had gravity and his speech was wisdom. Occasionally a rich bubbling mirth rose up and flooded his features in a smile that filled us all with delight. He never spoke against anybody, even in the direct face of the evidence, yet, at the same time, he would not yield to any wrong action or permit any deviation from the Shari'a of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He did not cease to perform the obligatory acts of 'ibada to the full until the moment of his death, allowing no excuse or laxity which he could have done due to his great age and sometimes weakness, although his last year was illuminated by a vitality and youthful energy that was a triumph of inwardness over the frail and aged outwardness that remained to him.

He maintained this condition throughout that last year and made preparations to go on hajj from his zawiyya in Meknes, Morocco. Refusing advice to fly, he insisted on travelling, as he loved to do, by car from zawiyya to zawiyya across North Africa. In the last days before leaving Meknes for the last time he alarmed his four wives by continually descending into the zawiyya and handing to the masakin and fuqara' first a jellaba and then a ha'ik, until, by the time he reached the city of Blida in Algeria where he was destined to die, his clothes had all been given away. He arrived there in apparently good health, walked into his zawiyya, struck the ground with his stick and turned to his muqaddam, saying, 'You will bury me here.' Shocked, his muqaddam denied that such a thing could happen.

Three days later he was to die, having held a night of dhikr at which he delivered a discourse on the Light Ayat of the Qur'an. Without waiting for permission – for it was known that he had declared his desire to be buried at the Meknes zawiyya – his muqaddam had him buried in the night. The Shaykh was buried on the spot that he had indicated with his stick when he first entered the zawiyya. His body was later exhumed and he now rests in the great zawiyya in Meknes.

We personally know of various karamat by his hand, but we will not speak of them here for we recall that when these things happened he hid them and his own perception of them. His fear of Allah was complete and without flaw. He maintained the position of helpless slave in every matter while he ruled a large supra-national community from California to Makka and beyond. When summoned to appear before Muhammad V in his palace at Rabat he refused, saying that if the King wanted to see him he would have to come to him in Meknes. He acknowledged only al-Malik (the King), the Lord of the Universe.

His company contained the poorest of the poor and the leaders of the community, the scholars and the common people. He travelled thousands of miles, using a car a year, annually traversing the southern desert of Morocco and also crossing northern Morocco to visit his many zawiyyas in Algeria. The great event was his Moussem, held every year seven days following the birthday of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him

and grant him peace. Fuqara' came from all over the world to attend this noble gathering. It was noted for the sobriety of its atmosphere, in contrast to the emotional and festive gatherings that passed elsewhere in Morocco for Moussems honouring the great Sufis. At his Moussem for three days all that happened was the recitation of Qur'an, constantly, the rich and sublime Andalusian singing of the Diwans of the Masters, the Sufic dance, the hadra, and long and complex discourses on the Qur'an and the Path to gnosis of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, this Moussem is still celebrated, but since it is devoid of marching in the streets and primitive superstitious practices it blessedly avoids the commendation and support of the Ministry of Tourism.

The Shaykh said to one of his murids, 'All the awliya' have miracles, but the great awliya's miracles come after their deaths. Wait and you will see.' One of the miracles of the Shaykh has been that directly by his teaching and patience and supplication to Allah, Islam has spread dramatically in England, Spain and the United States so that in these countries there are settled and unified Muslim communities which adhere to the Sufic path. Another is certainly the spread in renown of this unique diwan.

(The Arabic Diwan is available from Bookwork:-

<http://www.angelfire.com/ab2/bookwork/>

The new edition of the English translation should be available very soon, insha'allah.)

Introduction To The Diwan Of Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Al-Habib

The Shaykh said, may Allah be pleased with him:

Praise belongs to Allah Who has established men in every age to revive His Tariqa. He has revealed to them the lights of Muhammad, from which all the lovers who followed them would derive aid, be they couples or individuals.

We praise Him, the Glorious and Exalted, for the secrets with which He has entrusted us, and for the sciences, gnoses and lights He has poured out on us. We greatly thank Him, may His Majesty be exalted, in recognition of all the blessings that have come to us and all the slaves of Allah, free or in bondage.

We declare that our master Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger, sent by Allah as a mercy to the creation, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and his family and Companions who spent themselves and their wealth in the revival of His way and the setting up of His sunna, and who did not turn to the destruction of the hypocrites and the veiled.

Brothers of the Darqawiyya-Shadhiliyya order and all others of the Lord's slaves in all of Allah's countries who desire to emulate a master, know, that Allah the Exalted has destined for this noble path in every age one who sets right its deviations and manifests its secrets and its lights. He is the Shaykh who unites the Haqiqah and the Shari'a with the idhn of Allah and His Messenger and all the Perfected of Allah. He is the unique man of Muhammad of whom there is only one in every age. If there are numerous Shaykhs in his age, he rules over them all, whether they are aware of it or not. Many have laid claim to the Station of uniqueness with falsehood and lies because they seek leadership and desire to possess this passing world. The pretender is unaware that whoever claims what is not in him is exposed by the witnesses of the test, since in their presence a man is either exalted or humiliated. True Shaykhs are satisfied with the knowledge of Allah and depend only on Allah. All that emanates from them speaks of the blessing of Allah. He, may He be exalted said:

"As for the blessing of your Lord - declare it."

So let Muhammad ibn al-Habib, al-Amghari al-Hasani by lineage, dwelling in Fez, the poor slave of his Master, yet enriched by Him with other-than-Him - declare, in speaking of Allah's blessing - that idhn (authorisation) has come to him from Allah and the Messenger of Allah and all the Perfected of Allah, and that

Allah has singled him out with sciences and secrets which only the unique man of Muhammad possesses.

Had we wished to reveal all that Allah has blessed us with we would need volumes, we shall however relate to the fuqara only that tribute with which our Shaykh and teacher Sidi Muhammad ibn 'Ali favoured us. When he, may Allah be pleased with him, became head of the order, we wrote him a letter renewing our contact with him although we had taken Tariq from the Shaykh and gnostic of Allah, Sidi al-'Arabi ibn al-Huwari. He, may Allah be pleased with him, wrote to us and ordered us to come to his presence. So we obeyed his command and went to Marrakesh. When we went in to him he was filled with limitless joy and happiness and said to us: 'The whole order came to me when you came!' On another occasion he said to us in a prophecy, may it long be remembered, 'Your rank with us in our order is that of Ibn 'Ata'allah in the Shadhiliyya order. As Allah revived the Shadhiliyya path through Ibn 'Ata'allah, so also He will revive this blessed Tariqa through you, if He wills!' And Allah has realised his hope in us.

By Allah and by Allah we have not passed through a city, a village or a desert but that the people testified that love had come to them and life flowed in their hearts. Such is the secret of Allah's idhn. Praise be to Allah, no faqir has sat with us without gaining a knowledge that was not his before, and getting from it humility and a contrite heart. No murid of the Tariqa has sat with us without a strengthening of his innate condition and the heightening of his himma in the quest for gnosis of Allah. There has been no Shaykh of the Shaykhs of the age who has not increased in his immediate tasting and gained something of benefit which he did not have before. All that is from the secret of the idhn and its baraka.

Ibn 'Ata'allah says in his 'Hikam' (Book of Wisdom):

'He to whom the idhn of discourse has been given, his declaration is understood in the ears of creation, and the evidence of his selection is made plain to them.'

The one with idhn is the one who speaks by Allah and for Allah, and so his words have an effect on the heart, and all the elect and the beloved are guided to him. The Shaykh of our Shaykh, Sidi Muhammad al-'Arabi, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'By Allah, none has come to me who was not acceptable.' I say, speaking of the blessing of Allah, 'By Allah, none has come to me who was not beloved.'

Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said to me in a prophecy, 'Know, my son, that Allah will honour you with sweet and pleasant waters.' I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, are these the waters of Islam, Iman and Ihsan?' He said to me, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, 'They are.' He said, 'You and all who follow you of my community shall drink them.' And Allah realised for us what He promised. By Allah, we have drunk these waters, and soon all of those who accompany us with sincerity will drink them too. So, my lords, give praise to Allah ta'ala and thank Him for what He has honoured you with in your time.

He has said, may He be exalted, 'Whenever we abrogate an ayat or cause it to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or equal to it.' Allah ta'ala has given precedence here to the better over the like as an indication that the heir to the perfect Wali must appear even after some time has passed. And that he will be more perfect than him in knowledge and gnosis of Allah ta'ala. He is the miracle of that perfect Wali. So the overflowing energy from Allah continues to increase. The Shaykh, our lord and master, Ahmad al-Badawi, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

'Your overflowing increases
Your existence is uninterrupted.'

I have indicated some of what Allah has granted me in the qasida that speaks of the blessing from Allah, entitled 'The Robe of Nearness':

'Invocation of the Beloved clothed us in beauty and radiance,
exaltation and joy.

In drawing near we cast aside every restraint and

openly proclaimed the One we love to glorify.'

When the Shaykh Sidi Muhammad b. 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, died, and the idhn was renewed in me, I regarded my self as worthless and undeserving of that station until the four Shaykhs came to me. They are: Sidi Muhammad ibn 'Ali, Sidi al-'Arabi ibn al-Huwari, Sidi Muhammad al-'Arabi, and Sidi Ahmad al-Badawi, may Allah be pleased with them. They commanded me to go out to the creation and guide them to the true King. They said: 'The water which you have drunk from us is the coolest and sweetest of waters, so stretch out your hand to the east and the west, and fear no-one!' Then the idhn came from the Chosen One, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and I was awed into going forth. So I went out to creation by Allah and for Allah, saying as Ibn 'Ata'allah said in his 'Hikam': 'My God, you have ordered me to return to the existence-traces, so return me to it with a robe of lights and the guidance of discrimination so that I may return to You from it, as I came to You from it - my secret pure of regard for it and my himma elevated above dependence on it. You have power over all things.'

Know, my lords, that it is obligatory on every murid who seeks the presence of Allah to take the living Shaykh. The proof of this obligation is His word, may He be exalted: 'O you who have iman, fear Allah, and be with the truthful ones.' Being with them necessitates accompanying them in body, not just in spirit. He has said, may He be exalted: 'Follow the path of whoever turns away from self to Me.' In this ayat, He, may He be exalted, orders the walad (beginner/lit. youth) to follow the spiritual father, not the father of form, because the spiritual father teaches the inner meaning and the father of the body teaches you sensory meaning. What a difference there is between the one whose himma is for the meaning and the one whose himma is for the sensory! He said, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: 'A man follows the Deen of his friend, so let each of you look to who he takes as a companion.' There has always been agreement in this community of Muhammad that the first thing required of a murid once he has become aware of his state of distraction is that he should rely on a Shaykh of good counsel and guidance who knows the defects of the self, its motives, and the remedies for its ailments, and who has done with the putting right of his own self and its desires. He will give the murid insight into the faults of his self and draw him out beyond the perimeter of his senses. Whoever has no Shaykh to direct him will most certainly be directed by shaytan to the path of destruction.

Murid is derived from will (irada) and it depends on sincerity (ikhlas). The true meaning of murid is one who has stripped himself of his own will and accepted what Allah wills for him, which is the worship of Allah ta'ala, for as He said: 'I have not created jinn and men except to worship Me.' When the murid is weak in disciplining his self - since the inner rule belongs to the self and shaytan - he places himself under the rule of the Shaykh and in the protection of his power. He, in his turn will help the murid to obey and worship Allah through his himma which operates by the idhn of Allah and through his words which are made effective by the gift of Allah. So a murid must cling to whoever of the Shaykhs of the age are well disposed towards him.

Sidi 'Abd al-Wahid ibn 'Ashir says:

'The murid keeps company with a Shaykh who knows the ways of behaviour,
and who protects him from dangers on his way.

The murid is reminded of Allah when he sees the Shaykh,

who then leads the slave to his Master.'

Look at our commentary on these verses and confusion will leave you.

Ibn 'Ata'llah, may Allah be pleased with him, says in his 'Hikam':

'Do not accompany the one whose state does not change you,
and whose speech does not guide you to Allah.'

The elevation of your state, and the guidance of his speech are the result of this companionship. So whoever does not find such a state from his companion let him abandon him to Allah and seek one of this description. The murid will gain a master in accordance with his own sincerity and strength of resolution. Allah is the one to ask for help.

Explaining the attributes of the teaching Shaykh, I said in one of my qasidas ending in ta':

La ilaha illa'llah banishes all whisperings
with the instruction of a Shaykh who knows the Haqiqa.

His signs are: a light which shines appearing outwardly,
and a secret which appears inwardly, with himma.

He elevates you with a glance even before he speaks,
and from this glance comes a Robe of Honour.

By that I mean the secrets which flow rapidly into the
heart of the murid seeking the truth free of any shirk.

The staff of his journey is his zuhd among people,
and his concern lies in seeking the Beloved alone in vision.

His speech is by idhn from the Best of Creation
upon whom the glorious truthful ones depend.

If you attain the goal of finding someone like this,
then set out and offer up the self without delay.

Consider nothing except what I have described here,
for it is enough and it contains every happiness.

Al-Junayd, may Allah be pleased with him said:

'Purify yourself with the water of the Unseen if you are one possessing a secret. If not, do tayammum with dust or stone. Go before an Imam in front of whom you stand, and pray the noon prayer at the beginning of the afternoon. This is the prayer of those who are the gnostics of their Lord. If you are one of them, then moisten the dry land with the sea.'

He, may Allah be pleased with him, commanded the murid to purify himself with the water of the Unseen. It is understood that purification is of two sorts: sensory purification which is the sensory water, and pertains to the whole body if it is a major impurity, and to specific limbs if it is a minor impurity. This is not what the poet meant, may Allah be pleased with him. The second sort is spiritual purification which is the purification of the hearts from the ailments which veil them from the presence of the Knower of the Unseen. This purification is only done with spiritual water which is the water of sciences, gnoses and secrets that flow from the presence of the Unseen into the heart of the Shaykh who is a gnostic of Allah, purified of fault. The Shaykh pours it over the murid and so he purifies his heart from otherness and it is filled with gnoses and secrets. This is if the murid himself possesses a secret, that is to say inner sight, which brings him into contact with the one who takes him by the hand, that is, the Shaykh who draws his power from the presence of the Unseen as we have stated. If the murid does not possess this secret and inner sight then he must do tayammum with the dust of outward deeds and formal knowledge until Allah endows him with the secret and the inner sight.

He indicates, may Allah be pleased with him, by his statement: 'Go before an Imam in front of whom you stand,' that the murid must go before an Imam, a Shaykh, a gnostic of Allah, to copy him in the spiritual prayer which is the direct perception of the worshipped King, as it is necessary for the one behind the Imam in the prayer to do ruku' and sujud (bowing and prostrating). His words: 'In front of whom you stand,' indicate to the murid that he should not follow any Shaykh except one he already knew in the world of spirits. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: 'The spirits are numerous hosts, whoever of them become acquainted will be in harmony, and those not acquainted will be at variance.' The meaning then is: 'Go before in the world of spirits. Because of the encounter and acquaintance which occurred in the world of the spirits, harmony will occur in the world of forms.'

By his words, 'Pray the noon prayer at the beginning of the afternoon,' he means pray the Dhuhr prayer (noon prayer), that is the manifestation (dhuhur) of your desire for your Lord, which is uninterrupted witnessing of the worshipped King, as we have said. 'Asr (afternoon prayer) means 'being together' (mu'asara) with your Shaykh and the negation of your will for him. He does not refer, may Allah be pleased with him, to the prayers of Dhuhr and 'Asr containing ruku' and sujud, because it is known that dhuhr is set to be prayed at the beginning of its time and not at the beginning of 'Asr. Thus the meaning falls into place, so understand and you will be guided - and Allah has charge of our guidance and the guidance of creation. Amin.

As regards his statement: 'This is the prayer of those who are gnostics of their Lord,' it means this is uninterrupted contemplation of the worshipped King. Their prayer is not interrupted because it is constant. They persevere in the witnessing of their Lord. His word: 'If you are among them, then moisten the dry land with the sea,' means if you are one of the gnostics -and they are not veiled by creation from the truth, nor by the truth from creation - then moisten, that is sprinkle, the dry land of your road (Shari'a) with the sea of your reality (Haqiqah), and be among those who unite the two. Likewise, our Imam, Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, said: 'He who follows the Shari'a and does not ascertain (i.e. have direct experience) has strayed from the proper course. He who ascertains and does not follow the Shari'a has become a heretic. Whoever unites the two has realised!' That is, he has realised the two forms of worship ('ubudiyya), the worship of obligation and the worship of instruction.

MIFTAH AL-WIRD* The Key to the Source (The Wird of Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib)

[Note. The comments in red on the wird were done by Dr. Yasin Dutton]

[*The word wird comes from a root meaning "to go down to the watering-place, to drink.]

This is our noble Wird for whoever wishes it and seeks it. Its recital guarantees every good and repels every evil.

If the slave perseveres in it with idhn* of the Shaykh, or from a muqaddam who has idhn of the Shaykh, Allah will unite the Shari'a and Haqiqa for him.

[*Idhn means "permission", usually in the special sense of "permission of the shaykh". The Shari'a or "road" is the outward, path, i.e. the outward legal requirements of the deen. The Haqiqa is the "reality", or inward truth of things.]

MIFTAH AL-WIRD

O Allah bless our master Muhammad, Your slave and Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, and his family and Companions and grant them peace, as great as the number of Your creations and Your pleasure and the weight of Your Throne and the ink of Your words.

[The prayer on the Prophet is commanded by Surat al-Ahzab (33:56) "Inna llaha wa mala'ikatahu yusalluna 'ala'n-nabi. Ya ayyuha lladhina amanu sallu 'alayhi wa sallimu taslima." "Allah and His angels call down blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe! Call down blessings on him and ask for complete peace and safety for him."]

I take refuge with Allah, the Hearer, the Wise, from the accursed shaytan. In the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful. There is no power and no strength but through Allah, the High, the Great.

[Allah says, "Fa idha qara'ta'l-qur'ana fasta'idh billahi minash-shaytani'r-rajim." "Whenever you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from the cursed Shaytan." (16:98) and also, "wa imma yanzaghannaka minash-shaytani nazghun fa'sta'idh billah, innahu sami'un 'alim." "If an evil impulse from Shaytan provokes you, seek refuge in Allah. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing." (7:200)

I ask forgiveness of Allah. (3)

[Allah says: "was-taghfiru'llah, inna llaha ghafirun rahim." "And seek forgiveness from Allah. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (73:20)]

O Allah, bless our master Muhammad, Your slave and Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, and his family and Companions and grant them peace. (3)

There is no god except Allah alone, without association. The kingdom and the praise belong to Him, and He has power over all things. (3)

[The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The best thing that I and the Prophets before me have said is 'La ilaha illa'llahu wahdahu la sharika lah.'" (Muwatta.)

The last part of this dhikr, 'lahu'l-mulku wa lahu'l-hamd wa huwa 'ala kulli shay'in qadir" occurs in Surat at-Taghabun (64:1)]

Glory be to Allah and praise belongs to Allah. There is no god except Allah. Allah is greater. There is no

power and no strength but through Allah, the High, the Great. (3)

Glory be to Allah, by His praise, Glory be to Allah, the Great. (3)

[The last hadith in Imam al-Bukhari's collection is the following: "There are two phrases which are loved by the Rahman, light on the tongue and heavy in the balance: 'Subhanallahi wa bi-hamdihi' and 'Subhanallahi'l-'azim'.]

Praise is due to Allah and thanks be to Allah. (3)

A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering is distressing to him; he is deeply concerned for you; he is gentle and merciful to the muminun. (1)

[Surat at-Tawba (9:128)]

But if they turn away, say, 'Allah is enough for me. There is no god but Him. I have put my trust in Him. He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne.' (3)

[Surat at-Tawba (9:129)]

In the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful. Say: 'He is Allah, Absolute Oneness, Allah, the Everlasting Sustainer of all. He has not given birth and was not born. And no one is comparable to Him.' (3)

[Surat al-Ikhlās (112) It is stated in the hadith that this sura is worth a third of the Qur'an (see Muwatta')] Blessed is Allah. (3)

[Cf. Surat al-A'raf (7:54): "tabaraka'llahu rabbu'l-'alamin." Also Surat al-Mu'minin (23:14) and Surat Ghafir (40:64)]

In the name of Allah, All-Merciful, Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful, the King of the Day of Judgment. You alone we worship. You alone we ask for help. Guide us on the Straight Path, the Path of those whom You have blessed, not of those with anger on them, nor of the misguided. Amin. (3)

[Cf. Surat al-Fatiha (1)]

Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of might, above all that they describe, and peace be upon the Messengers, and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (1)

[This common ending for du'a's is in fact the last three ayats of Surat as-Saffat (37:180-182).]

O Allah, bless our master Muhammad, Your slave, Prophet and Messenger, the unlettered Prophet and his family and Companions and grant them peace by the measure of the sublimity of Your Essence at every time and in every age. Amin. Amin. Amin. (3)

Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of might, above all that they describe, and peace be upon the Messengers, and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (1)

O Allah! We ask You for sound Islam accompanied by submission to Your orders and prohibitions and for pure Iman, firmly established, enduring, protected from all the ambiguities and dangers, and for Ihsan that will drive us into the presence of the Unseen. May we be purified by it from every kind of negligence and defect. We ask for the certainty which will reveal to us the presences of the Names and Attributes by which we will be carried into the witnessing of the lights of the tajalliyati adh-dhat, and for useful knowledge through which we may understand how to conduct ourselves in Your presence and how to confide in You in prayer. Fill our hearts with the lights of Your ma'rifah so that we may witness Your All-Sustaining Gatheredness flowing in all created things. Let us be among the circle of Your bounty, beloved in Your presence and among the firmly grounded and enduring in tawakkul and sidq of dependence on You. Realise our hope with the answer to all that we ask, O Generous, O Giving! O Master do not let us rely on any other than You in stillness or in action. You have accustomed us to Your Ihsan before we even asked for it while we were in our mothers' wombs. You have raised us with the Latif of Your lordship over existence in a manner far beyond the perception of illuminated intellects.

We ask You, O Allah, by Your Prophet, whom You have preferred above all other Prophets and Messengers, and by Your Messenger whose message You made universal and a mercy to all creation, to bless him and his family and grant them a peace by which we may attain his love and follow him in words, deeds, in muraqaba, mushahada, adab, akhlaq and ahwal.

We ask You, O Master, by his rank, to grant us that useful knowledge through which every listener may profit and every heart may be made humble, and at which the skin may thrill and the tears flow. You are the All-Powerful, the Transformer, the Knowing, the Living, the Vast.

Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of might, above all that they describe, and peace be upon the Messengers, and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Then you pray the prayer called the Treasury of Truths in the prayer on the most noble of creatures from whom I received it, the Chosen One, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

O Allah, bless and grant peace to our lord and master Muhammad, the first of the lights emanating from the oceans of the sublimity of the Essence, with every one of Your perfections in all Your self-manifestations. In the two worlds - the hidden and the seen - he realised the meanings of the Names and Attributes. He is the first to give praise and worship with every kind of adoration and good action. He is the helper of all created beings in the world of forms and the world of spirits. And blessings be upon his family and Companions with a blessing that will lift the veil from his noble face for us in visions and in the waking state and will acquaint us with You and with him in all ranks and presences.

Be gracious to us, O Mawlana, by his rank, in movement and in stillness, in looks and in thoughts. (3)

Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of might, above all that they describe, and peace be upon the Messengers, and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaytan: Those to whom people said, 'The people have gathered against you, so fear them. But that merely increased their Iman and they said:

Allah is enough for us and the Best of Guardians. (10)

So they returned with blessings and bounty from Allah, and no evil touched them. (3)

They pursued the pleasure of Allah. Allah's favour is indeed immense. (3)

[Surat Ali 'Imran (3:173-174) These ayats came down about the second expedition to Badr, in the year 4 AH, when the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in accordance with the promise he had given Abu Sufyan after the Battle of Uhud, set out to meet him and the Makkans (the second 'people' in the ayat). Abu

Sufyan, however, tried to weaken the resolve of the Muslims by sending some of the tribe of 'Abd Qays (or, according to other reports, a man called Nu'aym ibn Mas'ud al-Ashja'i) (the first 'people' in the ayat) to cast fear into the hearts of the Muslims by telling them of the great numbers of Makkans ranged against them. In fact, it was the Makkans who were afraid and failed to present themselves at Badr, while the Muslims, putting their trust in Allah, went out and returned without suffering either harm or loss, and with the added gain that they made considerable profit from trading at the market of Badr.]

And if they intend to deceive you, Allah is enough for you. It is He Who supported you with His help, and with the muminun, and unified their hearts. Even if you had spent everything on the earth, you could not have unified their hearts. But Allah has unified them. He is the Almighty, All-Wise. O Prophet! Allah is enough for you, and for the muminun who follow you. (3)

[Surat al-Anfal (8:62-64) The last phrase is normally taken to mean "Allah and those believers who follow you are enough for you" (Ibn Juzayy, Jalalayn), but according to some it means "Allah is enough for you and for those believers who follow you" (e.g. az-Zamakhshari in Ibn Juzayy)

Ya Latifu, ya Latifu, the lutf is Yours!

You are the Latif, and from You the lutf engulfs us.

Ya Latifu, ya Latifu, I beg You by Your lutf - be the lutf to me -
and the lutf has descended!

Ya Latifu, we have hidden in Your lutf -
we have gone into the centre of lutf - and the lutf has descended.

We have been freed by the lutf of Allah, the Possessor of lutf,
Latifu, Latifu, His lutf is always that.

Ya Hafidhu, ya Hafidhu, the hifdh is Yours!

You are the Hafidh, and from You the hifdh engulfs us.

Ya Hafidhu, ya Hafidhu, I beg you by Your hifdh -
be the hifdh to me - and the hifdh has descended.

Ya Hafidhu, we have hidden in Your hifdh - we have gone
into the centre of hifdh - and the hifdh has descended.

We have been freed by the hifdh of Allah, the Possessor of hifdh.
Hafidhu, Hafidhu, His hifdh is always that.

By the rank of the Imam of the Messengers, Muhammad,
were he not the source of the hifdh, then it would not have descended.

Blessings be upon him as long as there is one who chants:

'Ya Hafidhu, ya Hafidhu, the hifdh is Yours!'

LA ILAHA ILA'LLAH (10)

No god - except Allah; our Master Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. May Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace. O Lord, make us firm by its recital, O Mawlana, give us results from its invocation. Let us enter into the fortress of its protection - let us be among its people - and let us say it and know it at the time of death. Gather us into the company of our lord and master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, and his Companions and all the believing slaves of Allah. Amin. Amin. Amin.

[There is a hadith qudsi to the effect that "La ilaha illa'llah' is My fortress, and whoever enters My fortress will be safe from My torment." (Ibn an-Najjar from Anas In Jam'al-Jawami' (I, 599)]

And peace be upon the Prophets and the Messengers, (3)

- And on all the Saliheen.

The last of our prayer is: Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. There is no power and no strength but through Allah, the Mighty, the Great.

[Cf Surat Yunus (10:10): "wa'akhiru da'wahuma ani'l-hamdu lillahi rabbi'l-'alamin" "The end of their call is: 'Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds!'"]

My help is only with Allah. In Him I have put my trust – and to Him I turn in renewal. Praise belongs to Allah for the blessing of Islam, and it is blessing enough.

[These words form part of Shu'ayb's words his people (the people of Madyan) in Surat Hud (11:88)]

O First! O Last! O Manifest! O Hidden!

Hear my cry as you heard the cry of Your slave, our master Zakariah, peace be upon him. Give me victory through You - for You.

Support me through You - for You. Join me to You - separate me from other-than-You.

[Cf. Surat al-Hadid (57:3): "Huwa'l-Awwalu wa'l-Akhiru wa'z-Zahiru wa'l-Batin"

For the story of Zakariyya who, despite his old age, asked for a child and was granted the Prophet Yahya as a son, see Surat Ali 'Imran (3:38-41)]

ALLAH (10)

Here ends the Greater Wird.

The Lesser Wird

In the name of Allah, All-Merciful, Most Merciful

O Allah, we ask You by the secret of the Essence and by the Essence of the secret. He is You and You are He. I have veiled myself with the light of Allah and the light of the Throne of Allah and all the Names of Allah from my enemies and the enemies of Allah. With one thousand 'no power, no strength but through Allah'. I have set a seal upon my self and my Deen and upon everything given to me by Allah with the seal of Allah with which He has sealed the Heavens and the earth. Allah is enough for us** and He is the best guardian, the best protector, the best helper.*** The blessings of Allah be upon our lord and master Muhammad, and upon all his family and Companions and great peace. Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.***

[*Surat Ali 'Imran (3:173)

**Surat a;-Afal (8:40) and Surat al-Hajj (22:78).

***Surat as-Saffar (37:182).]

O Lover! (3)

O Possessor of the glorious Throne! (3)

O You who Originate, O You who bring back to life. (3)

O He Who does whatever He wills! (3)

[This and the preceding three du'a's reflect Surat al-Buruj (85:13:16): "Innahu huwa yubdi'u wa yu'id, wa huwa'-ghafuru'l-wadudu dhu'l-'arsh, al-majidu fa'allul li-ma yurid."]

I ask You by the light of Your face that fills every corner of Your Throne - (3)

And I ask You by the power You exercise over Your creation (3)

And by Your mercy that encompasses all things - (3)

[Cf. Surat al-A'raf (7:156): "wa rahmati wasi'at kulla shay'".]

No god but You - O Rescuer - rescue us. (3)

Allah is Latif with His slaves. He gives wealth to whom He chooses, and He is the Strong, the Inestimably Precious. (10)

[Cf. Surat ash-Shura (42:19)]

Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of might, above all that they describe, and peace be upon the Messengers and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (1)

[Cf. Surat al-Hadid (57:3)]

THE WIRD OF FAJR

There is no divinity except Allah and Allah is greater. Glory be to Allah and by His praise: and I seek

forgiveness from Allah: and there is no strength nor power except by Allah. He is the First and the Last and the Outwardly Manifest and the Inwardly Hidden. Good is in His hand, He makes to live and makes to die, and He has power over everything. (10)

[Cf. Sura Ali 'Imran (3:26): "bi-yadika'l-khayr, Innaka 'ala kulli shay'in qadir" and in Surat al-Hadid (57:2): "lahu mulku's-samawati wa'l-ardi yuhyi wa yamit, wa huwa 'ala kulli shay'in qadir."]

And blessings of Allah upon our lord and master, Muhammad, and upon his family and Companions, let there be perfect peace, as great as the number of Your creations and Your pleasure and the weight of Your Throne and the ink of Your words. (1)

Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of might, above what they describe, and peace be upon the Messengers and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Glory be to Allah and praise be to Allah and there is no divinity except Allah and Allah is greater. There is no strength nor power except by Allah, the High, the Great, in quantity as great as what He knows and the weight of what He knows and the quantity of what He knows. (3)

Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of might, above what they describe, and peace be upon the Messengers and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

THE SEAL OF THE WIRD

O Allah, open our inner eyes to Your watching and contemplation through Your generosity and overflowing, and illuminate our secrets to the tajalliyat of Your Names and Attributes through Your gentleness and nobility, and annihilate us to our metaphorical existence in Your real existence through Your forbearance and favour. And make us have baqa' by You, not by us, preserving Your Shari'a and the Sunna of Your Prophet. You have power over everything and answering becomes You.

By a secret and a blessing -

In the name of Allah, All-Merciful, Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful, the King of the Day of Judgment. You alone we worship. You alone we ask for help. Guide us on the Straight Path, the Path of those whom You have blessed, not of those with anger on them, nor of the misguided.

Then pray for yourselves and your parents and all the Muslims and for the Shaykh of your age in particular. Then say:

O Allah, bless our master Muhammad and the family of Muhammad with a blessing by which You will save us from every fear and harm. Supply us with all our needs by it, and purify us from all evils by it, and raise us to the highest degrees by it. Through it let us attain the furthest goal of the good in life and after death. O Allah, in this hour send down some of Your good and Your baraka on us as You sent it down on Your perfect ones - send us what is kept for Your lovers. Let us taste the coolness of Your pardon and the sweetness of Your forgiveness. Spread over us Your compassion which encompasses all things. Sustain us with Your love, Your acceptance, our renewal in You, Your counsel, Your response to our asking, forgiveness, and well-being, taking in the present and the absent, the living and the dead in Your mercy.

O Most Merciful of the merciful, Lord of the worlds. (3)

O Allah, do not disappoint us in what we ask of You, nor deny us what we hope for from You. Protect us. Protect us. Protect us - in life and in death. You are the Answerer of prayers.

Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of might, above what they describe, and peace be upon the Messengers and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

O Allah, I ask You for the blessing of knowing You, and I ask for strength through Your power. I ask You for some of Your great and sublime fullness. You have power and I do not. You know and I do not. You are the Knower of the Unseen.

O Allah, if You know that my situation – my movement and stillness, apparent and hidden, in speech, deeds, character and state, in spiritual work and daily life, as regards myself and others, in this day or night and those after it, and all the rest of my life – is good for me in my Deen, and my worldly existence, in this life and my next life, and my final end, be it sooner or later, then decree it for me and make it easy for me and bless me in it.

But if You know that my situation - all my movement and stillness, apparent and hidden, in speech, deeds, character and state, in spiritual work and daily life, as regards myself and others in this day or night and those after it, and all the rest of my life - is evil for me in my Deen, and my worldly existence, in this life and my next life, and my final end, be it sooner or later, then divert it from me and divert me from it, and destine the good for me wherever it may be and accept it from me. You have power over all things.

O Allah, provision us with fear of You that may come between us and acts of disobedience against You, and grant us obedience to You that will bring us to Your Garden and grant us certainty that will make the misfortunes of this world easy for us.

O Allah, let us enjoy our hearing and vision and strength for as long as You grant us life and make it our legacy. Avenge us on those who have wronged us and give us victory over those who have attacked us, and do not give us misfortune in our Deen. Do not let this world be the greatest of our cares, nor the scope of our knowledge, nor the object of our desire, and do not let our homecoming be the Fire. Do not place over us because of our wrong actions those who have no fear of You and will not show mercy to us.

O Most Merciful of the merciful. (3)

O Allah! O Lord, by the rank of Your chosen Prophet and approved Messenger, purify our hearts of every attribute that might separate us from Your contemplation and love. Let us die in the Sunna and the community and in yearning for Your encounter.

O Lord of majesty and generosity.

So glory be to Allah both in your evening hour and in your morning hour. Praise belongs to Him in the heavens and the earth, alike at the setting of the sun and in your noontide hour. He brings forth the living from the dead, even so you shall be brought forth.

O Allah, we ask You for Your pleasure and the Garden and what brings one near to them from speech and action: and we take refuge with You from Your wrath and the Fire and what brings one near to them from speech and action.

O Allah, O Abundant in blessing, O Repeller of adversities, O One Who frees us from troubles and Who lifts up the darkness, and O Most Just of those who judge, O Reckoner of those who are unjust, and O Protector of those who are wronged!

On You Who have a name without a kunya, free us and all the muslims from the state they are in -

By the secret of Your Name - the Guarded, the Hidden, the Blessed, the Pure, the Purified, the Wholly Pure.

You are Powerful over all things and fitted to answer our prayers.

Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of might, above what they describe, and peace be upon the Messengers and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

MIFTAH AL-WIRD - The Key to the Source

The Wird of Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/ABewley/wird.html>

Selections from the The Darqawi Way (letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi al-Darqawi)

Selections from The Letters of Shaykh ad-Darqawi

27

Faqir, nothing is more beneficial to you than true sincerity with your Lord in what he has commanded you to do and in what He has forbidden you. By Allah, if you were like that with Him, you would see wonders since Allah Almighty says, "If they had been true to Allah, it would have been better for them." By Allah, if we were true with Him, our enemy would be true with us. By Allah, if we were to restrain our abuse of the servants of Allah, our Lord would defend us against every harm and abuse. Then we would only only experience good from everything, and we would not see any evil in anything. The one who used to harm us would not harm us, and the one who used to cut us off would not cut us off. We will only have this after the death, obliteration, disappearance, departure and extinction of our nafs, and after our annihilation to our annihilation.

Peace

28

Faqir, safety lies in fleeing from all people except those whose state is uplifting and whose words direct a person to Allah because people are ignorant of the Sunna of their Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and ignorant of their ignorance. We seek refuge with Allah! This ignorance is so great and immense that whenever they see someone who abuses his nafs, demeans it, humbles and humiliates, who is not concerned with it, and turns away from this world and its people, they look down on him, belittle him, are repulsed by him, and despise him, and declare themselves far from him. They hate him because they do not think that he is acting according to the Sunna. They think that he has innovation. They do not know that the door of the Sunna of Muhammad is that which he is following, may Allah be pleased with him, and that what they have is actually the innovation. The reason behind this state of theirs is that the sensory has overwhelmed them and taken possession of their hearts and limbs. It has left them deaf, dumb and blind. They have no intellect. How extraordinary! The realities have been turned upside down so that the Sunna becomes innovation and innovation becomes the Sunna! The blind man starts describing the Path to the one who is just like him. "We belong to Allah and to Him we return." There is no power nor strength except by Allah, the High, the Immense.

Peace.

36 I strongly advise you to follow the Muhammadan Sunna and to remember your Lord whenever your state is constricted and whenever it is expansive. You should say the prayer on your Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This is because if you are like this, then you will truly be the slaves of Allah. Whoever is truly the slave of Allah is not the slave of his passion. He is a wali of Allah.

Take care! Again, I repeat - take care! Be careful not to anything distract you from your Lord since there is nothing in reality except Allah. "Allah was and there is nothing with Him, He is now as He was." Know that when a man has need of something, that is because of his ignorance and lack of knowledge. If it had not been

for his ignorance, he would not need anything except Allah. The Mighty Qur'an and hadith of the Prophet both testify to this. Listen to the answer of the saint of Allah, Sayyidi Sahl at-Tustari, to one of his murids who said to him, "Master - food!" He told him, "Allah." The murid remained silent for awhile and then said, "We must have food." He told him, "We must have Allah." I say that, by Allah, in reality we and others have no need except Allah. If we are His, He is ours as in the past with others - He was theirs if they were His.

I also advise you to always keep together and to remind one another in your Path throughout your entire lifetime as those before you have done. Take care! Again, I repeat - take care! Be careful not to try to hasten an opening as some of you and others seek to do. If you do that, you will miss the excellence of the Path and its blessing, secret, baraka, and bliss because when someone wants to pluck something before it is permissible for him, that results in him being deprived of it. It is absolutely necessary that you keep together and have respect and esteem for one another. You should honour one another and show esteem for one another. Fulfil the contract of Allah when you make a contract. Love one another and show affection to one another as the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said. Be on your guard against being foolish and insolent and against treachery, dishonesty or abandoning the Path. Allah gives success.

Know that concern for a thing is something immense. We and you have no concern except for Allah's favour to us. The 'man' (rajul) denotes the one who does not lack strength, is not lazy and does not slack off. He fights his nafs. He gives it a little of the things which it hates and are burdensome for it until it is annihilated. "Annihilation is obliteration, disappearance, leaving your nafs, extinction," as the wali, Sayyidi Abu'l-Mawahib at-Tunisi, said in his Qawanin. Peace.

40

Faqir, the secret action is seventy times better than the public action, as is reported in tradition. Allah knows best, but we think that the circle of dhikr which our brothers, the fuqara', hold publicly - standing and sitting, in zawiyyas and in houses, in isolated places and inhabited places - is in the same position as the secret action since this age is an age of heedlessness. Heedlessness has overwhelmed people and taken hold of their hearts and limbs. It has left them deaf, dumb and blind. They have no intellect. Fervour for the deen has suffered in a similar way, and thus making dhikr public and well-known is better than concealing it, especially the circle of dhikr. It has great excellence and a clear secret since the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "When you pass by one of the meadows of Paradise, graze there." He was asked, "Messenger of Allah, what are the meadows of Paradise?" "Circles of dhikr," he replied. And the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "There is no group of people who gather together to do dhikr of Allah, only desiring Allah's face by that, but that a caller calls to them from heaven, 'Arise forgiven! Your evil actions have been transformed into good actions.'" I told this to our brother in Allah, the Sufi scholar and sharif, Abu'l-'Abbas Sayyidi Ahmad ibn 'Ajiba al-Manjari, have Allah have mercy on him. He found it excellent and did not dislike it, may Allah be pleased with him. Peace.

52

The ruh (spirit) and the nafs (self) are the same luminous thing from the world of light. Allah knows best, faqir, but it is not two different things even though it has two descriptions: purity and turbidity. The root is purity and the branch is turbidity. If were to you ask, "How is that?" I would reply that as long as the ruh retains its purity, excellence, radiance, beauty, nobility, height and elevation, then only the name 'ruh' is true for it. When it leaves its original purity, excellence, radiance, honour, height, and elevation, and becomes turbid by leaving its homeland and relying on other than its loved ones, then it is true to call it 'nafs'. We can designate it according to its low ranks - 'commanding evil', "reproachful", and other names, and we can also designate it according to high ranks which are very numerous. It is said that it has as many imperfections as Allah has perfections.

My brother, if you wish to return to your homeland from which you came - and it is the world of purity - and to leave a foreign land behind - which is the world of turbidity - then act! If you ask, "How shall I act?" I reply, "Strip yourself of the world of impurity as a sheep is stripped of its skin. Forget it, and do not remember it at all." Then, Allah willing, your luminosity will grow stronger, i.e. the meanings will come to you with their

immense, powerful, force armies. They will carry you swiftly to your homeland. However, test it. The knowledge of the realities lies in the testing.

There is no doubt that Allah knows the reality of the ruh since it has secrets which cannot be counted or enumerated as Allah said to His Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, when the Jews asked about its reality. He did not know, rather he could not know its reality. When they wanted to question him about it, they said, "If he answers us, he is not a Prophet. If he does not answer us, then he is indeed a Prophet." He did not answer them until Allah taught him what to say to them. There is no doubt that incapacity is the attribute of the slave. Slaveness is nobility. Because of that, Allah praises His Prophet with it when He says in His Book, "Glory be to the One who travelled with His slave by night." He did not say, 'His Prophet' or 'His Messenger' or anything else. He chose the name 'slave' for him because nobility lies in slaveness. It is said that the nafs has a secret and that that secret did not manifest itself to any of Allah's creation except for Pharaoh. That is why he said, "I am your Lord Most High." Peace

56

Listen, faqir! There was a certain person who kept our company for a period of about eight years. His state of affairs with us was that sometimes his love for us was strong and sometimes it grew weak. This all took place in the period of time which we mentioned.

One day while we were with him, we imparted to him a teaching of the heart which reached the very core of his heart, and Allah has the best knowledge of His Unseen. Because of that, he abstained from some of worldly things and inclined to us very strongly. Then suddenly the meanings came to him with all their vast armies. He had not had any prior experience of them, so they flocked to him and piled up until he supposed that no one on the face of the earth had more knowledge than he had at that moment.

He hurried to us to tell us what he had learned, as we lived a certain distance from each other. After he had spoken with us and we had answered him, he rejected what we said with vehemence and anger. That took place in a gathering of our brothers, may Allah be pleased with them. That had not been his habit with us before this, so we excused him. He would not release us. He continued to browbeat us with his knowledge oppressively. We appeared to him like a robber in front of his band. We did not accept what he said except for a part of it which we found to be true and irrefutable. When he had finished, he left us and went to some of the brothers who had a good intention in respect of us and sincere love for us. However, they had a weak state, and had no other power than that of knowledge. He uprooted them from their intention and from love and sincerity, and very nearly pulled them to one side after their good intention and sincere love.

May Allah be kind to him, he wished to make us move from the state of divestment to the state of means of subsistence. We told him, "If we were to return to what you wish us to return to, we would be excellent in our return since all of us have recognised this side and that side. But as far as you are concerned, you should only flee from the sensory lest it seize you as it has seized many of your companions, some of whom had even stronger states than yours. This is absolutely necessary if you wish to save yourself. Listen to what I tell you and hold to it, and do not hold to other than it. May Allah guide you! My brother, the sensory is very near to you since you recognise only it. Similarly, common people, or most of them, recognise the sensory and do not recognise the meanings nor the Path which leads to them, Now, if you desire those meanings, then flee from the sensory as we have fled from it. Strip it off as we have stripped it off. Fight it as we have fought it. Travel as we have travelled. My brother, if you desire the sensory, you do not want the meanings and your heart is not attached to them since whatever grows smaller in the sensory grows larger in the meanings. Whatever grows weaker in the sensory grows stronger in the meanings, and whatever grows stronger in it, grows weaker in them." He did not accept what we said. Then the sensory stripped him of the meanings which had come to him in all their array, just as we had warned him. He was left without a scent of them. Allah is the authority for what we say. Peace.

62

Faqir, the great sickness is love of this world which strikes at the hearts. It is not the love which strikes the bodies since this world is a cause for our distance from our Lord. Had it not been for the love which fills our

hearts, we would always be in the presence of our Lord. All that veils us from Him is the love of it which dwells in our hearts.

