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A Journal on Sufi Culture
Philosophy and literature

Sufi World

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent and Merciful

Fore-Word

Dear Readers, Assalam O alaikum

Alhamdulillah, with this issue we are completing 4 years of publication of this journal with the kind support of our patrons and readers. We hope to continue our endeavours in future as well.

Our website is seen by readers throughout the world and the results are encouraging.

We thanks our readers for the continued support in all our works.

We request our patrons and supporters to come forward to start units of Sufi centres in all towns and cities to spread the universal message of love and brotherhood. The monthly lectures are all uploaded on the website for the benefit of netizens.

We request our subscribers to renew thier subscriptions. please popularise our publications.

Wishing all our readers a happy and prosperous 2009

Bangalore

Dr Syed Liaqath Peeran Shah Qadri
Editor

Excerpts from Holy Quran-e-Shariff
Sura XXIX
Ankabut, or the Spider.
In the name of God, Most Gracious Most Merciful

1. A . L. M
2. Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, we believe and that they will not be tested?
3. We did test those before them and God will certainly know those who are true from those who are false,
4. Do those who practise evil think that they will get the better of us? Evil is their judgement!
5. For those whose hopes are in the meeting with God. (In the hereafter, let them strive) for the term (appointed) by God is surely coming and he hears and knows all thinks.
6. And if any strive (with might and main) they do so for their own so uls, for God is free of all needs from all creation.
7. Those who believe and work righteous deeds, from them shall we blot out all evil (That may be) in them, and we shall reward them according to the best of their deeds.
8. We have enjoined on man kindness to parents, but if they (either of them) strive (to force) thee to join with me (in worship) anything of which thou hast no knowledge, obey them not. Ye have (all) to return to Me, and I will tell you (the truth) of all that ye did.
9. And those who believe and work righteous deeds, them shall we admit to the company of the righteous,
10. Then there are among men such as say, "We believe in God," but when they suffer affliction in (the cause of) God they treat men's oppression, as if it were the Wrath of God! and if help comes (to thee) from thy Lord, they are sure to say, we have (always) been with you! Does not God know best all that is in the hearts of all Creation?
11. And God most certainly know those who believe, and as certainly those who are Hypocrites.
12. And the Unbelievers say to those who believe, Follow our path, and we will bear (the consequences) of your faults. Never in the least will they bear their faults in fact they are liars!
13. They will bear their own burdens, and (other) burdens along on the their own, and on the day of judgment, they will be called to account for their falsehoods.

Sections 2.

14. We (once) sent Noah to his people, and he tarried among them a thousand years less fifty, but the deluge overwhelmed them while they (persisted in) sin.

15. But We saved him and the Companions of the Ark, and we made the (Ark) a sign for all Peoples!

16. And (we also saved) Abraham, behold he said to his people, "Serve God and fear him, that will be best for you if ye understand!"

17. For ye do worship idols besides God, and ye invent falsehood. The things that ye worship besides God have no power to give you sustenance: Then seek ye sustenance from God, serve him and be grateful to him. To him will be your return.

18. And if ye reject (the Message), so did generations before you, and the duty of the apostle is only to preach publicly. (And clearly)

19. See they not how God originates creation, then repeats it: truly that is easy for God.

20. Say: travel through the earth and see how God did originate creation; so will God produce a later creation for God has power over all things.

21. "He punishes whom he pleases, and He grants mercy to whom, He pleases and towards him are ye turned."

22. "Not on earth nor in heaven will ye be able (fleeing) to frustrate (his plan) nor have ye, besides God, any protector or helper."

Section 3.

23 Those who reject the Signs of God and the Meeting with him (in the hereafter), it is they who shall despair of My mercy: it is they who will (suffer) a most grievous penalty.

24 So naught was the answer of (Abraham's) people except that they said slay him or burn him, but God did save him from the fire. Verily in this are Signs for people who believe.

25. And he said, "for you ye have taken (worship) idols besides God, out of mutual love and regard between yourselves in this life; but on the Day of Judgment ye shall disown each other and curse each other: and your abode will be the Fire, and ye shall have none to help."

26. But Lut had faith in Him: he said, "I will leave home for the sake of my Lord for He is Exalted in Might and Wise.

27. And We gave (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob, and ordained among his progeny Prophethood and revelation, and We granted him his reward in this life and he was in the Hereafter (of the company) of the Righteous.

28. And (remember) Lut behold, he said to his people: "Ye do commit lewdness, such as no people in Creation (ever) committed before you."

29. "Do ye indeed approach men and cut off the highway? and practise wickedness (even) in your councils? "But his people gave no answer but this: they said Bring us the wrath of God if thou tellest the truth."

30. He said: "O my Lord! help Thou me against people who do mischief!"

Section 4

31. When Our Messengers came to Abraham with the good news, they said: We are indeed going to destroy the people of this township: for truly they are (addicted to) crime.

32. He said, but there is Lut there. They said" well do we know who is there: we will certainly save him and his following, except his wife: she is of those who lag behind!

33. And when Our Messengers came to Lut, he was grieved on their account and felt himself powerless (to protect) them, but they said: "Fear thou not, nor grieve: We are (here) to save thee and thy following, except thy wife: she is of those who lag behind."

34 "For we are going to bring down on the people of this township a Punishment from heaven, because they have been wickedly rebellious."