Intention is the elixir. If intention is present with anyone, then good must inevitably be present with him. If it is absent, the good is absent from him. No one was greater than our Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, among all creatures, but in spite of the majesty of his value and the immensity of his affair, whoever does not have a good intention towards him does not profit. Whoever does have it gains great profit. Peace.

67

Shaykh, do not oblige the one who comes to you to say "Allah, Allah, Allah" constantly, to pray constantly, to fast constantly, or to recite constantly when his state is intense thirst for this world and devotion to idle talk. You should oblige him to perform the obligatory prayers and confirmed sunna prayers. He should leave whatever does not concern him and take on noble character. It is better for him to mention Allah once, pray one prayer, or recite one sura or the like of that with the state of the Shari'a of Muhammad than to do it a thousand times with the blameworthy state which is intense thirst for this world and devotion to idle talk, and absorption in misguidance. May Allah save us!. Peace.

74

Know, faqir, that I wrote to some of the fuqaha' who objected to our state of poverty: "Peace be upon you. May Allah be kind to you, and may Allah rescue you and us from every misguidance! We have heard that you have abandoned your faults and occupied yourselves with the faults of others. Do you not know that it says in the Book of Allah Almighty, 'Do you order people to devoutness and forget yourselves É' (2:44) to the end of the ayat? Or perhaps you have no faults? Far be it from the one who is free of faults that he should see other than the Beloved! Only the one who has faults sees the fault. What fault is greater than seeing others who are all you see both day and night? There is no doubt that both the comely person and the ugly one only see their own face among people. Be comely and you will see comeliness. Be ugly and you will see ugliness. Shaykh al-Busiri said in his Burda, may Allah be pleased with him:

The eye may reject the light of the sun because of ophthalmia,

And the mouth may reject the taste of water because of illness.

"This is a valid measure. By Allah, if we were ill, water would taste bitter in our mouths. If the faces of our meanings were good, then our sensory faces could only be good. People are like a mirror for those who look at them. Whoever has a comely face sees a comely face in them. Whoever has an ugly sees an ugly face in them. It is not possible for the comely to see one who is ugly as it is not possible for the ugly to see one who is comely. Because of this, Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali al-Kharrubi, may Allah be pleased with him, said,

'Say to those who see what they reject in us,

"Because of the purity of our drink,

you see your own faces in us."

"Fuqaha', we were like you, or worse than you, when we found the states of the people ugly and our states excellent. A lot of people were like us – Shaykh 'Izzu'd-din ibn 'Abdu's-Salam, Shaykh al-Ghazali, Shaykh Ibn 'Ata'allah, Shaykh Ibn al-'Arabi al-Hatimi, Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili, and their likes, may Allah be pleased with them. Then Allah opened their inner eyes and illuminated their secrets and removed the veil of illusion from them. They looked for ugliness and did not find any report of it. Listen, fuqaha', to what one of them said: 'Had I been obliged to see other-than-Him, I would not have been able to do it since there is nothing else with Him, so how can I see it with Him?' They said:

'Since I have recognised the divinity, I do not see other-than-Him.

Similarly otherness is forbidden with us

Since I have gathered together what I feared would separate,

today I have arrived gathered.'

"They said, 'Those who have achieved realisation refuse to see other-than-Allah. They said:

'Say: "Allah" and leave existence and what it contains

if you have any doubts about achieving perfection.

If you have realisation, all except Allah

is non-existence, both individually and as a whole.

Know that had it not been for Him, you and all the worlds

would have been nothing but obliteration and extinction.

Had it not been for Him, the existence of one whose existence is not

intrinsically his would have been absolutely impossible.

The gnostics are annihilated and do not see anything

except the Great, the Truly Exalted.

They see that other-than-Him in reality

is temporary in the present, past and future.'

"That is how it is. The business of dhikr is vast, and the favour of Allah, His generosity, openhandedness and mercy is vaster and vaster still. What is that you find that you reject, dislike, abhor, and find heavy except the dhikr of Allah Almighty in the houses as Allah – glory be to Him! – has commanded in His Book? The Almighty said, 'In houses which Allah has permitted to be built and in which His Name is remembered É' to the end of the ayat. (24:36) Or are you worshipping your Lord while the one who reject tempts you? If this is the case, then do not accept it from the one who does it. Turn him aside and strike him in the face. Only the ignorant and the one who is pleased with himself think well of him. We do not see anyone in your area worshipping Allah as you claim. Rather we see that some of the students who recite the Qur'an do not pray most of the time. As for the use of tobacco, hashish, sodomy, slander, calumny, and the like of that which our Lord has forbidden us, we will not say anything to you or them about that. We do not see you hastening to anything like you hasten to talking against the people of the Tariqa, may Allah be pleased with them. It has become a general necessity for you in all lands. The people who are affiliated with Allah are those who turn in repentance from that to Allah. Do not be preoccupied with them and their faults as if Allah Almighty had rendered you secure from faults. The truth is far from that! 'No one feels secure against Allah's devising except for those who are lost.' (7:99)

"The upshot is that if you desire counsel and safety from disgrace, then turn to Allah, your Lord to repent of your wrong action, since Allah Almighty says, 'Turn to Allah, every one of youÉ' to the end of the ayat (24:31). The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Turn in repentance. I turn in repentance seventy times every day." Another hadith says a hundred times. This was in spite of the fact that Allah Almighty had forgiven him any wrong actions, past and future. We see that the Prophet, peace be upon him,

was rising through the stations. Whenever he reached a station, he found one higher than one before it, even if that station was high, i.e. a station of security. Would that we could reach a station such as the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had turned from! The good deeds of the devout are the bad deeds of the best. The good deeds of the best are the bad deeds of the near. You must absolutely turn in repentance to Allah and retribute any injustice shown to people. You should avoid lying, slander, calumny, and all forbidden and disliked things. You must be aware of the repulsive things which are in your hearts and which Allah has forbidden you, inwardly and outwardly. Heedless students, what you have outwardly is what we have mentioned and clarified.

"We will now mention the inward – pride, showing-off, envy, vanity, slander, calumny, deviation from the right way, stupidity, greed, miserliness, and other repulsive qualities with which it is not permitted for the believer to fill his heart. It is permitted for him to purify his heart of them by night before day, and while sitting before standing if he can do that. If not, he must search for a doctor throughout all of North Africa, in the cities and the deserts. If he finds him, he should not leave him and should not leave him and should cling to him until he purifies his heart for him of the foulness which has afflicted it and of all his faults. If he does not find him in North Africa, then he should set out for the East immediately. Do not delay until you can go with the hajjis. Go quickly there so that repentance will not be delayed. Then you would need yet another repentance since delaying repentance is a wrong action which obliges repentance. 'Someone who turns in repentance from wrong actions is like someone who has no wrong actions,' as the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said. It says the Book of Allah, 'Your Lord has made mercy incumbent on HimselfÉ' to the end of the ayat (6:54), and 'It is He who accepts tawba from His slavesÉ' to the end of the ayat. (42:25)" Peace.

86

I want you to respect and exalt the presence of your Lord because respect is the cause of profit. Whatever election and baraka is obtained at the hand of any of the people of Allah is only through respecting and exalting them. Had it not been for that, no one would have obtained any of it. By brother, you did very well in recording our words, may Allah repay you well! Knowledge is the quarry, and writing it its tether. Tether your quarry to the firm mountains.

As for your statement, "The tongue and pen are with me," we do not know whether you have them or not. Test yourself at the moment of your neediness, the moment when people blame you and the moment when you do not satisfy your appetites. If your breast is expanded, then there is no doubt that you have the true heart. Our evidence is found in the Book of Allah Almighty, "Is he whose breast is opened to Islam, and who therefore is illuminated by his Lord...? Woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of Allah!" We think that this is a very great and appropriate testimony.

The lofty Islam is the Islam of Ibrahim which the Sufis have. They, may Allah be pleased with them, are such that their hearts find the moment of hardship the same as the moment of ease. They find the moment of illness the same as the moment of health. They find the moment of affliction the same as the moment of well-being. They find the moment of poverty the same as the moment of wealth. They find the moment of abasement the same as the moment of elevation. They find the moment of constriction the same as the someone of expansion, and so it. That is like Sayyiduna Ibrahim, peace be upon him, whose heart was ecstatic in the strongest possible constriction - or we could say affliction or trial. O Allah! Make us and all those connected to us belong to the path of Ibrahim by the rank of the Best of Creation, our lord, master and beloved, Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

My brother, be on your guard against interpreting any ayat of Qur'an with an inadequate interpretation. Go to the utmost in its commentary and then you will be right. If you do not go to the utmost in its commentary, then you must necessarily err since it is the Immense Qur'an. The meanings of the immense can only be immense. None knows its interpretation except Allah. When those masters, and scholars of outward knowledge were interpreting, would that their recitation might distract them from its commentary so that Allah could give them an opening to its inward meanings. Then they would combine the knowledge of the outward with the

knowledge of the inward, or the knowledge of the Shari'a of Muhammad with the knowledge of the reality. Then they would give commentary on it as many of the perfect men have given commentary, may Allah be pleased with them and may He give us the benefit of their baraka!

If you were to say, "The Qur'an testifies to other ways in addition to that of Ibrahim, I would ask, "Is the one whose breast is only expanded by the existence of his appetites and desires the same as the one who has withdrawn from his appetites and desires into the contemplation of the immensity of his Lord?" No, by Allah, by Allah, by Allah!

Also test your heart again. Does it seek help from the Immense Qur'an, the hadith of the noble Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, from the shaykhs of the people of the outward and the people of the inward, from the brothers, from Allah, and from His Messenger? If you find that it seeks help from Allah, then it is a great heart. If not, then it is lower than the one who possesses this state. Therefore, you should not leave him until you are like him - and your dye is his dye and his dye is your dye. When someone takes from Allah and His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, all creatures seek his help, high and low, absent and present, near and far, dense and subtle. Whenever his support is strong, their support is strong. Whenever his support is weak, their support is weak. However, we think that if he is perfect, whenever his help in one direction is strong, he turns to the other direction so that there will be balance between the two directions which are seeking help from him so that neither of them will be obliterated. Such is the person who possesses this heart, or we can say, possesses this immense station, until the extinction of this world. Allah is the authority for what we say Peace.

107

Injustice inevitably destroys the one who perpetrates it when the end of its term comes because it seems to them that he has done it deliberately. So they kill him because of the error which they discern in him. By Allah, I used to think that it was people who despised me, thought me a fool, belittle me, demeaned me, abased me, considered me ignorant, and failed to recognise my worth. When Allah opened my inner eye and illuminated my secret by His generosity and open-handedness, then I found that my nafs was the one doing that to me and no one else. I found that my self was the one doing that to me, and no one else. I found a large number of ayats which indicate this. Allah Almighty says, "Allah never changes a people's state unless they change what is in themselves," "Allah does not wrong people in any way; rather it is people who wrong themselves," "Whatever evil befalls you comes from your self," etc. When I recognised this, I saw that one doing the injustice was myself, and I did not see it as coming from my fellow men. This was so much the case that when someone came to complain to me about anyone, we saw that the injustice only originated from himself. We did not see it coming from any other direction.

May Allah bless you! Know that when you recognise your worth and the height of your position in reality, all of existence recognises your worth and the height of your position. If you are ignorant of it, existence is ignorant of it and does not recognise your value at all. This is because your self, faqir, inasmuch as it is knowing or ignorant, right-doing or vicious, is, in reality the whole cosmos with the one who has recognition, not with the one who is destroyed. You see only the cosmos which everyone sees. You also see that the cosmos injures you while it is only your self which injures you. By Allah, if you were to overcome it - or we might say, kill it - you would overcome all created things, great and small. Allah is the authority for what we say. Peace.

199

There was a woman who was one of the lovers of Allah, may Allah make many like her! Whisperings had got the better of her for many years and oppressed her greatly. It was so extreme that at certain times she would almost stop speaking because of the intensity of her anxieties and sorrows. I used to remind her and warn her against listening to the chatter of the self throughout that entire period.

Then her son wrote a letter to me about her. I answered him and said, "By Allah, there is only good in your mother. There is no evil in her except that she listens to all the illusions which come to her. Illusion is baseless. We have pointed that out to her, and we have reminded her and cautioned her about it as much as we can. Part of what I told her is that whispering used to overwhelm me and make me conceive the impossible. It would

tell me, "Look at the sky. There are arrows of fire falling from it which will burn you up from head to foot." I looked at the sky and, just as the voice had told me, it was falling on me. That happened I don't know how many times, until my breast was terribly constricted and I was distressed and grieved. Then I went to an isolated spot with the intention of killing myself. Allah is the authority for what we say. Then I said, 'The only thing I can do is to surrender my will about myself to Allah. He can do whatever He likes with me, be it happiness or wretchedness.' Then I completely avoided retreat and fled from it entirely. I used to converse with people and not separate myself from them. I talked with them and did not remain silent for a certain period of time. Then I completely forgot those whisperings through the overflowing favour of Allah. Every harm left me, i.e. those impossible forms which illusion had been making me imagine withdrew from me and completely vanished. Not a trace of that remained. I add not add anything to the obligatory and confirmed 'ibada which Allah has made obligatory. Then great favour and a clear secret appeared to me. The reason for that was that I had surrendered my will about myself to my Lord to do with as He wished. He could make me happy or wretched, show mercy to me or punish me, bring me near or put me far away, make me enter the Garden or make me enter the Fire. I had relief from what had afflicted me and, by Allah, I was completely delighted. Praise and thanks be to Allah!"

There is no doubt that whisperings are multiplied when someone is in retreat or silent. If Amina is as we were, then it will leave her. There is also no doubt that whisperings only impose themselves on the best of people. Listen to what happened to Shaykh ash-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him. He reports: "One night I was reciting 'Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the God of mankind, from the evil of the insidious whisperer who whispers in people's breast, and comes from the jinn and mankind.' Then it was said to me, 'The evil of the whisperer is the whisperer who comes between you and your Beloved. He makes you forget His kindness and reminds you of your evil actions. He makes little of that which is on the right and makes much of that which is on the left to make you turn from good opinion of Allah and His Messenger. Watch out for this door! Many people - worshippers, the ascetic, the people of earnestness and striving - have been taken by it.'"

Shaykh Ibn 'Abbad also reports the words of Ibn 'Ata'llah, "Whoever expresses himself from the carpet of his own goodness is silenced by his bad behaviour towards his Lord. Whoever expresses himself from the carpet of Allah's goodness is not silenced by his own bad behaviour." Shaykh Ahmad ibn Abi'l-Hawari said, "I complained to Shaykh Abu Sulayman ad-Darani about the whisperer. He said, "If you want him to leave you alone, then whenever you sense him at any moment, rejoice. If you rejoice, he will leave you alone since Shaytan hates nothing so much as the joy of the believer. If you are distressed by that, it will increase." Part of what will confirm this is what one of the Imams said, "The one whose faith is perfect is afflicted by the whisperer. The thief does not bother entering a ruined house. (al-Jawahir al-Hisan) Peace.

223

I advise all of you, elite and common, men and women, old and young, slaves and free, to follow what Allah has commanded you. It is that you do not delay the prayer beyond its proper time, and that you allow yourselves no indulgence in delaying it. You should pray in a group and not pray individually except with an excuse. Allah knows best, but the valid excuse is very rare indeed.

May Allah have mercy on you! Know that the reason which prompted me to say this to you is that I notice that many of the brothers delay the prayer beyond its proper time. They allow themselves indulgence in delaying it. They pray alone even when they are in a group. "Very evil is what they do." Even if they were to be among the masters of hearts, by Allah, they are still sober. They are not intoxicated and withdrawn from their sensory experience so that they should do that. May Allah give you success!. You must therefore be on your guard about this.

Forget remembering yourselves by remembering your Lord. Do not be the reverse and forget to remember your Lord by remembering yourselves. The one who remembers himself is the one who plunges into his appetites and is immersed in that. As for the one who remembers his Lord and forgets himself, he is only immerse in the meanings in which all of the awliya', may Allah be pleased with them, are immersed. They

abandoned their appetites and did not remain with them because they were ashamed lest their Master should see them with something other than Him, so understand! May Allah make your understand! Avoid what you are forbidden and occupy yourselves with what you are commanded to do. May Allah give us success!

Know that I see many of the brothers who are always in a state of anxiety, sorrow, distress, and fraud. That is because they turn away from their Lord and turn to their passion. Had they been the opposite of that and turned to their Master and turned away from their passion, then their anxiety, sorrow, grief and turbidity would have left them, Allah Almighty says, "If only the people of the cities had believed and been godfearing, We would have opened up to them blessings from heaven and earth." "Whoever shows fear of Allah – He will give him a way out and provide for him from where he does not expect. Whoever trusts in Allah – He will be enough for him. Allah always achieves His aim." "Whoever shows fear of Allah – He will make his affair easy for him. That is the command of Allah which He has sent down to you." There are many more ayats and hadiths like this. Peace.

Letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi (to the fuqara)

The sincere one can wear whatever clothes he likes, high or low since elevation and the state of lowness are the same for him. There is no difference between them. The one who is not sincere should only be like the common people. Faqir, leave forbidden and disliked things, and wear what you like. Marry whom you like. Ride what you like. Earn what you like. Dwell where you like. Be as you like. If a proof is established against you, I will take the blame, sincere one!:

If a man does not wear the garments of taqwa,

he is stripped naked, even if he wears clothes.

The best clothes a man has are obedience to his Lord. There is no good in the one who rebels against Allah.

Had this world lasted for its people, the Messenger of Allah would still be alive.

However, it is annihilated and its bliss is annihilated. Wrong actions and acts of rebellion go on as they are.

Peace

Faqir, the great sickness is love of this world which strikes at the hearts. It is not the love which strikes the bodies since this world is a cause for our distance from our Lord. Had it not been for the love of it which fills our hearts, we would always be in the presence of our Lord. All that veils us from Him is the love of it which dwells in our hearts.

Intention is the elixir. If intention is present with anyone then good must inevitably be present with him. If it is absent, the good is absent from him. No one was greater than our Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace among all creatures, but in spite of the majesty of his value and the immensity of his affair, whoever does not have a good intention towards him does not profit. Whoever does have it gains great profit.

Peace

Faqir, be on your guard against letting your heart incline to your self since that is part of the hypocrisy of the heart. Inclining to it is letting it follow what is light for it rather than what is heavier for it. The people, may Allah be pleased with them, follow the heavier. I also advise you to have what is heavy for yourself constantly. Do not have what is light for it until it is annihilated. We have said many times to oppose passion and it will result in knowledge by divine gift. Knowledge by divine gift results in great certainty. Great certainty banishes doubts and illusions and pushes one into the presence of the King, the Knowing.

Peace

If you want always to be strong, you must always be weak, and make do with a little food, few words, and not much socializing with people. If you want always to be rich, always be poor. If you want always to be mighty, always be abased. If you want always to be high, always be low. If you want always to be free, always be a slave. If you want always to see what you love and what pleases you, then always put your self with what it does not love and what does not please it. If you want creation to recognise you always, then always be content with the knowledge of Allah. If you always want benefits, always break the habits of your self, and always fear impediments, and always leave attachments.

Peace

If you want to be purified of doubts and illusions, then always be strengthened by the sunna of the Prophet, peace be upon him. One of the most important things is to remove all traces of urine. Do not do wudu' until you have no doubts about having removed your urine. If you wish to be certain about that, as is necessary, then the sunna is enough to make the matter easier for you. If you have your fill of innovation, it will lead to your self being too constricted to rise or descend as is our business and the business of most people. You will not be able to do it because you will have too much urine and faeces. Since they will be too much for you, you will find it difficult to free yourself of urine, you find wudu' difficult. If you find wudu' difficult, you find the prayer difficult. If you find the prayer difficult, you find the deen difficult. Our wages and your wages are up to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

If you wish to be freed of your self, then put an end to its conversation when it whispers to you, and do not turn to it. It tries to get the better of you and will not leave you alone. It says to you, for example, "You are one of the losers!" Do not let its words disturb you or alarm you. No matter what it says. Remain seated if you were sitting, standing if you were standing, reclining if you were reclining, eating if you were eating, drinking if you were drinking, laughing if you were laughing, praying if you were praying, reciting if you were reciting, and so forth. Do not listen to it unless it tells you, "You are one of the believers, or one of the gnostics, or in the hand of Allah, and His favour and generosity is great." It will not stop whispering to you until you are always steady in the above-mentioned state and take your strength from the sunna of Muhammad, Allah's blessing and peace be upon him. If you listen to what it says, it will tell you, "You are one of the losers," then one of the evil doers, then one who leaves the right way, and had it not been that kufr is the very limit of affliction, it would have said that you are one of the kafirun or worse.

We had a brother, may Allah have mercy on him, who used to listen to what it said. He believed it and was very worried and sad because of that. One day he said to our father, may Allah have mercy on him, while he and I were with him, "By Allah, my father, we only see our ship smashed into pieces." He said, "How dare you say such a thing! By Allah, it is not smashed to pieces! It is whole as it was. You are smashing it to pieces with your mouth!" These words made him extremely happy and because of those words he set out for Allah with a great energy.

We see many people with complete and total blessings -- iman, health, food, drink, clothes, mounts, wives, abundant well-being and others of the blessings of Allah. Yet they are always full of worry, sorrow, and constriction. That is because they are heedless of their Lord and remain with their own portions. Had they left their portions and turned to their Lord as He has commanded them, every harm would have left them since only the people of heedlessness have it. As for the people of dhikr, it has come down to us that "the bolt of lightning does not strike the person doing dhikr."

My brother, be steady in this teaching and cling firmly to it if you want the Path to act on all of created being. If not, then created being will make it act on you as it has made it act on your companions. If you do not make it act on created being, created being will make it act on you. Our master, may Allah be pleased with him! used to say to us, "Created being always says by the tongue of the state: 'Strike!' If not, then stretch out your neck to eat and watch out!" The matter is as he said. Allah is the authority for what we say.

Peace

There is nothing more likely to lead to gathering the heart to concentrate on Allah than silence and hunger. There is nothing more likely to lead to dispersal than a lot of food and talk even about what concerns us. There is no doubt that the believer has few words and a lot of action. He will certainly have few words and much action since silence results in reflection. Reflection is an action of the heart. An atom's worth of the action of the heart is better than mountains of the actions of the limbs. It has come in tradition, "An hour of reflection is better than seventy years of 'ibada." Peace

I advise you to draw near your Prophet with the prayer and peace upon him as we told you many days ago. We think that the reality of the prayer of blessings and peace upon him is only obtained by the one who follows his sunna and takes on his character. Many people bless him constantly while they swim in darkness. That is because they are ignorant of his sunna. They take on the character of innovation. May Allah have mercy on you! take note of this deep hole and avoid it. May Allah save us and you from falling into it! Peace

-The Darqawi Way; The Letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi

The Path

Will the seeker of God be content to be far?