35. And we have left thereof an evident Sign, for any people who (care to) understand.

36. To the madyan (people) (we sent) their brother Shu'aib then he said. "O my people! serve God, and fear the last day, nor commit evil on the earth, with intent to do mischief."

37. But they rejected him then the mighty Blast seized them, and they lay prostrate in their homes by the morning.

38. (Remember also) the Ad and the Thamud (people): Clearly will appear to you from (the traces) of their buildings (Their fate): the Evil One made their deed alluring, to them and kept them back from the Path, though they were gifted with Intelligence and Skill.

39. (Remember also) Qarun, Pharaoh and Haman: there came to them Moses with Clear Signs, but they behaved with insolence on the earth, yet they could not overreach (Us)

40. Each one of them We seized for his crime of them against some We sent a violent tornado (with showers of stones). some were caught by a (mighty) Blast, some we caused the earth, to swallow up and some We drowned (in the waters): It was not God Who injured (or oppressed) them: they injured their own souls.

41. The parable of those who take protectors other than God is that of the Spider, who builds (to itself) a house; but truly the flimsiest of house is the spider's house; if they but knew.

42. Verily God doth know of (every thing) whatever that they call upon besides Him and He is Exalted (in power), Wise.

43. And such are the Parables We set forth for mankind, but only those understand them who have Knowledge.

44. God created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions) verily in that is a Sign for those who believe.

Section 5.

45. Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to thee, and establish Regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of God is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And God knows the (deeds) that ye do.

46. And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): But say, "We Believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; Our God and your God is one, and it is to him we bow (in Islam)

47. And thus (it is) that We have sent down the Book to thee. So the People of the Book believe therein, as also do some of these (Pagan Arabs) and none but Unbelievers reject Our Signs.

48. And thou wast not (able) to recite a Book before. This (Book came) nor art thou (able) to transcribe it with thy right hand in that case, indeed, would the talkers of vanities have doubted.

49. Nay, here are Signs self-evident in the hearts of those endowed with knowledge, and none but the unjust reject Our Signs.

50. Yet they say, "Why are not signs sent down to him from his Lord?" Say the Signs are indeed with God: and I am indeed a clear Warner.

51. And is it not enough for them that We have sent down to thee, the Book which is rehearsed to them? verily in it is Mercy and a Reminder to those who believe.

Section 6.

52. Say: "Enough is God for a witness between me and you: He knows what is in the heavens and on earth. And it is those who believe in vanities and reject God, that will perish (in the end).

53. They ask thee to hasten on the Punishment (for them) had it not been for a term (of respite) appointed, the Punishment would certainly have come to them: and it will certainly reach them, of a sudden, while they Perceive not.

54. They ask thee to hasten on the Punishment, but of a surety, hell will encompass, the rejecters of Faith.

55. On the Day that the Punishment shall cover them from above them and from below them, and (a Voice) shall say "Taste ye (the fruits) of your deeds.!"

56.O My servants who believe! truly, spacious is My earth, therefore serve ye me (and Me alone)

57.Every soul shall have a taste of death in the end to Us shall ye be brought back.

58.But those who believe and work deeds of righteousness-to them shall we give a Home in Heaven, lofty mansions beneath which flow rivers to dwell therein for aye; an excellent reward for those who do (good)

59.Those who persevere in patience, and put their trust in their Lord and Cherisher.

60.How many are the creatures that carry not their own sustenance? It is God who feeds (both) them and you for He hears and knows (all things).

61.If indeed thou ask them who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon (to His law) they will certainly reply, "God". How are they then deluded away (from the truth)?

62.God enlarges the sustenance (which He gives) to whichever of His servants He pleases; and He (similarly) grants by (strict) measure, (as He pleases) for God has full knowledge of all things.

63.And if indeed thou ask them who it is that sends down rain from the sky, and gives life therewith to the earth after its death, they will certainly reply, "God!" Say "Praise be to God!" but most of them understand not.

64.What is the life of this world but amusement and play? But verily the Home in the Hereafter, that is life indeed, if they but knew.

65.Now, if they embark on a boat, they call on God, making their devotion sincerely (and exclusively) to Him. But who He has delivered them safely to (dry) land, behold, they give a share (Of their worship to others)!

66.Disdaining ungratefully Our gifts, and giving themselves up to (worldly) enjoyment! But soon will they know.

67.Do they not then see that We have made a Sanctuary secure, and that men are being snatched away from all around them? Then, do they believe in that which is vain, and reject the Grace of God?

68.And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against God or rejects the Truth when it reaches him? Is there not a home in Hell for those who Reject Faith?

69.And those who strive in Our (Cause) We will certainly guide them to Our Paths, for verily God is with those who do right.

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**Excerpts from Golden Saying
of Holy Prophet (SAS)
Tradition No.80**

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said, "The uttering of (these words), 'Subhan Allah Wal-hamdu lillah wa la ilaha illal-lahu-wal-lahu akbaru,' are dearer to me than anything over which the sunrises."

Muslim

Tradition No.81

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said, 'A son does not repay what he owes his father unless he buys him (the father) in case he is a slave and then emancipate s him.'

Muslim

Tradition No.82

Narrated Abu Huraira Allah's Messenger said, "Allah has some angels who look for those who celebrate the Praises of Allah on the roads and paths. And when they find some people celebrating the praises of Allah, they call each other, saying, Come to the object of your pursuit. He added, "Then the angels encircle them with their wings up to the sky of the world." He added, "(After those people celebrated the Praises of Allah, and the angels go back), their Lord ask them (those angels) though He knows better than them What do my slaves say?