Nay, for he needeth no less than Union.

The true seeker hath a sign on his face,

A light shineth gleaming upon his forehead.

Ever near is he, courteous, reverential,

Resolute, forbearing before censure, true friend

Honouring. His purpose all purposes transcendeth:

Naught can prevent him, the steep he seeth as level.

He hath no aim aside from his mark.

Longing for family diverteth him not, nor blame.

Fair his description, he needeth no other

But this, most excellent, that he seeketh the Truth.

Whoso is Its seeker, he maketh his quest

Sole object of his eyes. Then strippeth he his soul

Of all faults he can detect, and when stripped, robeth it
In their opposites. God's slave at each time and place,
His bounden debt of worship fulfilling,
He addeth thereunto of his own free will,
Until the truth is his Hearing, Sight,
Tongue and Utterance, and Hands and Feet.
He dieth before his death to live in his Lord,
Since after this death is the supreme migration.
He calleth himself to account ere he be called,
He herein most fitted to act for the Truth.
The Truth's Being he seeth before his own,
And after it, and wheresoever he turn.
Alone God was, and with Him naught else.
He is now as He was, lastly as firstly,
Essentially One, with naught beside Himself,
Inwardly Hidden, Outwardly Manifest,
Without beginning, without end. Whate'er thou seest,
Seest thou His Being. Absolute Oneness
No 'but' hath and no 'except'. How should God Essence
Be confined with a veil? No veil there but His Light.

-Shaykh Ahmad Ibn Mustafa al-'Alawi

Selections from The Letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi

Occupy yourselves with what your Lord has commanded and not with yourselves when someone directs abuse towards you, whether he is one of you or not. If you do not come to your own assistance, Allah ta'ala will help you and take care of your affair. If you come to your own assistance in it and take charge of you affair, Allah - Glory be to Him! will let you take care of it. You have no power to do anything, "Allah has power over everything."

The shaykh, the wali of Allah ta'ala, Sayyidi Qasim al-Khassasi, may Allah be pleased with him! said, "Do not be occupied at all with the one who abuses you. Be occupied with Allah and He will drive him away from you. He is the One who makes him move against you in order to test your claim to true sincerity. Many people have erred in this matter. They are occupied with the abuse of the one who abuses them so the abuse will continue in wrong action. Had they returned to Allah, He would have driven them away from it all and their proper business would have been enough for them."

May Allah have mercy on you! Take that which will kill your self and give life to your heart. The root of good things lies in freeing the heart from love of this world. I wrote to one of the brothers: "The cause of deviation from right action is love of this world. The one who turns to it with his heart and limbs is the one who turns away from Allah with his hearts and limbs. The one who turns away from Allah with his heart and limbs is the one who is very much wantonly astray and a great wrongdoer. Had it not been that iman is firm in his heart, we would have judged him to be a kafir." May Allah have mercy on you! Take that which will kill your self and give life to your hearts as we told you since there is no way for us to reach the presence of our Lord except after the death of our selves, no matter what we do. The shaykh, the wali of Allah ta'ala, Sayyidi Abu Madyan, may Allah be pleased with him! said, "Whoever does not die, does not see Allah."

One of the brothers complained to us about someone who was acting hostilely towards him with injustice. We told him, "If you wish to kill the one who oppresses you, then kill your self. If you kill it, you will kill all your oppressors with that one blow. May the curse of Allah be on those who lie!"

Then we said to one of them, "Disappointment, all disappointment is that the form of your self appears to you and then afterwards its abode is still full and its traces have not been obliterated. You should always burden it with whatever is heavy for it until you kill it since the life of the heart lies in killing it as one of the masters said, "The life of the heart is only in killing the self." One of them said, "Love is a bride, and the self is the bride-price. The hearts only have life after the death of the self." There are many more statements to this effect. When one of them struck a jew because of vanity, injustice, and oppression, and told us about that, we said to him, "Do not strike a jew nor christian nor anyone else. If there must be blows then strike your self, and keep on beating it until you kill it. Do not leave it a single snake." We like our brothers to be like that since all faults lie in the faqir with the live self. As for the faqir with the dead self, he is safe from faults and he always sees the unseen worlds. He is the master of all people in spite of them. Allah ta'ala has given to him.

We urge you with every possible means to always have cleanliness, bereftness, and contentment. Truly, none is bereft unless he has killed his self and recognised his Lord. Whoever has not done that, he is not bereft. Gathering concentration on Allah gathers one to Allah. Gathering concentration on other-than-Allah gathers one to other-than-Allah. We seek refuge with Allah from other-than-Allah being with Allah! "Allah was, and nothing was with Him. He is now as He was."

-Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ibn Ahmad ad-Darqawi, The Darqawi Way - The Letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi (Rasa'il Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi)

Selections from The Letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi

Know, may Allah have mercy on you! that when the faqir changes the remembrance of all things for the remembrance of Allah, his slaveness for Allah is purified and made sincere. When his slaveness is pure and sincerely Allah's, he is the wali of Allah. Remember only Allah and be Allah's alone. Whoever belongs to Allah, Allah is his. How happy is the one who belongs to Allah and Allah is his! His words, may He be exalted! about the virtue of dhikr of Allah is enough, "Remember me and I will remember you" (Qur'an 2:152). The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said in that which he related from his Lord, the Great, the Majesty, "I sit with the one who remembers Me."

My master, may Allah be pleased with him! used to say to me, "I like what I hear said against you." Al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi is like that. He likes what he hears said against you which kills the self and gives life to your

hearts, and not the opposite. Only the heedless ignorant man, whose inner eye is dull and secret is dark, is concerned with what gives life to the self and kills the hearts. Man has only one heart. Wherever he turns in one direction, he turns away from the other since "Allah does not give a man two hearts in his breast" (Qur'an 33:4) as Allah ta'ala said. The lofty Shaykh, Sayyidi Ibn 'Ata'illah, may Allah be pleased with him, said,

"Your turning to Allah is your turning away from creation. Your turning to creation is your turning from Allah."

One of the brothers said to me, "I am nothing." I told him, "Do not say 'I am nothing.' Do not say 'I am something.' Do not say 'Something concerns me.' Do not say 'Nothing concerns me.' Say 'Allah' and you will see wonders."

-Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ibn Ahmad ad-Darqawi, The Darqawi Way - The Letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi (Rasa'il Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi)

Selections from The Letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi

Letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi

I am afflicted by four who bombard me with arrows from a taut bow.

Iblis, this world, the self, and passion.

Oh Lord! You have the power to deliver (me).

his idol is then his own passion."

Letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi (to the fuqara)

Oh faqir! The sickness which has befallen your heart has come to it because of the appetites which have made inroads into you. Had you abandoned them and occupied yourself with the command of your Lord, that which has befallen your heart would not have happened. Listen to what I tell you. May Allah take you by the hand! Whenever your self tries to get the better of you, hurry to your Lord's command and strip away your own will for Him. The thoughts of the self, shaytan and every affliction will inevitably leave you. If when your self tries to get the better of you, you occupy yourself with management and choice, and absorb yourself in close examination, the thoughts of the self and shaytan with all their armies will pile up, overwhelm and surround you. Then you will have no good at all. You will only have evil. May Allah make us and you travel the road of His awliya. Amin.

Shaykh Ibn 'Ata'illah said in his Hikam, "Since you know that shaytan will never neglect you, do not neglect 'the One who has your forelock in His hand.'" Our master, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "The real attack against the enemy is your occupation with the love of the Beloved," We say that all good is in dhikr of Allah. The only path to Him is by the door of moderation with this world and alienation from people, and disregard for the inward and the outward. "Nothing helps the heart like retreat by which it enters the arena of reflection," as Shaykh Ibn 'Ata'illah, may Allah be pleased with him, said in his Hikam. We said, may Allah be pleased with us! "Nothing helps the heart like doing-without in this world and sitting in the presence of the awliya, may Allah be pleased with them." As for our wurd which we took from our master, may Allah be pleased with him! we have already mentioned it.

Overthrowing the position of the self, according to us and to our shaykhs and to all the shaykhs of the tariqa, is a necessary condition. One of them said, may Allah be pleased with them, "That which you dislike from me is that which my heart desires." However faqir, you should only say this to someone after you have said it to yourself and made your self travel that way and no other.

As for the brother who is bewildered in his affair, tell him to perform the obligatory prayer and the confirmed sunna. After that, he should say, "Allah is enough for us, and He is the best Protector" three times. "There is no power nor strength except with Allah, the High, the Great" three times. "Allah will be enough for you against them, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing" three times. "Our Lord, give us mercy from You." to the end of the ayat three times. "Oh Allah, bless Sayyiduna Muhammad, the unlettered Prophet, and his family and Companions, and grant them peace abundantly" morning and evening, and he will see wonders, whether he is at home or on a journey. If he does what we have mentioned, it will strengthen his resolution to go in the direction in which good lies, Allah willing, so strongly that he will not be able to repel it. I ordered one of the brothers, may Allah be pleased with them! to do this. He did it and he had a great blessing and clear secret. Allah is the authority for what we say. We would like whoever is at home or on a journey to do it as long as he is alive.

My brother, do not dislike the fact that your self is based on you. Had it not been for it, you would not have found the way of the travellers. A certain faqih from our brothers, the Banu Zawal, said to me, "Appetite has entered me." I told him, "It is that which benefits me, and it is that which profits me. It is that which makes me great and it is that which makes me mighty. I only possess the overflowing favour of Allah, its favour, and the favour of our masters, the shaykhs of the tariq, may Allah be pleased with them." Faqir, if you said "How can that be?" I say, "Because of abandoning the self, one who profits has his profit. Because of keeping hold of the self, the one who loses has lost." The shaykh, Ibn 'Ata'illah, may Allah be pleased with him, said in his Hikam, "Abuse is channelled through them so that you will not rely on them. He wants to rouse you and move you away from everything so that nothing distracts you from Him." The shaykh, Sayyidi Ibn Banna, may Allah be pleased with him, said in his Mabathith:

"Whoever allows his self what it desires,

his idol is then his own passion."

If you wish to obtain what you desire, then bless the noble Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, even only 100 times a day because a little bit of action which is constant is better than a lot which lapses. Action is only small if the person is based on something other than the Muhammadan sunna. If one follows the sunna, then only action is abundant. There is no doubt that the one who holds to the sunna does not miss the prayer on the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, even if he does not bless him with his tongue, then that is light upon light. There is no doubt that the one who clings truly to his sunna blesses him with his entire being. The preoccupied person who is not concerned with the sunna blesses him with his tongue alone rather than with his limbs. A little action in the sunna is better than a lot of action in invocation, so understand! May Allah give us and you understanding! Cling firmly to this blessed teaching and may Allah enrich you by it! Amin.

Faqir, listen. I was bewildered about a certain matter of mine for several days until I was extremely exhausted because of it. That state forced me into a very strong need of my Lord. Then I found the matter in the Book of Allah before and after: "The matter belongs entirely to Allah, and the whole affair returns to Him," I surrendered His affair to Him and cast myself down before Him. I did not carry it since it is carried as was

stated by the shaykh of our shaykhs, Abu 'Abdillah Sayyidi Muhammad b. Sa'id al-Habari at-Tarabulisi, may Allah be pleased with him! "Leave the house to its builder. If He wishes, He will set it up, and if He wishes, He will destroy it." It is as the wali of Allah-ta'ala, Sayyidi al-Hadrami, may Allah be pleased with him, said,

Surrender to Salma, and go where she goes.

Follow the winds of the Decree, and turn wherever they turn,

I found rest from my exhaustion and enjoyed myself. My moment was pleasant. Praise and thanks be to Allah! The entire secret lies in abandoning the self. As far as killing it is concerned, the Garden (is obtained) by its payment!

If you want your needs to be taken care of without working for them, then turn away from them and turn to your Lord. They will be taken care of, Allah willing. If you had left them altogether and turned to your Lord in them, He would give you what you desire of the good of this world and the good of the next world. You would have roads in heaven as you have on the earth, or even more since the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said in what he related from his Lord, the Mighty, the Majestic: "Whoever is distracted by My invocation from asking from Me, I will give him better than what those who ask are given."

Listen, faqir, to what I said to one of the brothers, may Allah be pleased with them, "There was nothing which I needed and turned away from, turning to my Lord, but that it was there in front of me, great or small, by the power of the Hearing, the Knowing." We think that the needs of the common people are taken care of by their working for them. The needs of the elite are taken care of by turning away from them and turning to Allah.

-The Darqawi Way; The Letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi

Be Content with the Opposites of your Desires

Things are hidden in their opposites without a doubt. Finding in loss, giving in withholding, might in abasement, wealth in poverty, strength in weakness, expansion in constriction, elevation in descent, life in death, victory in defeat, power in incapacity, and so on. Whoever wants to find should be content with loss. Whoever wants a gift should be content with refusal. Whoever wants might should be content with abasement. Whoever wants strength should be content with weakness. Whoever wants expansion should be content with constriction. Whoever wants elevation should be content with descent. Whoever wants life should be content with death. Whoever wants victory should be content with defeat. Whoever wants power should be content with incapacity. In brief, whoever desires freedom should be content with slaveness as his Prophet, beloved, and master, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was content with it. Let him choose it as the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, chose it. He should not be arrogant or proud and exceed his attributes, for the slave is the slave and the Lord is the Lord. They Shaykh Ibn 'Ata'illah, may Allah be pleased with him, said in his Hikam, "He forbids you from claiming anything that is not yours from that which creatures possess. Then how can it be permitted for you to claim His attributes when He is the Lord of the worlds?" The people, may Allah be pleased with them, say, "This Path of ours is only useful for people who sweep the rubbish heaps with their spirits." Peace

-The Darqawi Way; The Letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi

Abandoning the Rest

Faqir, if you love your master, abandon your self, this world, and people, except for the one whose state lifts you up and whose words guide you to Allah. Watch out! be careful that you are not deluded by one of them who you think guides to Allah while he only guides to his own passion. The wali of Allah-ta'ala Sayyidi

Abu'sh-Shita al-Khammar, may Allah profit us by him, said, "By Allah, we only say, 'Sayyidi' to the one who breaks our fetters." Faqir, it is not hidden from you that which what imprisons man in this world -- which is the world of impurities -- and leaves him a prisoner in it, is only illusion. If he were to banish it, then he would travel to the world of purity from which he came. Allah returns every exile to his homeland. Peace

The Darqawi Way; The Letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi

Occupy yourselves with what your Lord has commanded and not with yourselves when someone directs abuse towards you, whether he is one of you or not. If you do not come to your own assistance, Allah-ta'ala will help you and take care of your affair. If you come to your own assistance in it and take charge of your affair, Allah - glory be to Him! will let you take care of it. You have no power to do anything, and "Allah has power over everything."

The shaykh, the wali of Allah-ta'ala, Sayyidi Qasim al-Khassasi, may Allah be pleased with him! said, "Do not be occupied at all with the one who abuses you. Be occupied with Allah and He will drive him (the one who abuses you) away from you. He is the One who makes him move against you in order to test your claim to true sincerity. Many people have erred in this matter. They are occupied with the abuse of the one who abuses them so the abuse will continue along with wrong action. Had they returned to Allah, He would have driven them away from it all and their proper business would have been enough for them." Peace

First Letter from Shaykh Ahmad al-Badawi

Shaykh Ahmad al-Badawi was the student of Shaykh Moulay al-'Arabi al-Darqawi Letters

In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most-Merciful

There is no power nor strength except by Allah, the High, the Immense, and may Allah bless our master and Prophet Muhammad and his family and Companions and grant them peace abundantly until the Day of Rising

Allah. Allah. Allah.

To all the slaves of our Lord who follow us, wherever they are, especially our lords and masters of Ayt an-Nubu'a, and our lords and masters the scholars, and our lords and masters the descendants of the *salihun* whose ancestors were *salihun*, and our lords and masters who are the esteemed *muqaddams* and esteemed *muqaddimat**, since they are our representatives who represent us and are our support and the pillars supporting our brothers. They are the dogs of the fuqara', barking at their heels and guarding them, bearing their loads and urging them on and never being irresolute. That is the reality of the muqaddims, so how great is their happiness and what good news for them because of that since as is reported, "The servant of the people is their master."

[*Women with the position of muqaddam.]

If you do not busy the *nafs* with the truth, you will busy it with the false. And anyone who does not serve the elite will be tried by having to serve thieves. May Allah make us people whose goal is Him alone since that is what is necessary for attaining the three stations of the deen: Islam, Iman and Ihsan. "So worship Allah making the *deen* sincerely His." The people of the station of Islam are distinguished by what goes from them to Allah. The people of the station of Iman are distinguished by what comes from Allah to them. And the people of the station of Ihsan are distinguished by what goes from Allah to Allah.

May Allah drown me and you in witnessing the oceans of the perfection of immensity as He has always drowned the people of purity and love in it. They are in three ranks: the rank of the knowledge of certainty, the

rank of the eye of certainty, and the rank of the truth of certainty. In the first rank Allah makes you witness His nearness to you; in the second He makes you witness your non-existence through His existence; and in the third He makes you witness His existence without awareness of either your non-existence or your existence. "Allah was, and nothing was with Him. He is now as He was."

Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah *ta'ala* and His blessings, and also upon all those whose inner eye has been opened by Allah and whose secret He has illuminated so that they witness all existence as being from Him, annihilated in the present, past and future. Among them are those who only love Allah, only exist by Allah, are only occupied with Allah and remember Allah often without calculation or limit as Allah has commanded. Allah *jalla wa 'ala* says, "O you who believe, remember Allah much, and glorify Him in the morning and the evening." (33:41-42) Imam al-Wasiti, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "Never forget frequent remembrance."

Following on from that, the nub of my advice to you is: Always confirm your hold on your natural aptitude and intense yearning by serious study since it is the spirit of the Muhammadan Path. Constancy in it has an effect on the heart and elevates it to stations, stages and high degrees. Memorising two lines is better than bearing two heavy loads and two people engaged in study is better than both of these since your Lord, glory be to Him, is only worshipped through knowledge.

There are two types of knowledge: direct knowledge of Allah and knowledge of the command of Allah. The people of the Path of Allah are not concerned with anything other than these two. The fruit of knowledge of the command of Allah is direct knowledge of Allah. The fruit of direct knowledge of Allah is knowledge of the command of Allah. This rises in a continual spiral without end or cease for the one whom Allah makes firm.

The *hadiths* which have come about the excellence of knowledge and those who study and the reports of the righteous *Salaf* are numerous. They include the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "The angels lower their wings to the seeker of knowledge out of pleasure at what he does." "Allah guarantees the provision of the seeker of knowledge." "Gaining a point of knowledge is better than a year's worship." "The movement of a scholar in his bed is better than forty years of the worship of a worshipper without knowledge." "Anyone who attends a gathering of knowledge and does not understand anything at all gains six degrees." Imam as-Samarqandi, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, related that. It is also related that the gathering of knowledge is better than the worship of seventy years.

It is a confirmed instruction that wherever you find gatherings of knowledge, you should attend them. Our shaykhs, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by them and give us great benefit through them, gave us *idhn* for that. Mawlana al-Junayd, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "Stories told about the righteous are one of the armies of Allah by which Allah strengthens the truthful." He recited the words of Allah, 'azza wa jalla, "We have given you all this news about the Messengers so We can make your heart firm by means of it." (11:120) Our master and teacher, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "I have not seen anyone who dives into the mercy of Allah *tabaraka wa ta'ala* like someone who attends a gathering of knowledge. Strive for that. Strive to the utmost in the study of the books of the people of Allah, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by them. We were also given *idhn* for that."

The secret that we ourselves found in doing that is beyond description. One of the gnostics, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "My brother, so-and-so lived a life of great luxury and Allah inspired him to study the books of the People and that elevated him to a high station without any action or striving on his part." Our master and teacher, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "Someone who persists in studying the books of the People and memorising their words can change his state and reach Allah without a shaykh."

But, my masters and brothers, may Allah be pleased with you and help us by you, study the books of the famous perfect ones, such as the *Qut al-Qulub*, and the *al-Ihya'*, by the great imams, Abu Talib al-Makki and the Proof of Islam, Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali. Also *Sunan al-Muhtadin* and the *Tabaqat* by the great Imam ash-Sha'rani, *al-Mabahith* and its commentary by the great Imam at-Tadili, and the *Sharishiyya* in *ra'* and its commentary, *The Antimony of the Eyes*, by Mawlana Ahmad al-Fasi, the *Hikam al-'Ata'iyya* and its

commentary by the majestic imam, Ibn 'Abbad, and the *Tanwir Lata'if al-Minan* by the imam, the shaykh of the shaykhs, Ibn 'Ata'illah, and similar books of the perfected masters, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by them.

Beware and again beware of studying the books of the two great imams, Mawlana Ibn al-'Arabi al-Hatimi and Mawlana al-Jili and those who follow them in the way they write, except for what they write on the *adab* of *dhikr* and its excellence and the order of travelling through the stations of Islam, Iman and Ihsan. I say this because, although their words, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by them, are fine and deep, from the source of the Divine Presence and the Muhammadan presence, they can only be understood safely by someone who has reached their station. As for the beginner, he will not benefit from them at all. Rather it is feared that the opposite might happen. Allah *jalla wa 'azza* says, "*The fact is that they have denied something which their knowledge does not embrace and the meaning of which has not yet reached them.*" (10:39) "*No one knows its inner meaning but Allah. Those firmly rooted in knowledge say, 'We believe in it. All of it is from our Lord. But only people of intelligence pay heed.'*" (3:7) And the fact is that someone who has arrived at understanding of their words, no longer needs them because he is enriched by Allah and effaced in witnessing Him.

Do you then show me the knowledge of *tawhid*

when here are seas which are unexplored?

This is the station of the people of *tajrid*

who stand in the presence of my Lord.

Dhu'n-Nun al-Misri, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, was asked about what a gnostic is and he said, "He is here and he has gone." The greatest master, Sidi Ibn 'Ata'illah, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "The gnostic is not someone who makes an indication and then finds Allah nearer to him than his indication. The gnostic is without indication - by his annihilation in His existence and his total absorption in witnessing Him." Our master, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "The gnostic of Allah is unfettered, not bound, and he is water itself, meaning submitted, remembering Allah constantly."

Beware and again beware of speaking about the ruh. Speaking about it is of no use to anyone. Rather someone who does that has wasted his life uselessly because only Allah - majestic is He - He who created it, knows its reality. Enough proof of the prohibition of doing that is the words of the Jews, may Allah curse them, when they wanted to ask the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, about it. If he answered them he was not a Prophet. If he did not answer, he was a Prophet. He did not answer them and Allah revealed to him, "*They will ask you about the Ruh. Say: 'The Ruh is my Lord's concern. You have only been given a little knowledge.'*" (17:85) The righteous Salaf, may Allah be pleased with them, did not speak about it at all and the later ones have followed them in not doing it, and they had more knowledge of Allah and the command of Allah than those who came later. It is, however, true that some of the great guides of the Sufis and others among our masters, the scholars of the people of the outward, have spoken about it. There is evidence supporting both positions and there is mercy in the disagreement of our masters.

Beware and again beware of speaking about *mutashabih ayats* and *mutashabih hadiths*. Our ancestors, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by them, were also silent about that. They said, "We believe in them as they have come," as they also say about belief in Allah and in His Messenger: "We believe in Allah as our master the Messenger of Allah has commanded us to and we believe in the Messenger of Allah as Allah has commanded us to." What a majestic statement! How radiant and perfect! They were snatched from the mires of *tawhid* and saved from doubts and uncertainties. May Allah repay them with immense good on our behalf and on behalf of this community.

The slave of his Lord, Ahmad, (the writer) says, affirming the creed of his great predecessors: I am a slave of Allah believing what our master, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, believed

regarding Allah and himself, and holding to his intention, and his forms of worship, his acts of devotion and his customs. Our noble excellent master gave an excellent notification to us, "How excellent are the divested brothers, the masters!"

Beware and again beware of speaking about the essence (*kunh*) of Divine Sovereignty and the Message. Speaking about them wastes the moment in trying to do what is impossible and displays bad adab towards the Great Highly Exalted Lord. The Universal Ghawth, the master of our master, 'Ali al-Jamal, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by it, forbade that frequently and with great force.

Beware and again beware of speaking about quarrels between the Companions, *Tabi'un*, and *Tabi'it-Tabi'in* because they had clear reasons for the disagreements between them, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by them. "The one who strives to come to the truth and is right has a double reward, and the one who strives and is not right has one reward." The testimony of the Messenger about them is sufficient evidence of their worth and importance and rank to prove that that they are the best of the community when he said, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "The best of you is my generation and then the one after them and then the one after them."

Beware and again beware of preferring this person to that one. That is the worst of bad *adab* and results in hatred and destruction, except in the case of someone who is merely clarifying their rank and only the firmly rooted scholars are able to do that. Allah jalla wa 'ala said, "We preferred some Prophets over others." That is how the *awliya'* are also ranked. Some are perfect and some more perfect.

Beware and again beware of turning away from the company of the people of Allah. They are the treasure trove that has no end, the impenetrable fortress, the universal interspace and the overflowing sea. Their gathering contains all good, in both the sensory and the meaning. Sufficient evidence for their excellence is that they are the people, of whom it is said that "no one who sits with them is wretched," as is reported in the *Sahih*. Enough evidence against turning away from sitting with them can be found in the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, "Shall I tell you about the three men? One of them took himself to Allah and Allah took him in. The other was shy, so Allah was shy with him. And the other turned away, so Allah turned away from him."

Part of my complete counsel to you is only to leave their company if you have a strong legal need to do so. The connection of your sensory to their sensory guarantees the connection of your meaning to their meaning and that will result for you in the love of Allah which is the source of every good and will erase love of this world, which, as has been reported, is the source of every evil, from your hearts.

Strive as hard as possible to have a good opinion of Allah and the *awliya'* of Allah. The one who is truly deprived is the one who is deprived of the baraka of the *awliya'* of his time. Anyone who denies true *wilaya* has disbelieved by consensus as was stated by the greatest imam, Sahl ibn 'Abdullah at-Tustari, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, because he has denied the light of Prophethood. An aspect of the kindness of Allah to this community, however, is that the reality of *wilaya* is rarely definitively known. Its qualities are well-known but its seal is unclear. Its true stamp is that of which there is no proof: the collapse of lower desires and having love for the Master, as the Universal Ghawth, Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said. Our master, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "Whoever turns from his lower desires and advances towards his Master is a *wali* of Allah." The majestic imam, ash-Sharishi, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said:

His signs are that he does not incline to passion.

His world is wrapped up and his other world is in the gathering.

The treasure of *wilaya* is immense and great beyond "howness", description or quality. True are the words of the one who said, "The *wali* is the one whom Allah takes as a friend, whose quality is covered by His quality and whose attribute is covered by His attribute. The *wali* is the word of Allah which does not run out. Even if the trees had been pens and the sea ink and all creatures were to write, they would not be able to write the

amount of a gleam which occurs to the heart of the wali of Allah, '*azza wa jalla*.'" How and again how, can the person with this sublime state be recognised? The key of this treasure belongs to those whom Allah prepares for it by choice and preference so that they leave this world and devote themselves completely to Allah in secret and in public. Our master, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "All who go without this world, by Allah, join the *awliya*'."</p></div>
<div data-bbox="55 140 954 288" data-label="Text">
<p>p> The substance of my advice to you all is to hold as strongly as possible to giving up any hopes of this world and to abandon it and its people. Only take of it what is absolutely necessary, since when someone takes more than what is enough for him, Allah blinds the eye of his heart, as is reported. Do not mix with its people at all. The Universal Ghawth, the master of masters, 'Ali al-Jamal, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "The leper should be kept a spear's length away from you but the lover of this world should be kept two spears length away." Allah Almighty says, "*So turn away from him who turns away from Our remembrance and desires nothing but the life of this world.*" (53:29) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said, "Do not sit with the dead or that will make your hearts die." He was asked, "Messenger of Allah, who are the dead?" He replied, "Those who love this world and desire it."</p></div>
<div data-bbox="55 303 957 386" data-label="Text">
<p>Part of the instruction which the Qutb of Qutbs, Mawlana 'Abd's-Salam ibn Mashish gave to his student, Imam ash-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with both of them and help us by them, was, "My son, Allah Allah Allah. People! Free your tongue from mentioning them and your heart from images of them and prepare for their coming to you at night and shunning you in the day. Do you not see that when they come, they are test?" A poet has said, and, by Allah, it is the most majestic of what is said:</p></div>
<div data-bbox="55 401 496 419" data-label="Text">
<p>Fear the people of your species and be afraid of them,</p></div>
<div data-bbox="60 435 376 453" data-label="Text">
<p>as you fear wild animals and leopards.</p></div>
<div data-bbox="55 468 404 485" data-label="Text">
<p>Beware of them and stay away from them,</p></div>
<div data-bbox="60 501 437 518" data-label="Text">
<p>and be like the Samiri saying, "Do not touch."</p></div>
<div data-bbox="55 534 341 552" data-label="Text">
<p>Take Allah's earth as a companion,</p></div>
<div data-bbox="60 566 253 584" data-label="Text">
<p>and leave people aside.</p></div>
<div data-bbox="55 600 443 617" data-label="Text">
<p>All people, if you examine them, are scorpions.</p></div>
<div data-bbox="55 633 478 650" data-label="Text">
<p>Say 'Allah' and leave existence and what it contains</p></div>
<div data-bbox="60 666 319 684" data-label="Text">
<p>if you want to reach perfection.</p></div>
<div data-bbox="55 698 954 733" data-label="Text">
<p>Allah *jalla wa 'ala*, said addressing His Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "*Say: 'Allah!' Then leave them engrossed in playing their games.*" (6:92)</p></div>
<div data-bbox="55 748 931 798" data-label="Text">
<p>If you are sincere in your *tawba*, then you will be successful with those who are successful, be saved with those who are saved and reach the stations of the *awliya*' of Allah who are brought near. The greatest Imam, Mawlana ash-Sharishi, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said:</p></div>
<div data-bbox="55 813 370 830" data-label="Text">
<p>All the stations are in *tawba* and *zuhd*.</p></div>
<div data-bbox="60 847 449 864" data-label="Text">
<p>A sweet fragrance spreads from their meadows.</p></div>
<div data-bbox="55 880 949 946" data-label="Text">
<p>And one must constantly and always have certainty by Allah and reliance on Allah, trusting in the truth of His promise and threat. Allah *jalla wa 'ala* says, "*Whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will be enough for him.*" (65:3), meaning He will give him what is adequate for his needs and help him. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If you were to rely on Allah as He should be relied on, He would provide for</p></div>
<div data-bbox="918 953 954 970" data-label="Page-Footer">
<p>201</p></div>

you as He provides for the birds. They go out in the morning hungry and return in the evening full." We read in the *Sahih* Collection, "Seventy thousand will enter the Garden without reckoning. They are people who did not have themselves cauterised or use incantations or seek omens and they put their trust in their Lord."

Enough proof of the excellence of having trust in Allah is escaping the Reckoning and Allah's representing His slave and being enough for him, looking after his needs and enriching his children after him. It is reported that a poor person who relied on Allah and did not store up and did not own anything will stand before Allah at the Standing and He will ask him, "My slave, how did you leave your family?" He will reply, "My Lord, I left them poor." He - glory be to Him - will say to him, "I have made them rich after you." The rich man who relied on means and his worldly portion will stand and Allah - glory be to Him - will ask him, "How did you leave your family?" and he will reply, "Lord, I left them rich." He will say, "I have made them poor after you."

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "O Allah, let me die poor. Do not let me die rich." He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If someone devotes himself to Allah, Allah will spare him every burden and provide for him from where he does not expect. If someone devotes himself to this world, Allah will entrust him to it." It is said that the true faqir is someone who does not store up for himself and does not seek help. The faqir is the one who is in need of Allah's power, strength and existence and enriched by witnessing the One he worships. Our master and teacher, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, used to say, "By Allah, and there is no god but Him, everything except devotion to Allah is play and falsehood." He said, "By Allah, we have specified what we have specified and that is devotion to Allah, *'azza wa jalla*, since there is no delay in gaining a goal you seek by your Lord and a goal you seek by yourself is never easy to achieve, as is said." The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The truest phrase a poet has said is the words of Labid, 'Everything except Allah is false.'"

Know that *tawba* has three degrees: the *tawba* of the common, which is on account of wrong actions; the *tawba* of the elite which is on account of being occupied with stations, stages and degrees rather than the Beloved; and the *tawba* of the elite of the elite which is on account of lapses due to pricks from Shaytan and moments of heedlessness, since no one possesses constant awareness of the Real, majestic is He. Firmness of election does not demand absence of the quality of humanness, as is said.

My Master inspired me with something from Him which I did not take from anyone and which I have not heard from anyone else. It is to say: "O Lord, the only thing You have given me to rely on is success and generosity from You in having been able to perform all sorts of righteous actions and acts which have brought me nearness to You. This is in any case conditional on Your beautiful veiling of my faults since if it had not been for the beauty of Allah's veiling, there would be no action worthy of acceptance. I have divided these actions into a hundred parts. Ninety-eight are a gift for our master, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. One goes to the people of the house of the Prophet and the shaykhs, scholars, martyrs, righteous and all the believers. One quarter of the remaining part is for anyone who has a right against us, a second quarter is for my parents, a third quarter is for the rulers of the Muslims, and the remaining quarter for everything else which Allah *'azza wa jalla* created, seeking mercy from Him, each according to his state and station.

The dedicated, humble, sinful, insignificant slave Ahmad, who has nothing and is bankrupt before You, says with a tongue of supplication, abasement, weakness and need:

I have all faults; that is my quality.

You have all praise and lauding.

Grace, kindness and generosity come from You.

Poverty, bankruptcy and non-existence are my contribution.

My God, if someone's realities are merely claims, how can his claims not be claims? If someone's good qualities are evil qualities, how can his evil qualities not be evil qualities? My Lord, I hope for Your mercy

through Your mercy and the intercession of your Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, by Your generosity and nobility. There is no god but You. Glory be to You, truly I am one of the wrongdoers.

It is certain that the best of your moments is the moment in which you admit to your absolute poverty and return to your abasement and in which you are safe from the suggestions of your lower selves and people are safe from your bad opinion since there are two characteristics which are not surpassed by any other good quality: having a good opinion of Allah and a good opinion of the slaves of Allah; and there are two qualities than which there is nothing worse: having a bad opinion of Allah and a bad opinion of the slaves of Allah, as is reported. Allah jalla wa 'azza says, "*O you who believe, avoid most suspicion. Indeed some suspicion is a crime. And do not spy and do not backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat his brother's dead flesh? No, you would hate it. And fear Allah.*" (49: 12)

Our master and teacher, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "We may see the water of the fuqara' being held back and the reason for that is bad opinion and arrogance. If they were to have a good opinion and lower their heads, then Allah would release their water. May Allah curse the one who denies them." Be also certain, then, that any words that are not *dhikr* are a distraction. That is why the Messenger, may the blessing and peace of Allah be upon him, never spoke except to remember Allah. Allah jalla wa 'ala says, "*You who believe! do not let your wealth or children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. Whoever does that is lost.*" (63:9)

In short, put all your efforts into belittling this world and disdaining it and being content with little of it, and do not store up anything beyond your food for the following day, relying on Allah. Be content with everything that comes to you from Allah. Always be sad about acts of obedience to Allah you have missed. Do not talk about what does not concern you and only mention Allah. Fill your hearts with hope for success and fear of Allah. Close your eyes to the faults of others, dismiss their slips and overlook their evil deeds and repay them with good actions. Accept people's intercession and excuses. Purify your hearts of avarice and maintain ties of kinship and put things right between yourselves. Unite and do not separate. There is no good in those who are not friendly. Respect your brothers and honour them and receive them in every state. They are your support. Meet them with kindness and do not meet them with knowledge. Kindness makes people friendly and knowledge alienates. Leave what pains people's hearts.

Hasten to what is obligatory and recommended. Stop trying to look after yourself in all states. Looking after the self is bad news and inclining to it is a sign of hypocrisy in the heart. Self-satisfied people have the gates of mercy locked in their face and they are veiled from the secrets of the Unseen.

Keep contact with those who cut you off and give to those who refuse to give to you. Pardon those who wrong you. Give *sadaqa* to all believers in Allah. Always always keep your bodies, garments, places of worship, *zawiyyas* and houses clean. Be scrupulous with regard to *istibra'* and be extravagant in *istinja'* and encourage your wives to be extravagant in it. Every harm which afflicts your family in terms of serious illness, madness, the itch, leprosy and other such things comes from deficiency in doing *istinja'*. Do not allow your wives any laxness regarding purification from *janaba*. Every harm which comes to a woman with respect to her honour comes from her failure to ensure purity from *janaba*. When that happens the shaytans gain control of her and lead her by the forelock to every evil. It is related that *janaba* is hiding under every hair is and there is a shaytan connected to every state of *janaba*. It is also related that the angels do not go near anyone in *janaba* until they are purified.

[*Istibra'*: a process used by a man to ensure he is free of urine.
istinja': washing the private parts with water.
janaba: impurity resulting from sexual intercourse.]

Every harm which comes to a believing man or woman is the result of delaying the *Subh* prayer beyond its time since it is related that shaytan urinates in the ear of anyone who delays it and because of this the lower self begins to be lazy. Perform the prayer and pay the *zakat*. The prayer of someone who does not pay *zakat* is not accepted, as is related. Pay it with resolve at the end of the year and do not distribute it on the basis of your own opinion to other than those who are entitled to it. Those who are entitled to it consist of eight categories.

Allah *jalla wa 'ala* said, "*Zakat is for: the poor, the destitute, those who collect it, reconciling people's hearts, freeing slaves, those in debt, spending in the Way of Allah, and travellers. It is a legal obligation from Allah.*" (9:61) Do not be overcome by shaytan, your appetites and your nafs so that you fail to pay it, or let this world distract you so that you abandon the prayer or delay it beyond its time. Allah *jalla wa 'ala*, says, "*As for those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in the Way of Allah, give them the news of a painful punishment on the Day it is heated up in the fire of Hell their foreheads, sides and backs are branded with it: This is what you hoarded for yourselves, so taste what you were hoarding!*" (9:34-35)

Anyone who abandons the prayer should be executed for unbelief according to the position of *hadith* scholars and that is also the position in our school in the opinion of Imam Ibn Habib, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Allah does not bless any work which distracts one from the prayer."

Fear Allah in respect of your women and what your right hands own [i.e. slaves]. That was the last instruction of the Messenger, may the blessing and peace of Allah be upon him. Fear Allah in respect of the prayer. "Fear Allah in respect of women. Fear Allah in respect of what your right hands own." Do not ever turn away a beggar disappointed. If the beggar is truthful, whoever repels him will not prosper, as has been reported. Do not prefer your sons over your daughters in respect of gifts and *waqfs*, based on opinion and appetite. There is an immense sin in doing that except in an instance when the Shari'a demands that boys be singled out. "*Do not let the life of this world delude you and do not let the Deluder delude you about Allah.*" (35:5) "*As for him who overstepped the bounds and preferred the life of this world, the Blazing Fire will be his refuge.*" (79:37-38) Anyone who does not accept good advice should prepare for disgrace in this world and the Next. Those who oppose Allah's command should beware of a trial smiting them or a painful punishment striking them.

Feed people - no action is equal to feeding people in the way of Allah. Its rewards and special qualities are countless, beyond number in this world and in the Next, as is confirmed by the Book and Sunna and the consensus of all the Muslims. One of its qualities is that it makes property grow and causes no decrease since property is never decreased by sadaqa. Another is that anything spent in the way of Allah is multiplied by ten up to seventy times and even up to seven hundred times to numbers without end. Another is that it is source of shade for you in this world and the Next. Another is that Allah makes it grow for you until the Last Hour. Another is that it distances you from the Fire. Another is that it extinguishes the anger of the Lord and brings the fruit of His pleasure. Another is that it brings about love and nearness to Allah and the Garden and other people. Another is that power will be with the poor and the very poor at the time of the Immense Standing since they will have the right of intercession at that time, as is related. Another is that it makes hearts soft, brings about strength of certainty and belief, expands provision and increases good character in the case of those who are lacking in good character.

One of my stressed and confirmed commands is that any of you who has an opening to any of knowledge of *haqiqa* should bury it and conceal it and not speak about it except by using subtle indications to its people. When you see people from among you or others divulging it, shun them, do not speak to them and do not be connected to them. Close connection with them is a poison which will penetrate your hearts, because such people are hated, disappointed *zindiqs* and suffer disgrace in this world and the Next unless they repent. Anyone who repents of wrong action is like someone who has no wrong action, as is related. Allah *jalla wa 'ala* said, "*Say to those who disbelieve that if they stop, they will be forgiven what is past.*" (8:38) The Qutb, Mawlana 'Abdu'l-Warith al-Yasluti, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said:

Those who divulge the *haqiqa* to ordinary people

are *zindiqs*. There is no god but Allah.

Do not divulge the secrets of your *deen* and this world except to a true brother. In the case of others, do not do so. Our master and teacher, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "Do not divulge your secrets to anyone, even if he is loved by you, because he also has someone he loves who in turn has someone he loves who in turn has someone he loves and so on. So your secret will be spread among people everywhere and corruption will spread. That might lead to harm unless Allah prevents it."

Bury your secret seventy feet deep in the earth and level it.

Let people complain to Him on the Day of Rising.

May Allah give you success and guide you and give us happiness in both the worlds. May He relieve us of our cares and give us the best of both the worlds. May He cover us always in might, well-being, taqwa and righteous action which pleases Him and with which He is pleased, until certainty comes and we are with the Highest Companion, our master, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and his party in this world and the Next. His greatest pleasure results in total delight with no anger after it ever. May He grant us health and well-being in the deen and this world and the Next World. May He preserve us from punishment. May our evil deeds be transformed into good deeds and may we receive the greatest intercession and gain the upper hand in this world and the Next World by Allah's pure mercy, generosity and forbearance. Amin. Amin. Amin.

We end our supplication with the words: Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, there is no power nor strength except from Allah, the High, the Immense. My success is only from Allah. I have relied on Him and I repent to Him. *"Glory be to You. We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. You are the All-Knowing, All-Wise."* If You do not forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be among the losers.

This letter should be recited out loud slowly and clearly to all the brothers and sisters whom it reaches. Each and every group should honour it greatly out of thanks to Allah, *'azza wa jalla*, and follow it by doing the great dhikr of al-Latif and of His name, *as-Sattar*, according to the numerical value of its letters. Each group should write a copy of this letter in a clear script and the writer should be both a *faqih* and grammarian. It should be given to anyone who wishes to copy it. The master copy should be given to our relation by marriage, the source of great blessing, the wali of Allah Almighty, Sidi Muhammad ibn 'Umar, to be kept in his house and shown to the brothers and sisters as a special honour with thankfulness to Allah *'azza wa jalla*. This should be done quickly.

There must also be much visiting - it is an immense pillar in the Path of Allah - especially visiting your daughters because maintaining ties of kinship increases life. It is related that kinship is suspended from the Throne which says, "Whoever joins me, Allah joins him. Whoever severs me, Allah severs him." May Allah support you and make you firm. As soon as this arrives letter send me your news with the first trustworthy person to come. May Allah guard you.

Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah Almighty and His blessing with a complete universal and general peace and on your blessed happy circle. May Allah put it right and put others right by it and clothe us all in the immense *ghawthiyya* until the Day of Rising by His grace. Amin. Amin. Amin.

At the end of Shawwal 1268.

The most insignificant of the insignificant, the dog of the people of the presence of Allah, Ahmad al-Badawi. Allah is his Guardian.

Second Letter from Shaykh Ahmad al-Badawi

Shaykh Ahmad al-Badawi was the student of Shaykh Moulay al-'Arabi al-Darqawi Letters

In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most-Merciful

There is no power nor strength except by Allah, the High, the Immense

Our masters and friends, who have the greatest value and respect in our eyes, whose feet are on our neck, whose intercession with our Lord we hope for in this world and the Next; you are full moons, blessings, those who always act by the breezes of inspiration with both gravity and ecstasy, the light of the moment and its guidance, mercy and blessings; you are awliya' of Allah in truth and His chosen ones in sincerity, brothers in Allah and lovers in His essence; I refer to the people of Wadi Tafilat and the people of Tizimi, the people of Wadi ar-Ratb, the people of al-Fa'ija, the people of Amdaghra, the people of Jir, and everyone who follows us among the slaves our Lord. May Allah increase their number and His overflow of help to them, especially to the esteemed *muqaddams* and *muqaddimats*, our supports, pillars, and masters. May Allah crown me and you with the crown of those who are beloved until we see only Allah, love only Allah and worship only Allah and our cheeks are stepping stones for the sandals of the people of Allah, because Allah is jealously protective of them, even if they are liars. It is said that there are two forests which only a real hypocrite would poke about in: the forest of the people of the House of the Prophet and the forest of the people of Presence of Allah. We ask Allah for protection and peace.