The angels reply, they, say Subhan Allah, Allahu Akbar, and Alham -du-lillah, 'Allah then says, Did they see Me?' The angels reply, 'No! By Allah they did not see You.' Allah says, 'How it would have been if they saw me? The angels reply, 'If they saw You, they would worship You more devoutly and celebrate Your Glory more deeply, and declare Your freedom from any resemblance to anything more often.' Allah says (to the angels) 'What do they ask Me for?' The angels reply, 'They ask You for Paradise.' Allah says (to the angels) 'Did they see it?' The angels say, "No! By Allah, O Lord! They did not see it.' Allah says, 'How it would have been if they saw it?' The angels say, 'If they saw it, they would have greater coveteousness for it and would seek it with greater zeal and would have greater desire for it. Allah says, 'From what do they seek refuge?' The angels reply, 'They seek refuge from the (Hell) fire Allah says, Did the see i t?' The angels say, 'No! By Allah, O Lord! The did not see it,' Allah says How it would have been 'If they saw it?' The angels say, 'If they saw it they would flee from it with the extreme fleeing and would have extreme fear from it,' Then Allah says, 'I make you witnesses that I have forgiven them," Allah's Messenger said, "One of the angels would say, there was so -and-so amongst them, and he was not one of them, but he had just come for some need,' Allah would say, 'These are those people whose companions will not be reduced to misery.'

Agreed upon

Tradition No.83

Narrated Abi Al-Halim bin Abdullah bin Al-Harith Allah's Messenger said, If the person who passes in front of another person in prayer knew the magnitude of his sin, he would prefer to wait for 40 (days, months or years) rather than to pass in front of him. The narrator said, I do not remember exactly whether he said 40 days, month or years.

Agreed upon

Tradition No.84

Narrated Aisha Allah Messenger ösaid, "The tie kinship is suspended to the Throne says: 'He who unites me, Allah would unite him and he who severed me Allah would sever him.'

Agreed upon

Tradition No.85

Narrated Umar bin Al-Khattab Allah's Messenger ösaid "If anyone amongst you performs the ablution, then says, 'I testify that there is no god but Allah, the One there is no associate with Him and I testify that Muhammad is His Slave and His Messenger,' the eight gates of paradise would be opened for him and he may enter by which ever of them he wishes."

Muslim

At-Tiridhi added to the last tradition, "O Allah! Make me of the penitents, and make me of those who seek purification."

Tradition No.86

Narrated Umm Habibal heard Allah's Messenger ösaying, "If any Muslim slave (of Allah) prays for the sake of Allah twelve prostrations (of sunan) everyday, over and above the obligatory ones, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise or a house will be build for him in Paradise.

Muslim

Tradition No.87

Narrated Hudhaifa and Abu Dharr !When the Prophet ö went to bed, he would say. "Bismikaallahumma ahya wa amutu," *1* and when he got up he would say. "Al - hamdulillahil-ladhi ahyana ba dama amatana wailaihin -nushur. *2*

*1.(With the name of my Lord (Allah) I live and die)

*2.(All thanks and Praise be to Allah Who has give us life after causing us to die (i.e. sleep) and unto Him is the Resurrection)

Al-Bukhari

Tradition No.88

Narrated Aisha The Prophet öused to supplicate (in these words) "O Allah! I seek refuge with you from the evil of what I did and from the evil of what I did not.

Muslim

Tradition No .89

Narrated Abu Sa'id (Al-khudri)Allah's Messenger ö said, "No people would sit remembering Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, but they are surrounded b y angels and covered by Mercy, and descends upon them tranquillity as they remember Allah, and Allah mentions them to those who are near Him.

**A letter of
Hazreth Ghous-ulazam (RAA)
to his disciple Hazreth Ali Ibn Husamuddin al-Muthaqi (RAA)
The Tenth Letter**

Concerning the need to shed tears, to acknowledge one's incapacity, to offer humble entreaty, and to seek refuge with him (Exalted is He)

My dear friend!

If you do not place the forehead of urgent need upon the soil of admitted incapacity, and if the tears of sorrow do not rain down from the clouds of your eyes, the plants of your delight will not become verdant in the orchard of daily life. The gardens of men will not become fecundated to suit your purpose. The branches of patience (sabr) will not put forth the leaves of contentment (rida) and the fragrant perfumes of intimate friendship (uns), nor will they bear the fruits of the nearness of

And he enjoyed access to Our presence and a happy journey's end. (38.25)

wa inna la hu indana la zulfa wa husna ma ab

You will fail to attain to the limit of perfection. The nightingales of your heart will not sing the melody of ardent longing, and the doves of your heart will not fly with the wings of:

I am going to my Lord:

He will guide me. (37.99)

inni dhahibun ila Rabbi sa`yahdi`n.

from the cage of:

Or shall man have

whatever he may fancy? (53:24)

am li'l`insani ma tamanna

You will not cross the vast expanse of:

And do not strain your eyes toward that which We have given for some pairs among them to enjoy- the flower of this world's life, that we may thereby put them to the test.

(20:131)

wa la tamuddanna 'ainai-ka ila ma matta 'nabi`hi azwajan min`hum zahrata 'l`hayati'd
dunya li naftina hum fih

you will fail to reach the lotus tree (sidra) of:

A sure abode, in the presence of a King All -Powerful.(54.55)

maq'adi sidqin

'inda Malikin Muqtadir.

and you will not gather any of the fruits of the trees of:

They shall have whatever they will in the presence of their Lord.(39.34)

la`hum ma yasha una inda Rabbi`him

No fragrant breeze will reach the nostrils of your heart from the orchard of:

And Allah - with Him is the fairest journey's end.(3:14)

wa 'llahu 'inda`hu

husnu 'l`ma'ab

nor will your nose inhale the sweet scent of the roses of:

There is the abode of peace with their Lord, and He will be their Protecting Friend because of what they used to do.(6:127)

la`hum daru 's` salami 'inda Rabbi`him wa Huwa Waliyyu`hum bi`ma kanu ya 'malun
The Eleventh Letter Concerning the affirmation of Oneness (tawhid) and the fruits thereof My dear friend!

When the glimmerings of the light of the dawn of the affirmation of oneness (tawhid) first appear on our hearts, from the eastern horizons of:

By the dawn when it breathes a sigh.(81:18)

wa 's`subhi

idha tanaffas

and the suns of the eyes of conviction ('ain al`yaqin) become established in the constellations of the spheres of:

And the sun runs on to a resting place of its own. (36:38)

wa 'sh`shamsu tajri li`mustaqarrin la`ha.

the darkness and gloom of human existence vanish, in the glow of the brilliant radiance of:

Their light will run in front of them. (66:8)

nuru`hum yas 'a

baina aidi`him

Revealed is the secret of:

He causes the night. to pass into the day.(22:61)

yuliju 'l`laila

fi 'n`nahari

and the veil is lifted from the face of the foreordained gift of the grace of:

Allah is the Protecting Friend of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light.(2:257)

Allahu Waliyyu 'l`ladhna amanu yukhriju`hum mina 'z`zulumati ila `nur

An attack is then mounted by the army of the devil of:

Surely satan is an enemy of you. (35:6)

inna 'sh`shaitana la`kum 'aduwwun

on the battlefield of:

So treat him as an enemy. (35:6)

fa`ttakhidhu`hu 'aduwwa.

with the assistance of the troops of:

Decked out fair for men is the love of the pleasures derived from women and children. (3:14)

zuyyina li'n`nasi hubbu 'sh`shahawati mina 'n`nisa i wa 'l`banina.

against the soldier of the heart, who say:

Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our Protector, so help us against the disbelieving folk.(2:286)

wa' 'fu 'an-na
wa 'ghfir la-na
wa'rham-na Anta Mawla-na fa-'nsur-na 'ala'l - qawmi'l -kafirin
So the invisible herald of:
And with Him are the keys of the Unseen (6:59)

wa 'inda-hu
mafatihuh 'l - ghabi.
Cries out:
Do not faint and do not grieve, for you shall be the uppermost (if you are true believers),
(3:139)

wa la tahina wa la tahzanu wa antumu 'l-a'lawna (in kuntum mu minin)
They are soon reinforced by the troops of:
And Our host - they are sure to be the victors.(37:173)

wa inna junda-na la-humu'l-ghalibun.
With the announcement of:
When the help of Allah comes, and victory à(110:1)

idha ja' a nasru 'llahi wa 'l-fathu
and advance notice of:
Surely We have given you a clear victory. (48:1)

Inna fatahna
la-ka fathan mubina
They unsheathe the swords of:
Surely We shall help Our Messengers and those who have believed. (40:51)

inna la-nansuru rusula-na wa 'lladhina amanu
from the scabbards of:
We raise by degrees whomever We will. (12:76)

narfa 'u darajatin
man nasha.
They launch an assault against the foes, and soon there are visible signs of:
So they routed them
by Allah's leave. (2:251)

fa-hazamu-hum
bi-idhni 'llahi
Reports keep coming with the news of:
Help from Allah and a victory near at hand. (61:13)

nasrun mina 'llahi
wa fathun qarib.
and the herald of the spiritual state (munadi 'l-hal) proclaims:
Say: "O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty! You give sovereignty to whom You will, and You
withdraw sovereignty from whom You will. You exalt whom You will, and You abase
whom You will. In Your hand is all good. You are Able to do all things."(3:26)

quli 'lil-humma Malika 'l-Mulki tu' ti 'l-mulka man tasha' u wa tanzi' u 'l-mulka mim-man
tash : wa tu 'lizzu man tasha' u wa tudhillu man tasha: bi -yadi-ka'l-khair: inn-ka 'ala kulli
shai in Qadir.

**Excerpts from Futul Al-Ghaib
by Hazrat Ghous ul Azam (RAA)
THE SEVENTEENTH DISCOURSE**

He (Allah be pleased with him) said:

When you are united with Allah and you attain His nearness by His attraction and he lp; and the meaning of union with Allah is your going out of the creation and desire and purpose and becoming established in His action and His purpose without there being any movement in you or through you in His creation unless it be with His order and action and command. So this is the state of Fana (annihilation) by which is meant union with Allah. But union with Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious, is not like union with anything in His creation, in an understandable and appointed manner:

"Nothing is like unto a likeness to Him and He is the Hearing, the Seeing."(xlii -11)

The Creator is above being similar to His creatures or bearing any resemblance to anything that He has made. Thus union with Him is a thing which is well known to people, having this experience of union, because of their realisation of it. Everyone of them has a different experience in this matter which is peculiar to himself and which cannot be shared by any other person.