It is necessary to submit to their most splendid presence, provided that that does not entail anything agreed to be forbidden, because we and they are one and unified in Allah. If someone splits us up into disparate groups or causes any separation among us, Allah is his reckoner and questioner and the One who will take revenge on him. *"Those who do wrong will soon know the kind of reversal they will receive!"* (26:227) We are the bedstone on which the millstone turns. Wherever the people of the presence of Allah are, they are the millstone, so whoever comes between us will be ground to dust. The one who comes between us is someone who says, "Shaykh Sidi so-and-so is greater than Shaykh Sidi so-and-so," or, "The people of Sidi of so-and-so are teachers of the people of Sidi so-and-so." This is terrible heedlessness, a blameworthy state, and a pretence at eliteness without having its reality. Woe, and again woe, to anyone who claims to be one of the elite when that is not the case. Delving into these matters is something completely renounced by the people of the Divine Presence because it is one aspect of the greatest affliction and not appropriate for their state or in harmony with their station, as our master and teacher said, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him. One of the signs that someone is a true Muslim is that he will ignore what does not concern him, whereas a hypocrite will seek out other people's faults, as is reported.

Peace be upon you and mercy of Allah Almighty and His blessings and on all of the blessed good circle and everyone who has a sound, forbearing heart, especially your sharifs, scholars, fuqaha', notable people, great people, those you love, and all of those who befriend you in Allah.

Following on from that, know, may Allah teach you well, that eliteness, or we could say the greatest *siddiqiyya*, or we could say perfect *wilaya*, is that a person who has it is never found doing anything prohibited and is never upset about having to exhaust himself in the Way of Allah, so emulate that, may Allah help you and make you firm. Study constantly because study in Allah makes you firm and makes you travel the path quickly and makes you firm when you arrive at realisation.

Receive good news and give good news of a tremendous overflowing of Divine help both in the sensory and meaning, and of protection, veiling, kindness, light and blessing, because the *himma* of the people of Allah is with you, and they are not separate from their *himma*, and their knowledge is not separate from their action. Allah, glory be to Him, does not disappoint them and is not disappointed by them. He enables them to obtain what they desire and protects them from those who attack them. O the happiness and good fortune of anyone who sees them and looks at them!

As for the one you see stationary, leave him like that.

If you abandon someone, his life is meaningless.

The one you travel with is reckoned to be one of you

and is drawing near.

O people of perfection! Allah has been generous to you.

Your love enriches.

Praise Allah greatly for joining you to the string of their necklace because a man has the deen of his close friend. Anyone who spends much time with the main body of a people is one of them and the people of Allah are such that no one who sits with them is wretched and all who love them will be gathered with them, as is related.

The two imams, al-Junayd and ash-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with them both and help us by them, said, "Affirmation of the Path is itself *wilaya*." The shaykh of the shaykhs, Sidi Ibn 'Ata'illah, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "Glory be to Him who makes His friends known only because it is a way of making Himself known and only takes a person to them when He wants to bring them to Himself." Another of them, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "If you see someone affirming this Path, give him good news. If you see someone mastering the art of its people, envy him. If you see someone having an opening regarding the interpretation of its meanings, he is a star which is not attained and a sea which is never exhausted." It is also said that your reaching Allah is your reaching someone who knows Him. It is said, "Meet Me through the gnostic and meet Me in a sea of wrong actions."

So, my masters, be firm with respect to your contract with them and your love, honour and affection for them, preferring them and esteeming them. Surrender your will to them and close your eyes to any faults they may display. They are by Allah for Allah in all of their states. Be firm, "*be steadfast; be supreme in steadfastness; be firm on the battlefield; and have taqwa of Allah; so that hopefully you will be successful.*" (3:200) If any of you experiences doubt about them, he should repent and renew his contract so that death does not overtake him in a state of doubt, causing him to lose the good of his life and its blessing and threatening him with an evil seal at his death.

If something comes to a person either in a dream or while they are awake inducing him to reject this glorious path, he should hold to the creed of the two *shahadas* and realise that it is the suggestion of a rebellious shaytan. He should seek refuge in Allah. Take this to heart, my illustrious friend, Sidi al-Hajj al-'Arabi ibn Sidi al-Hajj al-Ghali, and inform all your young people. Hold to it and do not desire anything other than it, so that you are not ruined after receiving this great gift, for that is worse than the fire of Jahannam, as is said. Repent to Allah for having let any such thought preoccupy you. Spit to your left three times and say, "O Allah, I seek refuge with you from the evil of what I have dreamt lest it harm me in my *deen* and this world." Then Allah will protect you from the evil of that, as is reported. Allah *jalla wa 'ala* says, "*O you who believe, do not follow in the footsteps of Shaytan. Anyone who follows in Shaytan's footsteps should know that he commands indecency and wrongdoing.*" (24:21) He, *tabaraka wa ta'ala*, also says, "*This is My Path and it is straight, so follow it. Do not follow other ways or you will become cut off from His Way.*" (6:154) Allah *ta'ala* further says, "*Shaytan is your enemy so treat him as an enemy. He summons his party so they will be among the people of the Searing Blaze.*" (35:6) Always say "*Ya Latif, Ya Hafidh, Ya Mani'.*"

You must accord the greatest honour to the brothers as expiation for your wrong actions and healing for any injury you have inflicted. We have recommended you to study. The Real, *'azza wa jalla*, is only worshipped through knowledge and the angels lower their wings to the seeker of knowledge, pleased with what he does, as is reported, and Allah protects them.

The reality of the murid is that he gives up his will to his shaykh. Taking a dead shaykh is not valid except by way of seeking blessing. Beware of defaming the people of the Divine Presence because that amounts to denial of the Divine Itself and is an Israelite, shaytanic impulse. Beware of quarrelling, even if you are in the right. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If someone abandons quarrelling when he is in the right, Allah will build him a palace in the upper part of the Garden. If someone abandons it when he is in the wrong, Allah will build him a palace in the forecourt of the Garden." It is related that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace forbade us to indulge in chitchat and a lot of asking. Allah, *jalla wa 'ala*, says: "*There is no good in much of their secret talk, except in the case of those who enjoin sadaqa, or what is right, or putting things right between people.*" (4:114) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The believer is sparing of speech and grave." It is said that the believer has little speech and much action.

If someone criticises you for performing one of the practices of the Path, be certain that he is a human shaytan. A human shaytan is worse than seventy shaytans of the jinn, as is said. Be silent [and do not speak] to him, and free your heart from him. Pray for good for him when he is absent because the majestic Path has been built on foundations whose pillars are reinforced by the Book, the Sunna and consensus. This is not a matter we have innovated. The practices of the Path - doing *dhikr* out loud, the circle of *dhikr*, the dance with ecstasy or without ecstasy, begging in residential areas and markets, wearing the *muraqqa'a* and the *subha*, using a staff, wearing green garments, *sama'*, saying the *takbir* a lot and doing *dhikr* of the Name of Majesty alone, and breaking norms with the intention of lowering the self and abasing it, in the past and present, in ways which do not differ from the Book and the prescribed Sunna - these are all things which are done by the Poles, Ghawths, and A'frad and countless number of shaykhs and their followers.

Those noble outward scholars who criticised them were responded to by them, may Allah be pleased with them, and then they acknowledged the truth and were fair. Some of them took the path themselves while others of them recognised them and sought *baraka* from them. This was said by someone without whom the consensus of the scholars would have been impossible to achieve in his time, Sidi 'Izzu'd-din ibn 'Abdu's-Salam, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him.

By Allah, we have not seen anyone who truly abides by the rules of the indestructible Shari'a except for the Sufis. Whoever wants to verify and clarify that should read *al-Ihya'* by Imam al-Ghazzali, *Sunan al-Muhtadin* by Imam al-Mawwaq, the *Risala* of al-Qushayri, the Letters of Sidi Ibn 'Abbad, the *Nusra* of Imam as-Sanusi, the works of Imam ash-Shatibi, the *Nusra* of Imam Ibn Khajju, the *Nusra* and *Mabahith* of Imam at-Tujibi, the works of the Fes masters, especially the work of the greatest imam, Sidi Ahmad ibn Yusuf ibn as-Sama', the works of the Shaykh of Shaykhs, Ahmad Zarruq, the *Risala* of Imam ash-Shushtari and others who are too many to count, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by them and make us benefit by their remembrance. Amin.

If you really want a summary of all that in chapter and verse then read *al-Nusra* by the accomplished scholar, the gnostic of Allah and guide to Him, Mawlana 'Abdu'r-Rahman ibn Hashim al-Madghri al-Hasani al-'Alawi, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him. We do not know of any book like it. It contains the gist of about a hundred and twenty works of the firmly rooted great scholars of the past who have combined the outward and the inward.

This book is in the possession of one who calls people to Allah with gravity, ecstasy and glory, the unique one of our age, Mawlana Ahmad ibn ash-Sha'rani, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him. Borrow it from him and keep it with you for as many days as Allah wishes, so that you can study it. Hearing about something is not the same as seeing with one's own eyes. Tell him from us that if he has not copied out the three folios which remain, he should hasten to do so and send the last half to our brothers, the people of Mdaghra. He should be made fully aware that if any benefit has been lost to the slaves of Allah as a result of this tardiness, its wrong action is on his neck and the neck of Sidi Muhammad al-'Arabi because it was divided up by us into sections to be circulated and copied. If someone wants a single folio to study that is all right. Some people of Fes, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by them, asked us to do that. Ask him from us: "Where is your love of Allah? Where is your contract with Allah? Where is your connection to Allah?" All of our masters, the brothers, in every region should correspond and study. Some of them visit and after the first visit there is no more trace of them, no correspondence or even a faint whiff. We seek refuge with Allah from being overwhelmed by the intoxication of heedlessness!

Whoever does not apply himself to our Master applies himself to his own whims and desires. I have said that there can be no rest. We belong to Allah and we are returning to Him! If you do read the majestic *Nusra*, then study it together. As a result of this the lovers who affirm it will add belief to their belief and any critics will repent and so we will be a means of mercy for them. The All-Merciful shows mercy to the merciful. "Show mercy to those in the earth and you will be shown mercy by those in Heaven." All creatures are the dependants of Allah and the most beloved of creatures in the sight of Allah is the one who is most beneficial to his dependants, as is reported.

There is enough of a proof in those masters and strengthening for anyone who connects himself to them, especially in the scholars of the Community, such as the Proof of Islam, al-Ghazzali, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, and all the others who are too numerous to count. Enough of a proof among more recent masters can be found in Sidi Ahmad ibn al-Mubarak who took from Sidi 'Abdu'l-'Aziz ad-Dabbagh, Sidi Yusuf al-Fasi who took from Mawlana 'Abdu'r-Rahman al-Majdhub, Sidi at-Tawdi ibn Suda who took from Mawlana Ahmad as-Saqalli, Sidi 'Umar al-Fasi who took from the master of our master, Mawlana 'Ali al-Jamal, Sidi Ahmad al-Warzazi in Tetouan, and the clever knowledgeable one, Sidi Bujlal in the east. There are also the majestic fuqaha', Sidi Muhammad az-Zarwali, Sidi Ahmad Bunafi', Sidi Ahmad al-Malwi, Sidi Ahmad al-Kuhan, Sidi Ahmad ibn 'Abdullah al-Makudi in Taza, Sidi 'Abdu'l-Qadir al-Kuhan and others, and the great clever fuqaha' in Meknes az-Zaytun, Sale, Rabat al-Fath, Marrakech, as-Sawira and the east, all of whom took from our master and teacher, Mawlay al-'Arabi. Mawlana Ahmad ibn 'Ajiba, and his brother Sidi al-Hashimi took from the brother in Allah, Sidi Muhammad Buzidi, may Allah be pleased with all of them.

Imam Sidi at-Tayyib ibn Kiran took from our masters, the people of Wazzan. He used to attend their gatherings when they were doing dhikr with jalals in various melodies and he did not object to them doing that and there were tunes in some of them. He and our masters, the scholars, the people of Fes, attended our gatherings and his presence was most desired by them, by Allah. Sidi at-Tayyib ibn Kiran was our shaykh and guide. I used to study tafsir with him. When I divested myself, he used to yearn to meet us and sit with us. All the scholars of Fes espoused our *tajrid* since they knew that our gravity in our youth was by the support of Allah. But whoever is ignorant of a shaykh opposes him and yearning is only recognised by the one who has experienced it and passionate love by the one who has felt it, as is said. One thing they agree on is that tunes are not permitted intentionally unless it is in the form of the *jalals*. Then there is no harm. I said that the reason for that is because people's souls drink from those tunes when sung with good voices and are strengthened and escape from the sensory and rise to the presence of the Real, *tabaraka wa ta'ala*. This is essence of action and is the only thing for which actions are prescribed. It is also said that *sama'* is obligatory for the murids in their beginning.

They also agree on the permissibility of dancing even if no state is experienced, because the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If you do not weep, then imitate weeping." In the same way they agree about *dhikr* without presence because an action is not abandoned because of showing off. The greatest model, Sidi Muhammad ibn 'Abdu's-Salam al-Bannani, used to attend the *hadra* of a group of fuqara and did not object to it. They asked whether the dance was permitted when no state was experienced and he responded, "Are there any among you who experience the state?" They answered, "Most." He said, "Then dance, and there is nothing against you, because if someone has a state with Allah, those who are present with him are not separate from them, as is said."

The insignificant little Ahmad al-Badawi in the very heart of Fes, which is the treasury of knowledge, and all its scholars affirm the Path and are fair and seek blessing by it and some of them have themselves taken the Path. This also applies to the notable fuqaha' of the desert, most of whom have taken the Path, and the notable men of the fuqaha' of Makka and Madina who have also taken it. So listen to this and believe it, you who criticise, if you desire safety for yourselves and your belief and to obtain the *baraka* of your moment and the affection of the people of the presence of your Lord. Otherwise, the business is up to Allah. Allah guides to His light whomever He wishes. Anyone who criticises the people of Allah does so based on his own opinion, appetites and ignorance compounded together, and he is astray and leads others astray. He casts himself into every affliction. We read in a *hadith qudsi*, "Anyone who harms a friend of Mine has come out against Me in battle."

It is also feared that he will have an evil seal unless he repents and returns to Allah. Someone who repents of wrong action is like someone who has no wrong action, as is related, Allah willing. "*Allah loves those who repent*" (the *ayat* 2:220). Something on which our masters the shaykhs agree, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by them, is that anyone who criticises us will die with an evil seal, even if they were lying. So resolve on this and stand by it, Sidi as-Salih ibn al-'Arabi. Do not listen to anything else. Repent to Allah of what echoes in the breast and give honour to the brothers as expiation for your wrong action and your listening

to that criticism and your corresponding about it. Is there any doubt about Allah? Is here any doubt about Allah? Is there any doubt about Allah? Do you ask me about a man when he is like my father?

Travel the Path of the People and you will meet its good fortune

since the Book and Sunna define it.

This is a path of looking forward.

It is and will remain as long as time endures.

This Path is one of the most majestic paths,

so understand my words and imitate them in speech.

From *al-Mabahith al-Asliyya*.

Know, O greatest friend, clear famous guide to Allah, Sidi Muhammad ibn al-Makki al-Wighlafi, and honoured respected faqih Sidi as-Salih ibn al-'Arabi al-Bu'sami, that holding others in esteem is the greatest pillar on the Path and the loadstone of the secrets of gnosis and realisation, especially having respect for earlier *afrad* such as Mawlana 'Abdu'l-Qadir al-Jilani and those like him. It is an individual obligation (*fard 'ayn*). We hope that Allah will make us dust under the feet of his dog. Expiate your oath and repent of it with sincere *tawba*. Do not prefer us to any of our masters at all. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Do not prefer me to my brother, Yunus ibn Matta." The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, also said, "If I had been Yusuf, I would have responded to the caller." This is teaching and humility on his part, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, although he was the master of the first and the last by consensus. Make esteem for the brothers expiation for your wrong action and esteem all of those ascribed to Allah wherever they are.

Beware and again beware of finding fault with anyone or his shaykh. Allah has as many paths as human creatures have breaths, each drinking from his own source. The Shaykh of Shaykhs, Sidi Ahmad Zarruq, may Allah be pleased and help us by him, said, "It is obligatory for us to submit to the people of the presence of Allah as long as they do not fall into something which is agreed upon to be *haram*. Whenever they come to you, honour them, esteem them and respect them. Do not impute any knowledge or action or state to them, out of esteem for their ascription to Allah. And do not travel to them except with the intention of visiting them and being in their presence and being patient in the face of what they say, as long as that does not conflict with the Book or Sunna. Otherwise, do not go."

I say that this is so that there is no debate and argument with them which would result in bad adab and reinforcing the *nafs*, which is one of the greatest wrong actions, for the faqir does not store up for himself and does not reinforce his *nafs*. Be like a bee. Alight wherever you find fragrant pasture. Bees eat what is good and produce what is good and spend the night in their hive. The power of horses derives from their pasture, as is said. May Allah guide you rightly and guide rightly by you and protect you outwardly and inwardly, in the same way that He preserves the Wise Reminder, and may He crown you with every noble prophetic quality by His favour. Amin.

Sidi Muhammad ibn al-Makki, our precious subha connects you to the company of the bearer of this letter and this is the form of our wurd:

O Allah, bless our master Muhammad, Your slave and Messenger, the Unlettered Prophet and his family and Companions, and grant them peace abundantly in quantity as great Your creation, Your pleasure, the weight of Your Throne and the ink of Your words. I seek refuge with Allah, the All-Hearing, All-Knowing, from the Accursed Shaytan. In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful. There is no strength nor power except by Allah, the High, the Immense. (1)

I ask forgiveness of Allah. (100)

O Allah bless our master Muhammad, your slave and Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, and his family and Companions and grant him peace. (100)

There is no god but Allah alone without any partner. His is the kingdom and praise is His and He has power over all things. (100)

Glory be to Allah and by His praise. Glory be to Allah the Immense. (100)

Praise be to Allah and thanks to Allah. (100)

O Concealer (*Ya Sattar*) (101)

Begin it with "O Allah, O Concealer," and end it with "O Allah! There is no god but You. Glory be to You! I am one of the wrongdoers."

To that we have added *Surat al-Ikhlās* with the *basmala* (3).

Then seek refuge with the *basmala*, "There is no power nor strength except by Allah", and end with the prayer with which it begins once.

Recite this wird morning and evening, if you are able. If you are unable to do that, do the first three hundred. If that is not possible, do ten of every hundred, or ten of just of the first three hundred. The bare minimum is one hundred *istighfar* in order to keep anyone who is unable to do all of it on the path of the contract of the people of Allah, since the wird is the contract between the murid and his shaykh, Whoever abandons it, has broken his contract. Teach it to all who want it. We have given you *idhn* to do that. The *idhn* for it is *baraka*. Its *adab*, and the *adab* of *dhikr* in general, is the same as that for the prayer if it is feasible. Otherwise, the human being should remember Allah in every state.

The greatest imam, Sidi as-Suyuti, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "One thing on which all four schools and their scholars agree that in the case of everything other than the Qur'an, a human being can do *dhikr* in any state because the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to remember Allah at all times. Its ruling is similar to that of the prayer. In other words anyone who misses the wird at its appointed time should make it up as and when he can. He should also repeat the formula: "There is no god but Allah," without limit or number. At the end of every hundred he should say: "Our master Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace."

Know, O single unique exile who guides to Allah with gravity, and ecstasy, the clear path and exact opinion, our pillar and blessing, Sidi Muhammad ibn at-Tahir al-Wallali, that I was absolutely delighted with what you mentioned in your wonderful letter with its gleaming lights and secrets about the earnestness of our masters and mawlas, our brothers in Allah and their constant striving in *dhikru'llah* and all that makes one draw near to Allah and their honouring of the people of the presence of Allah and particularly with their always feeding people in the Way of Allah, based on what is mentioned in the Book of Allah. Allah *ta'ala* says, "*They give food, despite their love for it, to the poor and orphans and captives: We feed you only out of desire for the Face of Allah.*" (76:9-10) It is said that the pronoun in "love for it" refers to the food since it is dear to the *nafs*, and it is said that the word "it" can be read as "Him" referring to the Real, majestic is He.

So feed: feed people constantly and always. It is the source of success constantly and always. Whoever wears the robe of success always and constantly, will have success in whatever Allah desires for him and will be pleasing to Him constantly and always. Our masters, the scholars say that all success is by Allah's might and power as Allah states in His Might Book more than once. Allah *jalla wa 'ala*, says, "*My success is with Allah alone.*" (11:88) One of the gnostics of Allah, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "We sought success for a long time and eventually found it in feeding people. There is no action which is equal to it." I say that it is the impenetrable fortress and the flowing sea. So hold fast to it.

There should be a lot of asking forgiveness, a lot of prayer on the Chosen Prophet, a lot of repetition of the words of Allah Almighty, "There is no god but You. Glory be to You. I am one of the wrongdoers," great intensity in supplication, and much visiting of the people of Allah. No day or night should be devoid of sadaqa on your part, even if it is only a date. By consensus these actions defend anyone who undertakes them from all afflictions and clothe him in the robes of privilege. If you are like that, you will be protected from the evil of this time and its affliction and the evil of its people, and will be helped and restored and have success, for it must be said that the time is not easy and it is getting worse. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Every day they are getting worse." And it is related that he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "There is no year but that the one after it is worse than it." And there is no month and no day which does not follow that pattern.

So strive, my masters, in making supplication for this Muhammadan community with great intensity! Its present state has appalled us greatly but we retain our good opinion of Allah, praying that He will help it, make it firm and unite the hearts of the Muslims in every good. May Allah place me and you among the party saved by His favour!

Exert yourself, O storehouse of sincerity, Sidi Muhammad ibn at-Tahir al-Wallali, in reminding the slaves about Allah and the Sunna of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and do so assiduously. The *idhn* for it is *baraka*. Encourage them to give *sadaqa* in all their villages wherever you stay with them. It counters afflictions and repels them until the Day of Rising. May Allah make you firm and make people firm by you.