With everyone among the Prophets and Messengers and the Saints (Awli ya) of Allah is to be found a secret which cannot be known by any other person, so much so that sometimes it so happens that the Murid (spiritual pupil or disciple) holds a secret which is not known to the Shaikh (the spiritual perceptor); and sometimes th e Shaikh holds a secret which is not known to the Murid though the latter may in his spiritual journey have approached the very threshold of the door of the spiritual state of his Shaikh. When the Murid reaches the spiritual state of the Shaikh, he is made to separate himself from the Shaikh and he is cut off from him and Allah becomes his guardian and He cuts him off from the creation altogether.

Thus the Shaikh becomes like a wet nurse who has stopped suckling the baby after two years. No connection remains with the creation after the disappearance of low desires and human purpose. The Shaikh is needed by him so long as he is infested with low desires and purposes which have to be crushed. But after the disappearance of these weaknesses of the flesh there remains no need of the Shaikh because there remains no stain and no defect in the Murid,

Thus when you unite with Allah as we have described, you will feel safe for ever from whatsoever is besides Him. You will certainly see no existence at all besides H im. Either in profit or in loss or in gifts or with their withholding, in fear or in hope, you will only find Him, the Mighty, the Glorious, who is worthy to be feared and worthy to be sought protection from. So you keep on looking at His acts for ever and expecting His order and remain engaged in obedience to Him, cut off from the whole of His creation whether of this world or of the hereafter. Let not your heart be attached to anything in His creation.

Consider the whole creation as a man who has been a rrested by a King with a great kingdom, strong command, awe-striking might and power, then as if the same King has fettered him neck and legs and then crucified him on a pine tree on the bank of a big river, with huge waves and of great width and depth, and strong in current, and as if then the same King sits on a big throne of great height which it is difficult to reach and the King is armed heavily with arrows and spears and bows and various kinds of weapons of which a true estimate cannot be made by any but himself; then as if he starts throwing

towards the crucified man anything that he likes from among those weapons. Can anyone admire a person who sees all these and then turns away his sight from the King and becomes devoid of fear from him and hope from him and fears instead the man-crucified and hopes from him? Will not the man who does this be called in the judgment of intelligence a foolish man, lacking comprehension, a lunatic, and a brute and inhuman?

So seek the protection of Allah from being blind after having possessed sight and from being separated after being united and from being taken after, after being near and from going astray after having received guidance and from unbelief after having believed. Thus the world is like the great river, flowing on, to which we have referred. Every day its water increases and it is the animal passion of mankind and the enjoyments which come to them from it. As for the arrows and various weapons, they are the trials which destiny brings to them. Thus the predominant elements in the worldly life of man is the trials and hardships and the sufferings and the struggles. And what they get as blessing and enjoyments is also guarded or surrounded by calamities.

When any intelligent man takes a critical view of the matter, if of course he possesses a certain knowledge of the reality, he will understand that there is no real life excepting the life hereafter. Thus the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) has said: "There is no life excepting the life of the hereafter." This is particularly true in the case of a believer. Accordingly the Holy Prophet (on him be blessings and peace of Allah) has said:

"The world is a prison for the believer and a heaven for the unbeliever."

And he (on him be blessings and peace of Allah) has also said: "The man of virtue is bridled."

How can a comfortable life in this world be possible and desired in face of this? Thus, real comfort lies in a complete and exclusive contact with Allah, the Mighty and Glorious, and in being in harmony with Him and in throwing oneself in absolute surrender before Him. When you do this you will be free from this world and then will be lavished on you compassion and comfort and kindness and prosperity and favour of Allah

THE EIGHTEENTH DISCOURSE

He (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

It is a parting advice of mine that you should never complain about any mishap that may befall you to anyone whether it be a friend or a foe and should not blame your Lord for what He does to you, and for His causing the trial for you. You should rather give publicity to what good happens, to be with you and to your thankfulness on that account. Your telling a lie in expression of your gratitude without any blessing is better than your stating a true fact and giving publicity to any grievance for your external circumstances. Who is there that is devoid of the blessings of Allah? Allah the Mighty and Glorious says: "And if you count the blessings of Allah you will not be able to enumerate them (xiv -34)". How many blessings there are with you and you do not recognise them! Do not feel comforted with anything in the creation and do not be in love with it and do not communicate to anyone the state of your affairs. Your love should rather be for the sake of Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious, and your comfort should be in him and your grievance against Him should be communicated only to Him.

You should look to nobody else, because in nothing else there is any harm or good or any appropriation and renunciation or any honour or dishonour or any elevation or fall or any poverty or affluence or any movement or pause. All things are the creation of Allah and in the hand of Allah lies the source of their movement by His command and permission. They continue to exist up to a time appointed by Him. And everything exists according to a measure fixed by Him. Whatever He has made posterior can by no means be prior and whatever He has made prior can by no means be made posterior. If Allah intends any harm to you no one can avert it excepting He. And if He intends any good, no one can withhold His favour.

Thus if you complain against Him while you are in comfort and enjoying some blessings, just desiring an increase in them and shutting your eyes to what is with you of blessing and comfort, considering them very poor, Allah will be angry with you and take these two things away from you and make your complaint real and double your trouble and intensify His chastisement and anger and hatred for you; and He will make you fall off in His sight.

Therefore, beware of complaint with utmost effort even if your flesh be cut into pieces by means of scissors. Save yourself! Fear Allah! Fear Allah! Fear Allah! Make good your escape! Make good your escape! Beware! Beware!