Hold firmly to sincerity with Allah in all your states and actions because it is the greatest sword of Allah. Whenever it descends on something, it cuts through it. The Universal Ghawth, the master of our master, Sidi 'Ali Jamal, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "Someone who is sincere with Allah accomplishes a hundred things with one word, whereas someone without sincerity accomplishes nothing with a hundred words." Allah the immense speaks the truth: '*Being true to Allah would be better for them,*' (47:21). '*É so that So that Allah might recompense the sincere for their sincerity.*' (33:24)

Be scrupulous in all your affairs. Righteousness in the *deen* depends on it as the greatest imam, Sidi al-Hasan al-Basri, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said. Ascend to Allah by means of your *himma* since what was going to happen has happened and what is decreed will certainly come about. By Allah, turning to creation is hidden *shirk*. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If someone devotes himself to Allah, Allah will spare him every burden and provide for him from where he does not reckon." Prefer Allah to all things since things are by their nature transitory and vanishing. '*All things are passing except the face of Allah.*'"

Keep your tongues still except in *dhikru'llah*. The disasters of the tongue are numerous. A man may speak one word which he finds inconsequential but because of it fall into the fire of Jahannam for seventy years, as is related. All words which are not *dhikr* are a distraction and there is no hour in which a person does not remember Allah *tabaraka wa ta'ala* which will not be a regret for him on the Day of Rising, as is related. So beware and again beware of sitting with the people of this world and socialising with them except out of legal necessity. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Do not sit with the dead or your hearts will die." He was asked, "Who are the dead, Messenger of Allah?" He answered, "Those who love this world and desire it." Allah *jalla wa 'ala*, said, "*So turn away from him who turns away from Our remembrance and desires nothing but the life of this world.*" (53:29)

In short, limit your hopes so that you seize the opportunity of the rest of your life and recognise Allah Almighty, *tabaraka wa ta'ala*, in times of comfort by recognising Him in times of hardship. Seek Allah's help and He will help you. May Allah have mercy on you, be mindful of your states! Do not mirror the states of the people of our time who trivialise their lives. Hurry and again hurry, to construct *zawiyyas* in your villages. A *zawiyya* is a nest for the development of love of Allah, a place for the attainment of every desire and an anchorage for all good, both in the sensory and the meaning.

Repay us by mentioning us in your supplication to Allah constantly and always. Supplication is the core of worship. May Allah repay you likewise. I have received, O storehouses of sincerity, meaning our brothers among the people of Tafilalet, your glorious precious letters illuminated by the light of sincerity and love brought by visitors, mentioning each one by his name. May Allah increase your numbers and make help overflow to you. I have acquainted myself with their contents. The same applies to the most welcome letter from the clear famous remarkable blessing, Sidi Muhammad al-Makki Uyiddan, and what it contains. May Allah accept us and you and turn to you with His favour, Amin.

I have also received and read the letter of the storehouse of sincerity, Sidi Muhammad ibn al-Hajj Arbiti al-Qati in az-Zarifat, and that of Sidi Muhammad Ubaba al-Aghrisi al-Halmimi and have acquainted myself with their contents. Also five measures of good dates from Sidi Muhammad ibn al-Hajj and a basket of good dates from Sidi Muhammad Ubabab, may Allah increase their good, pour forth His help to them and make their feet firm and give them, for every date, a good deed the size of the Throne, accepted by His favour. Amen.

One of our confirmed stressed commands to you, our might, boast and honour of our father, Sidi Muhammad ibn at-Tahir al-Wallali, is that you look for one of our brothers, a noble faqih, to read this letter to you from beginning to end with great clarity, slowly and carefully, so that you learn what it contains. Then take it immediately to every single village of your brothers, the people of Wadi Tafilalat, the people of Tizimi and the people of ar-Ratb. Read it to all of them with great clarity and with a loud voice. Honour it greatly out of thankfulness to Allah, *'azza wa jalla*, and end it by mentioning the names of Allah "the Kind" (*al-Latif*) "the Great" (*al-Kabir*) and His name, "the Concealer" (*as-Sattar*). Then do one hundred of *Ya Mu'izz*, one hundred of *Ya Mutakabbir*, and one hundred of *Ya 'Adhim*. These latter three hundred were something which our heart has been inspired to repeat by something tremendous which came us and as a specific dhikr for this time. Allah instructs it and the expansion of the breast is idhn.

All the villages of our brothers should make a copy of it in a clear and large script and the writer should be someone with a good knowledge of grammar, even if someone has to be paid to do it, and it should be kept carefully in each village and read regularly. Sidi Muhammad Uyyadan should copy it and it should be stored in his house and honoured out of thankfulness to Allah *'azza wa jalla*. He should praise Allah for the kindness of the people of Allah. O the happiness of the one who sees it! Write, Sidi, Muhammad ibn at-Tahir with care, a copy for our brothers, the people of al-Fa'ija. Send it with anyone among them who comes to visit or with someone trustworthy and reliable. Praise Allah for the kindness of the people of Allah. Their kindness is the kindness of Allah, by Allah.

If any of you is concerned about a matter, whatever it is, whether the matter is outward or inward, about the affairs of his *deen*, this world or the Next World, he should be particularly careful not to delay the prayer beyond its time, especially the *'Isha'* and *Subh* prayers. If ever he should commit a wrong action he should follow it by immediate repentance. He should often say, "There is no strength nor power except by Allah the High, the Immense" and he will see marvels in all his affairs. May Allah support you and support others by you! Amin.

Inform us of the arrival of this letter and send us your news whatever it may be with the first reliable person who comes to visit us. Your precious cloak has reached me, Sidi Muhammad ibn at-Tahir. May Allah clothe you in the robe of the greatest *ghawthiyya* followed with His favour Amin.

Here are two majestic treatises of great value that have come to us by the favour of the Real, *tabaraka wa ta'ala*. The text of the first is:

To everyone who follows us - may Allah increase your number and pour out His help to you without qualification or limit and grant you firmness until certainty comes - the essence of my advice is that you strive constantly and always in travelling the path of eliteness, which involves being stripped of this world and its people as a sheep is stripped of its skin. You should have a good opinion of Allah and the slaves of Allah and creation, prefer others to yourselves, be calm under the passage of the decree. Restrain yourselves from harming others and endure injury secretly and publicly. Keep your tongue still except in *dhikru'llah*, the Mighty, the Compeller, and be scrupulous regarding your words and your deeds. Reduce your hopes of this

world until it is as if you were undergoing the throes of death. Prepare to meet the Forbearing, the Forgiving. All of the people of nearness obtain might from Allah and from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and from all the circle of the people of Allah who are certain that there is no rest at all in this world.

Anyone who does not strive in the path of eliteness strives in the path of commonality many times over. He misses out on might from Allah and from His Messenger and from the circle of the people of Allah in both abodes. He is scorned by all of creation. As an Arab saying goes: "Argue and you will be despised."

Even the smallest amount of eliteness involves undergoing abasement and humiliation and feeling fear all the time, especially at the moment of death. All the prerogatives of eliteness seek the one who seeks it beyond his wildest desires. All things seek him in abasement and humiliation. There is no attachment in his heart to that, since if someone prefers Allah to all things, He enriches him, suffices him and brings him near. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If anyone has the Next World for his goal, Allah will put wealth in his heart and make his property sufficient for him and this world will come to him in spite of itself. If anyone has this world for his goal, Allah will make it run from him and place poverty in front of him and only what is decreed for him of this world will come to him." The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If anyone is sad for the sake of this world, Allah will be angry with him." May Allah give you success and guide you by His favour. Amin.

The following is a supplication of immense value which results in health, happiness, and honour for the one who uses it. I use it after the obligatory prayers and at propitious moments. Teach it to all of those who are your friends. Its text is:

O Allah, purify our hearts of hypocrisy and our genitals of indecency and immerse us completely in the source of the seas of the perfection of the immensity of Your Essence so that we do not see or hear or find or feel except by You until certainty comes. Amin. Amin. Amin.

May Allah support you. Peace.

The text of the second is:

A confirmed definite command for everyone who follows us is that he should add one hundred and one "*Ya Sattar*" to his wurd morning and evening. Whoever has this instruction reach him should pass it on to anyone it has not reached in his area and to all the people of his region. We have given *idhn* for that as something which Allah desires. We ask Allah for kindness. We ask Allah for kindness. We ask Allah for kindness.

Lord, be kind to us by Makka and as-Safa!

Hear our supplication by Muhammad!

Know, may Allah teach you direct knowledge of Him, that what is with Allah is only obtained by obeying Allah. Allah will deliver those who are godfearing and are humble before Him and will preserve them. If you desire kindness and help from everyone then treat the slaves of Allah how you want to be treated and repay them with kindness. He is the All-Wise, All-Knowing. We know that the most merciful of people to others is someone who shows mercy to a person who is not merciful to him. A person with great forbearance almost reaches the standing of a Prophet. A wali of Allah is fashioned from forbearance and generosity, as is reported, "*Ibrahim was forbearing, compassionate, penitent.*" (11:75)

Another confirmed, definite command for you is to do the *Suway'a* alone as a *dhikr*. It was the chant of the shaykh of our shaykhs, the Qutb, Sidi Yusuf al-Fasi, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him. Its text is:

I ask for Allah's forgiveness and I turn to Allah, Glory be to Allah and praise be to Allah. There is no god but Allah and Allah is greater. There is no power nor strength except by Allah."

Astaghfiru'llaha wa atubu ila'llah wa subhana'llahi wa'l-hamdu lillahi wa la ilaha illa'llah wa'llahu akbar. wa la hawla wala quwwata illa billah.

It is a *dhikr* for all *dhikrs* and all good deeds. May Allah guide you right. Amin.

Peace

21 Safar 1268.

The most insignificant of the insignificant, the dog of the people of the presence of Allah, Ahmad al-Badawi, Zawatin. Allah is his friend.

third Letter from Shaykh Ahmad al-Badawi

Shaykh Ahmad al-Badawi was the student of Shaykh Moulay al-'Arabi al-Darqawi Letters

In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most-Merciful

May Allah bless our master Muhammad and his family and Companions and grant them abundant peace.

Following on from that, Allah has filled my heart and your hearts with the belief pattern of our master, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and his family regarding the Essence of Allah, may His majesty be exalted, and His attributes and Names and in his belief about himself and his Message and Prophethood, and the Message being sealed by him. May He make our life, our death and our gathering with him so that we see him with our own eyes by His favour.

Be certain with utter certainty as you are certain of the *shahada* that whoever makes the purity of his *tawhid* free from doubt and illusion and fills his heart with good belief in everything which is necessary for Allah, may His majesty be exalted, and for His Messengers, peace and blessing be upon them, and what is impossible and what is permitted for them has, by Allah, been provided with the might and wealth of both the worlds and has obtained the divine elixir which transforms the heart and has been endowed with the stations of certainty whose good, light and profit do not end in this world, and on the Day of the Deen, Allah will preserve, by His favour, the purity of their *tawhid* from evil impulses by the rank of the master of the greatest rank, and all those He admits to the presence of *tawhid*. So seek refuge in Allah, my lords, from the impulses of Shaytan. Allah Almighty says, "*If an evil impulse from Shaytan provokes you, seek refuge in Allah. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. As for those who have taqwa, when they are bothered by visitors from Shaytan, they remember and immediately see clearly.*" (7:200-201)

Seeking refuge with Allah *tabaraka wa ta'ala* is the source of preservation, of salvation and of a good seal by the mercy of Allah at the time of death. One of the gnostics of Allah, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by them, said, "If I die holding to the word of *tawhid*, I do not care if I meet Allah with every wrong action committed by all the people on earth." We read in the two *Sahih* collections, "Everyone who dies testifying, 'There is no god but Allah' will enter the Garden." It is the small card by which his pan of good actions outweighs the pan of all his bad actions [in the scales] - a generous notification!

All other *ayats* revealed about *tawhid* disappear in the oceans and the treasure trove of the words of Allah '*azza wa jalla*: "*The First and the Last, the Inward and the Outward.*" So be firm and steady, my masters, may Allah have mercy on you in every breath and glance, in your life and death. The key of the talisman of this immense treasure which contains all the treasures of the Lord lies in turning from this world and its people, being divested of lower desires, appetites and innovations, following the Book and the Sunna and consensus, and having the unique Name, the Name of majesty "Allah" on your tongues.

Say always: "Allah"

Beware of forgetting for the blink of an eye.

Our master and teacher, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "*Dhikr* of the Unique Name is a path which leads to direct knowledge of Allah." And I say that this is the consensus of all of the shaykhs of teaching, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by them Amin. Their Qutb, *Fard* and model, the greatest scholar of the community, the Proof of Islam, our master al-Ghazzali, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "We tested it and found it to be like that." May Allah give you success.

Then be certain that if someone is denied arrival, that is due to their being weak where the foundations of the *deen* are concerned because the *haqiqa* is hidden in the Shari'a and practices of the Shari'a are the perfection of perfection, just as they are the key to arrival. The end of my advice is, therefore, to hold fast and cling to the great basis of the *deen* on which all its foundations are built. That is the *shahada*: the affirmation that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Always call to mind knowledge of it and have the meaning of the secret of the knowledge of certainty of it, the eye of certainty of it and the truth of certainty of it in your heart in every state since it is the first obligation of your *deen*.

It is an individual obligation for every free believer to repent truthfully and sincerely. That guarantees love and is the ground on which the *deen* is built. Rectifying wrongs done to others is a duty which Allah insists on and will continue to do so until it has been done. The next thing is to establish the prayer at its time, especially the *Subh* and '*Isha*' prayers. The person who safeguards them, will be more likely to safeguard the other prayers. The person who disregards them, will be more likely to disregard the other prayers. Enough for you on that subject are the words of Allah '*azza wa jalla*, "*The prayer precludes indecency and wrongdoing*" (29:45) and the words of the Messenger, may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him: "The five prayers are expiation for what is between them," and: "The only thing standing between Islam and unbelief is the prayer." Anyone who abandons the prayer should be executed by the sword for unbelief according to the school of the *hadith* scholars. That is why the Messenger, may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him, said as he was dying, "Fear Allah regarding the prayer."

Delaying the prayer beyond its time is a major wrong action and it is the reason for the removal of *baraka* from those from whom it is removed. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Allah does not bless any occupation which diverts one from the prayer." Delaying the prayer of *Subh* beyond its time causes a person to fall into a massive chasm because Shaytan urinates in his ear, as is related. What do you expect to happen to someone into whose ear shaytan urinates?

It is further essential to thoroughly cleanse yourself of urine, which brings about deliverance from the punishment of the grave, and then to know the rulings of *wudu'* and purity for the prayer, and beyond that to make sure of the underpinning on which the *deen* is built, which is being scrupulous about cleanliness: the cleanliness of your bodies, clothes, *zawiyas*, places of your worship and your courtyards because, as is reported, the Jews do not keep their courtyards clean. Also vital for you is natural grooming (*fitra*) which involves cutting the nails, trimming the beard, plucking the armpits and shaving the pubic hair. You should use a lot of water in *istinja'* when removing all traces of impurity from the anus after defecation, relaxing the sphincter and wiping it thoroughly. I heard our master, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by them, used to say, "Extravagance is permitted in three things: in the prayer on the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in feeding those one loves, and in the water used for doing *istinja'*."

That also applies to *istinja'* when repeating sexual intercourse. All instances of the itch, illness, leprosy and other health defects which afflict children is due to lack of *istinja'* when you have sex more than once on a single occasion. Any madness, lack of modesty or deficiency in the *deen* that appears in them is due to failure to mention the name of Allah at the beginning of intercourse. You should say before you start: "O Allah, keep Shaytan away from us and keep shaytan away from what You provide us with," and at the end, in the heart but not with the tongue, you should say: "Praise be to Allah who created the human being from water and gave him lineage and in-laws. Your Lord is powerful." Then the child who has been conceived will be protected, wholesome and good. Cleanliness before and after eating is also a blessing, meaning washing the hands.

You should always display good character towards, and have good counsel for, those in your care and be good to the family of the House of the Prophet and your daughters. Always seek refuge from any diminishment of your certainty. That is the source of destruction. Only be close friends with those who elevate your state. All good results from keeping good company and likewise all evil results from keeping bad company.

Anyone who mixes with a perfumer

will smell of his fragrance.

Anyone who mixes with a blacksmith,

will stink of his stench.

No evil or anything disliked comes to my brothers at all except through their keeping close company with the people of evil. The state of such people is as venomous as snake that kills with its first bite.

You should renew your *wudu'* whenever you break it. Doing that gives access to a treasure whose blessings do not end in this world or the Next. Our master and teacher, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "If someone wants to have the opening of our master 'Abdu'l-Qadir al-Jilani, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, should redo *wudu'* whenever he breaks it and pray two *rak'ats* and make supplication."

You must also always pay *zakat* at its specified time without delay or slackness. Allah, *'azza wa 'jalla*, says about *zakat* on crops, "*Pay their due on the day of their harvest.*" (6:142) There is consensus that prayer is not accepted without the payment of *zakat*. The greatest imam, our master Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, fought those who refused to pay *zakat*, saying, "By Allah, if they refuse me as much as a she-goat which they used to pay to the Messenger of Allah, I will fight them for it." The punishment of someone who refuses to pay *zakat* in this world is the destruction of his property, his heart being tested, and his being veiled from his Lord, and in the Next World, it is his disgrace and his being punished by the Fire of Jahannam, as is related. If someone trades with debts and has equivalent in capital, the consensus is that he must pay *zakat* when the year is complete. *Hajj* is the monasticism of Islam, as is related. We ask Allah for safety, well-being and firmness in obeying the Shari'a of the *deen* until certainty comes, Amin.

Beyond this, leave what does not concern you and observe the limits of your Lord wherever you are by adopting scrupulousness. It is a fundamental of the *deen* and the key to the treasure of the secrets of the stations of certainty. Cling to the *sunna* of your Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in all your acts of worship and daily affairs. The most important thing of all is hatred for this world and disdaining it and fleeing both with the heart and body from it and its people. Our master Shaykh ash-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, was asked, "We do not see that you do all that much. In what way have you surpassed people causing them to respect you as they do?" He, may Allah be pleased with him, answered, "By one *sunna* which Allah imposed on His Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. I cling to it. It is turning away from you and from this world of yours."

Love and esteem for this world and sitting with its people is a penetrating poison. A little of it kills the heart and veils it from the presence of the Veiled. The most pernicious aspect of it is women and children. Anyone who turns away from it, does not pay attention to it, and is distracted by Allah from it, is successful and wins through. The shaykh of shaykhs, the shaykh of our shaykh, Sidi Ahmad ibn 'Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "A matter about which there is no dispute, from our master Adam until the Final Hour comes, is that the springs of *wilaya* lie in leaving this world and its people."

His signs are that he does not incline to passion.

So this world is wrapped up and His next world is gathered.

You must absolutely and definitely be on your guard against the ultimate source of all sources of disaster and that is satisfaction with the self and unleashing the tongue too freely in speech. The tongue is a wild beast. If someone unleashes it, it will devour him. A man may utter a single word which he is unconcerned with, but which becomes the cause of his falling seventy years into the Fire of Jahannam. If someone utters one word about his brother believer which he dislikes, it is as if he had committed fornication with his mother in the Ka'ba thirty-three times, as is related. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Good is divided into ten parts. Nine parts are silence and one part is withdrawal." It is said that there are seven thousand types of wisdom in silence. If speech is silver, then silence is gold. So make the important practice of silence one of your wirts. If you restrict your speech to *dhikr* of Allah and legal necessities which Allah has made obligatory, you will be happy and win the best of both worlds, by Allah.

Beware and again beware of far-reaching hope. I say: If someone decreases his hopes and multiplies his actions, his light is strengthened, his good overflows, his heart is softened and his good character expands. He becomes a refuge and mercy for all the slaves of Allah. And the opposite is also true. Be certain that anything that you put your hopes in, other than death, is a delusion, since it is closer to you than you yourself are. All your worries about provision are the greatest encrustation on your hearts because they come from lack of realisation that you are seeking what is seeking you. All your hopes for your selves are harmful for you and make you neglect your Master and Lord. So be silent, particularly about yourselves and what is other than your Lord, since that is true silence. "*All things are passing except His Face.*" (27:88) "Everything except Allah is false."

There is no action which sets the heart at rest and which aids your meeting with your Lord like leaving this world and its people and restraining your anger and pardoning others: "*those who control their rage*" (3:133). Do not get angry, as is related. Dhu'l-Kifl became a Messenger of Allah by refusing to give in to anger. It is enough of a warning about this world that it is more spell-binding than Harut and Marut, as is related. "*Do not let the life of this world delude you and do not let the Deluder delude you about Allah.*" (35:5) Anyone who has this world as his goal, incurs the anger of Allah. If someone has this world for his goal, Allah will dissipate it for him and put poverty in front of him and only what is decreed for him of this world will come to him in any case, as is reported. An intelligent person is one who abandons it before it abandons him and dies to it before it dies to him and calls himself to account before he is called to account. Those are the clever ones who have nobility in this world and honour in the Next World. All who turn away from their desires and this world have the veil lifted from them and will be immersed in the sea of the immensity of the Essence of their Lord, the Noble, Forbearing, All-Giving.

If you live a thousand years, then two thousand after that,
there still must come a day on which you go to the grave.

Anyone who wants to see nothing other than Allah, should not possess anything whose loss he fears. The most extraordinary phenomenon of all is someone who runs from what is absolutely inescapable and chases after what is totally evanescent. "*It is not their eyes which are blind, but the hearts in their breasts which are blind.*" (22:44) So get rid of your desires and innovations before it is too late. Do not go after insights but rather be still and not excited if they come. Do not rely on your strength and do not despair about a state of weakness. What is decreed will come about. Do not say, "I am something." Do not say, "I am nothing." Do not say, "He singled me out for something." Do not say, "He did not single me out for anything." Say "Allah" and you will see wonders. Whoever says, "Allah" annihilates existence whether he is aware of it or not, as was said by our master and teacher, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him. You should abandon socialising, make sure your food is pure, and bar the means to harm, as was said by the Greatest Shaykh, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him. Prefer safety to stuff. Your weakness is essential [to you].

One aspect of barring the means to harm is to avoid advising and reminding women in private for they are vipers which can kill by a glance. Another is avoiding calling those with wealth and rank to Allah. He is with you in the company of the great and you are with Him in the company of the lowly. Whoever humbles himself to a rich person on account of his wealth loses a third of his *deen*, as is related. Your counsel to your brothers

should originate from a righteous intention. Otherwise it is merely helping the *nafs* which is a sea of conflicting desires. It says in the Revelation, "*You who believe! you are only responsible for yourselves. The misguided cannot harm you as long as you are guided.*" (5:105)

If you want to point something out about someone do so by censuring or praising the characteristic concerned, not by singling out the person who may have it. Abandon management and do not strive for something which Allah has in any case guaranteed to you. Strive as hard as possible to fulfil all that Allah demands of you. The intellect has no place in what Allah and His Messenger have taken care of so just hear and obey. This applies to the legal rulings of Islam, as was said by the universal Unique Individual, our master Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him.