Verily most of the various calamities that befall the son of Adam are due to complaint against his Lord. How can one complain against Him, and He is the most merciful of the merciful ones and the best of all judges, Patient, Aware Compassionate, Merciful, Kind towards His servant; He is not unjust to His servants and is like a patient, affectionate, loving, kind, physician who is also a kinsman (to the patient). Can any fault be found in an affectionate kind-hearted father or mother?

The Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

"Allah is more merciful towards His servant than a mother is towards her son".

O poorman! show the utmost of good manners. Exhibit patience at the time of calamity, even if you become exhausted by patience. Hold on to patience even if you get exhausted through your cheerful submission to and harmony with Allah. Hold on to cheerful resignation to and concord with Him. Still remain pleased and get reconciled.

If you are still found in existence vanish out of it. When you are thus lost, O, you philosopher's stone! where will you be obtained? Where will you be found? Have you not heard the word of Allah:

"Fighting is enjoined on you and it is an object of dislike to you; and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you and it may be that you love a thing while it is bad for you, and Allah knows and you do not know." (ii-216).

The knowledge of the reality of things has been kept rolled away from you and you have been screened away from it. So do not show bad manners in disliking or liking it. Follow the Law in all that may happen to you if you are in a state of piety (Salih) which is the first step, and follow the commandment in the state of Wilayat and in the state of dying out of the existence of desire and do not go beyond this and this is the second step. And be pleased with the action of Allah and be reconciled to it and vanish into the state of Abdal and Ghauth and Siddiq and these are the final stages. Keep clear out of the way of destiny and do not stand in its way and turn yourself and your desire, and restrain your tongue from complaint.

Then when you have done this if the destiny is good, your Lord will give you more good, and an enjoyable and happy life. And if it be a bad one Allah will protect you in the course of it through your obedience to Him and will keep away from you all blame and will keep you lost in it until the time it passes away from you and the point of the ripeness of time also passes; just as the night passes into the day and the coldness of winter passes and merges into the summer. Here is an example for you and you should take lesson from it.

Again in the self of man there are various kinds of sins and faults and blemishes on account of which he is unworthy of the company of Allah, unless he becomes purged of impurities of sins; and no one can kiss His threshold except those who are purified from the dirt of self-conceit, just as no one can be worthy of the company of kings except those who are cleansed of impurities and bad smell and dirt. Thus the calamities are atonements and purifiers. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said: "The fever of one day is an atonement for the sins of a whole year."

**Excerpts from the
"Purification of the Soul"
by Hazreth Ahmed Farid (RAA)
CHAPTER TEN PRAYING AT NIGHT**

Allah says:

Surely your Lord knows that you stand (in prayer) two thirds of the night, or a half of it, or a third of it. (73:20)

And also:

And those who spend the night before their Lord, in prostration and standing. (25 :64)

The Prophet ﷺ said, "The best prayer, after the obligatory prayers, is the night prayer."

Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, said, "Between the 'isha prayer and the fajr prayer, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to pray eleven rak'at. He used to give the taslim after every two rak'at and then pray one witr rak'a."

Ibn Mas'ud related that mention was made before the Prophet ﷺ, of someone who sleeps throughout the night until dawn (without praying). The Prophet ﷺ said, " That is a man in whose ears shaytan urinates."³

The Prophet ﷺ said, "When any one of you sleeps, shay -tan ties three knots at the back of your head. On each knot he repeats and exhales the following words, 'The night is long, so stay asleep'. If you wake up and remember Allah, one knot is undone; and if you do wudu, the second knot is undone; and if you pray, the third knot is undone, and you get up in the morning full of energy and with a clear heart. Otherwise, you get up feeling lazy and with a muddled heart."⁴

Ibn Mas'ud used to get up when other people were asleep, and a continuous humming, like the humming of bees, could be heard coming from him until daybreak.

Al-Hasan was once asked, "How is it that those who stay up at night have the most attractive faces?" He replied, "Because they are on intimate terms with the Merciful, and He robes them in some of His light."

He also said, "A man commits a sin and so (because of it) he is deprived of staying up at night."

A man once said to a righteous man, "I am unable to keep on staying up at night; give me a remedy." The righteous man said, "Do not disobey Him during the day and He will keep you up, between His hands, at night."

It has been transmitted that Suffian ath -Thawri said, "I was once deprived of staying up at night for five months because of a sin that I had committed."

Ibn al-Mubarak said:

When the night is completely dark,
it finds them staying up in the night.

Fear has chased away their sleep so they stay up,
while those who feel secure in this life quietly sleep on.

Abu Sulaiman said, "The people of the night are more content with their staying up at night than the people who play are with their play. Were it not for the night, I would not have liked to continue living in this world."

Ibn Al-Munkadir said, "Only three pleasures remain in this life: staying up at night, meeting one's brothers, and doing the obligatory prayers in jama 'a"

Notes

1. Muslim, 8/54.

2. Al-Bukhari, kitab al-Witr,2/478; Muslim, Kitab al Musafirin, 6/16.

3. Al-Bukhari, Kitab at-Tahajjud, 3/28; Muslim, Kitab al Musafirin, 6/63

4. Al-Bukhari, Kitab at-Tahajjud, 3/24; Muslim, Kitab al-Musafirin,6/65

ELEVEN DOING WITHOUT THE PLEASURES OF THIS WORLD

Abu'l-Abbas as-Sa'idi said, "A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Guide me to such an action that when I do it, Allah will love me and the people will also love me, He said, 'Be detached from this world and then Allah will love you, and do not be attached to what people have and then the people will love you"

This hadith shows that Allah loves those who live simply in this life. It has been said that if having love for Allah is the best state to be in, then living simply is the best condition to be in.

Living simply means that you should restrain your desire for worldly things in the hope of receiving something better instead. In order to achieve this more easily you should first realise that the things which people yearn for in this world are in fact worthless when compared with what we hope for in the next world.

If we know that what Allah has will remain and that the life to come is better and more lasting, then we realise that the life of this world is really like a piece of ice left out in the sun - it soon melts and vanishes. The akhira, however, essentially never vanishes. The desire one has to exchange this life for the one to come is strengthened by the certainty that there is no comparison between this life and the next.

In the Qur'an we find this world and the next world described in the following terms:

Yes, you prefer the life of this world, but the next world is better and more lasting.
(87:16-17)

And also:

You desire the attractions of this world, but Allah desires the next world for you. (8:67)

And also:

And they are happy with the life of this world, but the life of this world is small comfort compared to the next world. (13:26)

The ahadith which scorn worldly goods and describe how worthless they are in the sight of Allah are many:

Jabir ibn Abdullah reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ happened to walk through the market place. Some people were gathered on either side of him. There he came across a dead goat with very short ears, of which he took hold, saying, "Who among you would like to have this for a dirham?" They said, "We would not even like to have it for nothing, for it is of no use to us." He said, "Would you like to have it for free?" They said, "By Allah, not even if it were alive, because its ears are so short; and now it is also dead." Thereupon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "By Allah, this world is more insignificant in the sight of Allah than this is in your eyes."²

It has been related by Ibn Shaddad al-Fahri that the Prophet ﷺ said, "This world, in comparison with the world to come, is the same as if one of you were to put his finger in the ocean. Consider how much you would have when you pulled it out."

It has been related by Ibn Sahl ibn Sa'ad that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Had the world been worth even the wing of a gnat to Allah, He would not have even given a drink of water from it to a kafir."⁴

Living simply means turning away from the things of this world because they are so worthless. You do not bother with them and remain detached from them, Yunus ibn Maisarah said, "Being detached from this world does not mean that you should forbid what Allah has permitted, nor that you should squander money. Rather, it is a state in which you are more certain of what is in the hand of Allah than you are of what is in your own hands: your state in misfortune is the same as your state at other times; your attitude towards those who quite rightly criticise you and those who quite rightly praise you is the same."

He has explained this in terms of three stages, or stations, all of which are concerned with the heart rather than with physical action. This is why Abu Sulaiman used to say that you should not call anyone a zahid,

The first station is that of a servant who is more certain of what is in the hand of Allah than he is of what is in his own hands. This station arises from a healthy and strong conviction.

Abu Hazim az-Zahid was asked, "What is your wealth?" He said, "Two kinds of wealth dispel all fear of poverty: trust in Allah and not being attached to what people have." He was asked, "Don't you fear poverty?" He said, "How can I fear poverty when my Lord owns all that is in the heavens and on the earth and all that is between them and all that is beneath the ground?"

Al-Fudayl said, "The essence of living simply is being content with Allah, Mighty and Exalted is He."

He also said, "The one who is content is the one who lives simply, and it is he who is rich. The one who has attained real faith, who trusts in Allah in all his affairs, and is content with what He provides for him, and remains unattached to the creation, out of fear and hope - and by so doing finds that pursuing worldly gains is not worthwhile - has attained the benefits of simplicity. He is the richest of people, even though he may not possess a thing in the world."

As Ammar said, "Death is teacher enough, true faith is wealth enough, and worship is action enough."

Ibn Mas'ud said, "True belief is not trying to please people by doing things which would bring Allah's displeasure on you; and not envying anyone for what Allah has given him; and not blaming anyone for what Allah has not given you. For Allah's provision is not attracted simply by a man's being careful, nor is it deflected by another man's malice. Allah, with His Justice, Omniscience and Wisdom, has made delight and joy the companions of faith and contentment, and despair and sorrow the companions of distrust and dissatisfaction."

The second station is that of a servant who, if he is afflicted by some misfortune - like the death of a child, or the loss of wealth or goods - desires the reward for his accepting the loss more than his recovering what has been lost. This is also a consequence of having complete trust. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Whoever lives simply in this world finds misfortunes easy to endure." Some of our predecessors used to say, "If it were not for the misfortunes of this world, we would arrive in the next world completely destitute."

The third station is that of a servant who regards praise and criticism equally - If the world occupies a place of importance in his heart, then he would prefer praise to blame, which in turn might make him abandon much good for fear of being censured, and do many bad things in his quest for praise. This means that in his heart other people's opinions about him are of no importance to him -indeed what is important to him is his love of the Truth and his earning Allah's good pleasure.

Ibn Mas'ud said, "True faith is not trying to please other people by doing things which are displeasing to Allah." Allah has praised those who fight in His way, without worrying about the opinions of others. Al-Hasan said, "The person who lives simply is the one who finds it in his heart to say that someone else has surpassed him in it." Imam Ahmad, I believe, was once asked whether a wealthy man could live simply. He said, "Yes, if he is not pleased when his wealth increases, nor sad when it decreases, then he can."