When your state is constricted, remember Allah. When your state is expanded, remember Allah. In every state, whether it is one of majesty or one of beauty, outward or inward, remember Allah. In fact, my masters, connect all movements and stillness to the remembrance of Allah, *'azza wa jalla*, which is the axis round which all blessings, both of the sensory and the meaning, revolve, and the foundation of all types of honour. Any words which are not *dhikr* are distraction.

Shaytan accompanies a rememberer to the extent that he neglects to remember Allah. "*If someone shuts his eyes to the dhikr of the All-Merciful we assign him a shaytan who becomes his bosom friend.*" (43:36) "*O you who believe, do not let your wealth or children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. Whoever does that is lost.*" (63:9) Enough about the excellence of *dhikr* is the words of Allah, *'azza wa jalla*, "*And remembrance of Allah is greater still.*" (29:45) "*Remember Me, and I will remember you.*" (2:151)

In short, the whole thing is a matter experience and true tasting. So to the extent that you remember created things, a state of abasement and obliteration of the inner eye envelops you. To the extent that you remember Allah, *'azza wa jalla*, a state of might and opening of the inner eye envelops you. "A man is on the deen of his close friend." "If anyone takes more than what is enough for him, Allah will blind the eye of his heart," as is related. Therefore, my brothers, pay attention to this great possibility of excellence and honour from the Immense, the All-Powerful.

Always strip yourselves of your own power and strength and often recite "There is no power nor strength except by Allah, the High, the Immense," which is a one of the treasures of the Garden, and often recite "What Allah wills. There is no strength except by Allah." Anyone who tastes their reality is always in the presence of his Lord and protected from the bombardments of the evil of the time and its disasters. He is likely to remain in good health and, despite the continuing bombardment, seas and rivers of the secrets will always be flowing over him. Allah, *jalla wa 'ala*, says, "*We desired to show kindness to those who were oppressed in the land and to make them leaders and make them inheritors and establish them firmly in the land.*" (28:4-5) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If someone is humble before Allah, Allah elevates him." A sign of someone who possesses this quality is that he always continues to criticise himself and sees himself as being in the wrong and all other creatures of his Lord as being in the right, even if they wrong him, because the truth is that the lower self has as many imperfections as Allah has perfections. True are the words of the one who said most eloquently:

I have all faults, and it is my description.

You have all praise and adulation.

Make your hearts sound. The soundness of the heart is the result and the stamp of good words, actions and sincere pure pleasing states. Have a good opinion of Allah and His slaves. There is no good above that at all. If Allah knows of good in your hearts, He will give you better than what is taken from you. If you do not have a good opinion of Him on account of His attributes, then have a good opinion of Him because of His treatment of you. Has He accustomed you to anything but good? Does He bestow on you anything other than His favour? Make your concern your himma, your din and death which is set before your eyes and remember it often. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Remember the destroyer of pleasures," since all that is coming is near. The business of the Last Hour is only the blink of an eye away, or close to it.

The heightening of his *himma* is the crown, glory and majesty of the one who aspires to Allah. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "*The believer does not abase himself.*" We read in the Revelation, "*All might belongs to Allah.*" (63:8) What Allah wills happens. What He does not will does not. One of the gnostics said, "The help of Allah does not leave the one who clings to Allah," or we could say to the Way of Allah. "*Whoever holds fast to Allah has been guided to a straight path.*" (3:101)

Know, my masters and brothers, that the hated one, the one who is the firewood of Jahannam, is someone whose excuse is not accepted and whose breast is full of rancour. The same applies to anyone who esteems and honours such a person greatly and is passive and submissive before him, like a corpse in the hands of its washer. If you ask for any help whatsoever, addressing him with flattery and the most humble entreaty, he will respond to you with harsh refusal and you rarely hear from him a single word which gladdens you - O Ever-Kind, be kind to us, our Lord. This is the case for everyone like this except for someone who repents because repentance wipes out what happened before it.

This instruction is a reminder and warning against falling into bad character which is inward misfortune and to encourage you to take on those characteristics loved by Allah and to always remember the blessings of Allah. His concern for you is inseparable from you. Do not look at people's actions as if they were lords. Do not judge by the state of the moment. How many a person is on the earth while his heart is in the heavens - and the opposite - because the Real, *'azza wa jalla*, says of Himself, "*every day He is engaged in some affair*" (55:27) regarding the soul. He gives and denies, lowers and raises, exalts and abases, gives life and makes die. So always be humble and abased. Lower your necks and place your cheek on the earth. Say, "O Peace, give peace, O Kind, O Allah." Anyone of you who has his *nafs* tell him that he is someone who has the truth, should examine himself carefully at a time when he is remembering death and his meeting with his Lord. If it panics and is routed, his claim is baseless. If it remains at peace, tranquil, and without terror, then it is true.

What is being talked about here is what really concerns the *awliya'*. Allah *jalla wa 'azza* says, "*Say: 'You Jews, if you claim to be the friends to the exclusion of all other people É'*" (62:6) In respect of their knowledge of the magnificence and true greatness of Allah, they are the people with the greatest fear and strongest hope. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said. "I am the one with the greatest recognition of Allah and have the strongest fear of Him and greatest hope of Him" because his state, may Allah bless him and grant him and family peace, was constant joy and continuous sorrow on account of his witnessing of Allah's majesty, as is said. We read in the Revelation: "*They outdid one another in good actions, calling out to Us in yearning and in awe, and humbling themselves to Us.*" (21:90)

May Allah guide you, I must warn you vigorously and ceaselessly of the bridle of shaytan by means of which he leads those who follow him to *zandaqa* which is worse than *kufr*. I mean by that, speaking about pure *haqiqa* and accompanying its people while not acting by it. The Universal Ghawth, our master and teacher 'Ali al-Jamal, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, used to say, "The knowledge of the *haqiqa* is sweeter than honey but acting by it is more bitter than colocynth." He used to say, "If anyone articulates the *haqiqa* but does not act by it, that leads him to *zandaqa*." May Allah protect you!

None of those who take the path of poverty are safe from this dark shaytanic possibility except for the one on whom Allah has mercy and who is embraced by the concern of the shaykhs, may Allah be pleased with them and help us by them. And in reference to *zandaqa* the Universal Ghawth, the Imam of the Group, our master, Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "Those destroyed in this Path are more numerous than those who are saved." He, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "Whoever does not die in this knowledge of ours, dies persisting in major wrong actions while he is not aware."

The story of the Greatest *Fard*, our master 'Abdu'l-Qadir al-Jilani, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, is enough of a notification and warning about that. Allah *'azza wa jalla* says, "*Recite to them the tale of him to whom We gave Our Signs, but who then cast them to one side and Shaytan caught up with him. He was one of those lured into error.*" (7:175) There are also the words of our Imam Malik, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, "Whoever follows the reality without the Shari'a will become a *zindiq*." There is what our master and teacher, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "If someone follows the

reality without the Shari'a, his state is the same as the state of Nimrod and Pharaoh." O Kind, show us a kindness which will veil us from others and not veil us from You!

The reason that some groups leave the path is that they are ruled by opinion and supposition. If someone is protected and safe, that comes from following the *Sunna* and consensus. No morning of any of your days should be devoid of *sadaqa*, even if you only give a morsel or single date, and you should always recite "Allah is enough for me" seven times. It is related that if someone does that, he is protected during the day and night, even if he is lying. You should observe the *Duha* prayer and fast three days of every month as well as doing the prescribed regular *nafila* prayers before and after *Dhuhr*, before *'Asr*, after *Maghrib*, and after *'Isha'*, and you should visit the people of Allah, both alive and dead and mention them with respect. There is no action equal to visiting. Whoever is purified loves doing that.

With *idhn* from us you absolutely must instruct the people of every village among your tribes to give a lot of *sadaqa* from time to time to the mosque of Allah to feed both the strong and weak so that they will defend you and others will be attracted to you. The present time is not easy for the one who has insight, remembers and considers. Make much supplication for us and for all the slaves of Allah and the lands of Allah, especially for the Sultan, may Allah help him. Begin with yourselves: that is the *sunna*. Supplication and *sadaqa* repel the decree both that which has already occurred and that which has not yet happened, as is reported: "Say: 'What has My Lord to do with you if you do not call on Him?'" (25:77)

Know, my brothers, that Allah has made the sultanate a matter deserving of great esteem, boasting, and respect on your part because it is the place of your sovereign and represents the Prophetic khalifate and provides protection against the fire of civil war within this Muhammadan community. Only mention your sultan with supplication. Hear and obey. This is the position adopted by the Book, *Sunna* and consensus. If anyone finds fault with him, even if only in his heart, he is a hypocrite if he does not repent of it immediately. He should not do that because it involves finding fault with something which Allah has exalted. If anyone scorns what Allah has exalted, Allah will scorn him and hate him. "The *deen* is loyalty," just as "The *hajj* is 'Arafa."

Know, my brothers, people of al-Faija, that we are delighted to hear of the activation of the people of Tilwan, the children of Bushiha and the children of Sidi Bukil and Ayt Izdak, by their respect for our letters, even to the extent of paying good money for them, and their correspondence with us and coming to visit with their letters. Be guided by them so that death does not find you heedless. The arrival of Divine assistance is according to one's preparation for it and the shining of lights is according to the purity of people's secrets. Allah gives life to those who bring the Path to life. It comes about through love, sitting together, and corresponding. "If you cannot find any water, then do *tayammum*," (4:43) Otherwise there is just slackness and laziness. May Allah support you and support others by you and make you firm and make others firm by you! May He place the most immense election, which involves hatred of the self, the dropping of lower desires and love of the Master, in you and your descendants until the Day of the *Deen*. Amen. The end of my advice is to esteem *tasawwuf* and its paths and shaykhs without differentiating between them at all. Allah *jalla wa 'ala* says, "We do not differentiate between any of His Messengers." (2:284)

The *awliya'*, may Allah be pleased with them, and help us by them, are the moons, the reflections of the Prophets and their heirs. I testify to you, and Allah is a witness, that I am a slave, a sweeper and the dog of the people of Allah wherever they are, specified and branched out, old and new. I have nothing to meet Allah with except their love, esteem, honour, love and intercession in this world and the Next World. By His favour may Allah make me firm on that Day by their rank and your rank with Him. Amin.

I warn you about hunting for this world, the Next World or rank through your connection with the Path of Allah. That will bring about the loss of this world and the Next and dying with a bad seal except for the one who repents and whom Allah pardons. "So whoever emigrates to gain something of this world or to marry a woman, his emigration is for that to which he emigrated," as is related. Our master and teacher, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him, said, "O Allah, if someone gives us a huge sum for the sake of this world, give him affliction by the rank of the best of creation!"

This is a Jewish characteristic. Allah, *jalla wa 'azza* says, "O you who believe, many of the rabbis and monks devour people's property under false pretences and bar people from access to the Way of Allah," (9:35) "who listen to lies and consume ill-gotten gains." (5:31) By Allah, because of that it is said that what veils creatures from Allah is their management of themselves and their working for this world. If someone does not work for this world, it will come to him in abundance. If someone is true in his *zuhd*, this world will come to him in spite of itself. If a cap were to descend from heaven, it would only land on the head of someone who does not want it. "O this world of mine, serve the one who serves Me and exhaust the one who serves you!" "If you were to stop with this world, We would veil you from the Next World. If you were to stop with the Next World, We would veil you from Us. Now you belong to Us alone and your share of both worlds will come to you."

So, my brothers, the gnostic of Allah is unconcerned with either this world or the Next World. This world is for his Next World and his Next World is for his Lord, as was stated by the great shaykh of our shaykhs, our master Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mursi, may Allah be pleased with him and help us by him. My brothers, in short, it is a question of happiness for an hour followed by punishment for ever or steadfastness for an hour followed by eternal bliss. O Allah, do not make anyone among us or from us or with us wretched or deprived. Make our station like that of Ibrahim the Friend, may peace and blessing be on our Prophet and on him: "All who enter it are safe" (3:97) and that of anyone who loves us and listens to us by Your pure mercy. Amin.

I also caution you vigorously and ceaselessly against duplicity with Allah and with His Messenger and with the believers. It consists of stratagems and anyone employing them is always tired because their goal is never achieved and they will receive "a fitting recompense". (78:26) So such a person is always in toil and abasement. We see some brothers who are very well thought of but whose hearts bubble away with stratagems like a boiling pot and they are like that with their shaykhs and brothers. "Beware of the insight of the believer. He sees by the light of Allah." "Being true to Allah would be better for them." (47:28) It is impossible to deceive Allah. "He knows the eyes' deceit and what people's breasts conceal." (40:19) "Your Lord's Assault is very fierce indeed." (85:12) So, my brothers, divest yourselves completely of deceit as a sheep is stripped of its skin. A two faced man is not honoured by Allah and has no standing with Him. May Allah make you happy and make others happy by you. Amen.

Anyone who desires to have the seal covering the treasure of the secrets of *tawhid* removed for him, should often recite the words of Allah the Mighty, the Glorious, "And in yourselves as well. Do you not then see?" (51:21) Allah will make his feet firm by His favour.

Beware, and again beware of quarreling with anyone. There is only the action of the One, the Unique. Quarreling breeds conflict and it is one of the greatest wrong actions. Beware of speaking about the *ruh*. It is from the command of Allah. Beware of the *mutashabiha ayats* and *hadiths*, and the *ayats* which were revealed about the Prophets, may the blessing and peace be upon our Prophet and upon them, and other things whose interpretation is only known by Allah. "Those firmly rooted in knowledge say, 'We believe in it. All of it is from our Lord.'" (3:7) We have enough of a model for that in our first Salaf who are the best of the community and our scholars by the testimony of the Messenger, may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him and his family, in his words, "The best of the generations is my generation, and then those who follow them."

Speaking about such things serves no purpose: it is wasting one's life in trying to do the impossible. "Inability to understand is understanding." Inability to understand anything at all is something in itself. It is the greatest support in every matter and the key of the secret and blessing in every single thing. Allah *jalla wa 'ala* says, "Allah helped you at Badr when you were weak." (3:123) "If they are poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty." (24:32) May Allah inspire you.

One confirmed definite command for you our masters, the people of Tilwan and the sons of Bushiha, is that you should read this glorious letter to them very distinctly (*tartil*) and with a loud voice and they say after it, *al-Latif al-Kabir* and His Name, blessed and exalted is He, *as-Sattar*, as well as a hundred "There is no power nor strength except by Allah, the High, the Immense." They should hold it in great esteem out of thankfulness to Allah *'azza wa jalla* since He has deemed them worthy of it. They are the reason it was written.

Then you yourselves should take it to each and every group of them and say after it *al-Latif al-Kabir* and the rest. It should only be kept by someone who is going to take great care of it because of its great worth and immense importance. It contains the laws of the *deen* and the basic principles of *tasawwuf*. If it reaches any of the people who follow us in the desert and elsewhere, read it to them and they should honour it. I think, and Allah knows best, that this precious majestic letter is a letter from one who takes leave of this world and advances to the Next World because all of it deals with fine subtle useful and beneficial knowledges in great detail.

We have interceded for you by the Name by which, when Allah is asked, He answers and when He is requested for something, He gives it. It is a sign of love of Allah and love for His Messenger and our love for you for the sake of Allah and in Allah. All who write well should write out a copy of it without any excuse whatsoever in a large clear script. The writer should be someone with a good knowledge of grammar. It can be kept in his house and can be read time and time again. Whenever a brother in Allah comes to him, he should read it to him so that he seeks benefit and benefits. The little slave of his Lord, Ahmad, guarantees that for him in addition to the help specific to the strength and success of Allah. May Allah give you success and guide by you and make me and you among the elite *Afrad* by His grace, Amen.

The end we hope for from Allah, *'azza wa jalla*, by His pure generosity, is to make the throes of death easy for us after we have made full preparation for it and to grant us a good seal.

You must arm yourselves with jealousy since it is the character of Allah *ta'ala* and His Messenger, may Allah bless and grant peace to him and his family, as is related, with respect to your wives and daughters and close relatives. Guard them completely and preserve them completely. Jealousy is part of faith, as is related. Gird yourselves with the greatest manliness by being a good companion to your wives and families and being generous with regard to their maintenance and clothing. That means giving in to their appetites because a believer panders to the appetites of his dependants while a hypocrite panders to his own appetites. If someone gives his brother something he loves to eat, he is forgiven before it enters his stomach. Be kind to your wives by pleasing them before intercourse and then have intercourse with them. That is the sunna. If they gain the ascendancy over you from time to time, indulge them because their good for us is great. In this context they only overcome one who is noble, as is related. As a general rule, however, they only overcome a fool.

Another aspect of manliness is liberality regarding the wage of builders, servants, sharecroppers, gardeners, butchers, porters and cuppers. It also involves being very generous to your brothers by giving them all sorts of foods and providing a lot of incense and perfume, and honouring your guests greatly when they come to you. They bring you blessing and forgiveness. When Allah loves a slave, He drives guests to him.

Yet another aspect of manliness is good neighbourliness and love of your neighbours. If something comes to you without effort on your part, begin by sharing it with your neighbours and the weak. There is also the wearing of rough garments and carrying one's provision on one's shoulder and walking barefoot sometimes, because lack of pretension is part of faith. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Wear rough clothing, and coarse clothing." So paying a great deal of attention to one's appearance has nothing to do with manliness. All of this is done by the people of Allah in expectation of their reckoning with Allah. It is said that, by Allah, a believer can be recognised by his rough clothing and *tasbih*.

In short, travel the Path according to whatever knowledge of election comes to you. That comprises the might of this world and the might of the Next World. It involves what no eye has seen, no ear has heard and what has not occurred to the heart of man. As for any knowledge of commonality which comes to you, turn from its path. It involves abasement which has no end in this world or the Next. May Allah make your feet firm by His favour.

Know with the knowledge of certainty that your good lies in keeping company with one another, alive or dead. So hold tight to one another and cling together through thick and thin. Respect those who come and be fair and do not disagree *"and do not quarrel among yourselves lest you lose heart and your momentum disappear. And be steadfast."*(8:46). When you are like that your strength will flow from one to another and your ascent in Allah will always be rapid and help will never be cut off from you. This last counsel is the counsel above all

others. Whoever is given it and does not accept it will ask and not be given. Whoever does not accept good counsel should prepare for disgrace in this world and the Next. May Allah give you success! Send your news, whatever it is, as well as news of our son, Sidi Ahmad, in detail with the first reliable visitor who comes.

Know with absolute certainty that that the good contract and its renewal and strong help and rising in the secrets of the Truth, the Absolute Support, the One, lies in the use of the feet. It is the great wurd which contains all the wurd by the consensus of all the noble shaykhs to such an extent that some shaykhs do not have a wurd at all except for the *idhn* to visit him. Provided it is for reasons which lie within the legal parameters of the deen, not out of lower desires, then there should be continual mutual communication. Otherwise it is falsehood and playing with Allah and His Messenger and with the shaykhs, seeking for rank, leadership, passions and appetites by means of Allah's Path. "They think they deceive Allah and those who believe. They deceive no one but themselves but they are not aware of it. There is a sickness in their hearts and Allah has increased their sickness." (2:8-9) *"On the Day of Rising you will see those who lied against Allah with their faces blackened. Do not the arrogant have a dwelling place in Hell?"* (39:57)

May Allah magnify our reward and your reward by the greatest pillar in the path of Allah, our master, the great master, al-Amtahhar, may Allah give him a noble reward and make his resting-place with the highest Companion, and make it easy for us to travel his path. Death is enough of a warner. Is there anyone who will be admonished? Is there anyone who will be restrained? It is said that there are some people who, even if half of him were to die, the other half would still not be restrained.

Promote the reputation of the most generous of the brothers. Do not promote a miser and do not go near to him and do not look at him. Allah - glory be to Him - hates him, even if he someone who worships a lot. May Allah make us and you among those for whom Allah's concern is preordained so that they are not harmed by wrong action by His grace. Amen.

The most insignificant of the insignificant, the dog of the people of Allah, Ahmad al-Badawi Zawitn, Allah is his protector.

Atonement of a Wasteful Life through Salawat

Bismillahi r-Rahmani r-Rahim Peace and Blessing on Muhammad, his family and companions forever

Atonement of a Wasteful Life through Salawat Notes of Ibn 'Ata Allah (ra)

By Isma'il Dhul-Qarnayn

Ibn Ata Allah (ra) said:

The one who has approached the end of his life and wishes to win over what he has neglected in his by his insufficiency hold to the right of Allah and virtuous action, then he should increase in extensive remembrance. So if he were to do this, the short life becomes extensive.

Ibn Harith (ra) said that the Prophet (saw) left from her then returned after sunrise and she was sitting and he (saw) said to her, "You remained in this state which I left you? And she said, 'yes', and he (saw) said to her, 'after I left you I said four utterances three times. If what you said during the day was weighed against it, it would out weigh them and it is, "Glory to Allah by the quantity of his creation, Glory to Allah, Glory to Allah to the extent of his pleasure, Glory to Allah in the decoration of the Throne, Glory to Allah In the ink of His

words

On this, the one who has neglected much of fasting and performance then he should occupy himself with Salawat on the Messenger of Allah (saw). If have throughout your entire life work in obedience to Allah, then Allah was to send prayers on you one time, this will override all what you've done in you life. Because you give peace to the Prophet (saw) according to your extent but Allah gives it on the quality of His Lordship. So if this by one Salawat then what about when He sends ten salawat-prayers on you for every one you send (request) on the Messenger (saw)? Ab#363; Hurayra (ra) is reported as saying that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

The one who send prayer on me, Allah send on him ten.

But what a beautiful life if you were already obedient to Allah with remembrance of Him, you were engaged in salawat on the Messenger of Allah in every time with sincerity of heart, soft demeanor, good intention and cognizance with the love of the Messenger of Allah (saw). Allah has commanded us to give prayers and peace on him in his book:

“Allah and his angels send prayers on the Prophet. O ye who believe, send prayer and peace upon him forever.” (33:56)

The Prophet (saw) has no need in the sending prayer for him from the believers; it is but to manifest his greatness (saw) and being thankful for him whereas he is the source of our guidance and bliss. Because sending prayers brings us to him and the avenues of his love opens for us and the attainment of reward and is the great favor from the Lord of the Worlds.

End Quote.