Ibrahim ibn Adham said, "There are three types of zu-hud, or doing without: the first is as a result of having to do so, the second of praiseworthy action, and the third of being careful. Avoiding haram things is obligatory, avoiding things which are halal may be praiseworthy, and avoiding things which are doubtful is prudent"

Any person who exchanges the things of this world for the next world is doing without something in this life and so we can call him a zahid, but doing without can also involve enjoying something in this world at the expense of the next world; in this case it is something in the akhira with which one is doing without.

A righteous man was once told, "You do without much more than I do." The man replied, "It is you who are more extreme in this, for I deny myself things in a life which will not last and whose rewards are uncertain, while you have denied yourself the akhira. No one could be more extreme in their doing without than this."

Normally, however, when we speak of zuhud we mean that we deny ourselves some of the pleasures of this world rather than those of the next world. However it is only possible to abstain from things to which you have access. This is why Ibn al-Mubarak said, when someone said to him, "O Zahid", "The real zahid is Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz, for he rejected the tremendous pleasures and riches of this world that were placed at his feet, whereas I have very little to give up."

Al-Hasan al-Basri said, "I have known people and kept company with groups who neither rejoiced when the things of this world came to them, nor grieved when they lost anything in this world. The life of this world was more insignificant to them than dust. One of them might live for a year or for sixty years -without ever having a garment that would entirely cover him, and without ever having anything that would come between him and the ground, and without ever having any food

that he could ask to be prepared for him in his own home.

"When night came, they would be on their feet, with their foreheads flat against the earth, tears rolling down their cheeks, secretly calling on Allah to save them on the Day of Judgement. If they did something good, they never stopped being grateful for it, and were always asking Allah to accept it. If they did something bad, they would be saddened by it, and would keep on asking Allah to forgive them for it. By Allah, they were not safe from wrong actions, and were saved only by their constant turning in repentance. May Allah be pleased with them and grant them His mercy."

There are three stages of zuhud:

The first stage is to withdraw from the life of this world, even though you may still have a great desire for it and your heart is still drawn towards it. The self is still preoccupied with the world, even though you struggle with it and restrain it.

The second stage is to acquire detachment from this world and to do without in it, in order to obtain your reward for avoiding it. Here, it is your doing without which preoccupies you. This is the state of the person who gives away a dirham in order to obtain two.

The third stage is that of the one who willingly puts the world to one side without even a thought for what he has abandoned. This is the one who has exchanged a fragment of broken pottery for a jewel.

Or it is like someone who, seeking to gain entrance to see the King, may be prevented by a dog at the gate. By throwing the dog a scrap it is distracted, and this makes it possible for him to gain entrance to the King's audience chamber. Shaytan is like that dog, standing at the gates of Allah. He tries to prevent people from entering them, even

though the gates are wide open and the world is just a scrap which you can toss a side without a second thought.

Notes

1. Hasan, Ibn Ma'jah, Kitab az-Zuhud, 2/1373.
2. Muslim, Kitab az-Zuhud, 18/93.
3. Muslim, Kitabal-Jannatu wa Na'imuha, 17/191.
4. Sahih gharib, at-Tirmidhi, Kitab az-Zuhud, 6/611.

Excerpts from Secret of Secrets
by Hazreth Ghouse-ul-Azam (RAA)
On the Vision of Allah: Arriving at the Level of Seeing the Manifestation
of the Divine Essence

The vision of Allah is of two kinds: one is seeing the manifestation of Allah's attribute of Perfect Beauty directly in the hereafter, and the other is seeing the manifestation of the divine attributes reflected upon the clear mirror of the pure heart, in this life, in this world. In such a case the vision appears as the manifestation of light emanating from the Perfect Beauty of Allah and is seen by the eye of the essence of the heart.

Allah describes the vision seen by the eye of the heart: The heart did not deny what it saw. (Sura Najm, 11)

On seeing the manifestation of the divine through an intermediary the Prophet ﷺ says, 'The faithful is the mirror of the faithful'. What is meant by the first 'faithful', the mirror in this phrase, is the pure heart of the believer, while the second 'faithful' Who sees His reflection in that mirror is Allah Most High. Whoever arrives at the level of seeing the manifestations of Allah's attributes in the world will certainly see the Essence of Allah in the hereafter without shape or form.

The reality of this has been confirmed by many of the beloved and the lovers of Allah. Ha'rat 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'My heart saw my Lord by the light of my Lord'. And Hadrat 'All, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'I will not pray to Allah unless I see Him'. They both must have seen the manifestation of divine attributes. If someone sees sunlight coming through the windows and says, 'I see the sun!' he is telling the truth.

Allah gives the most beautiful example of the manifestation of His attributes.

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His light is as if there were a niche and within it a lamp, the lamp enclosed in glass, the glass as it were a brilliant star lit from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the East nor of the West, -whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touches it; light upon light! Allah doth guide whom He will to His light (Sura Nur, 35)

The meaning of the niche is the faithful heart of the believer. The lamp enlightening the niche of the heart is the essence of the heart, while the light that it sheds is the divine secret, the sultan-soul. The glass is transparent and does not keep the light within, but protects it and allows it to spread, which is why it is likened to a star. The source of the light is a divine tree. That tree is the state of unity reaching out with its branches and its roots, inculcating the principles of faith, communicating without any intermediary in the language of purity.

It is directly in this language of purity that our Master the Prophet ﷺ received the Qur'anic revelations. In reality, the angel Gabriel brought the divine messages only after they had already been received - this for our benefit, so that we might hear in human language. This also made clear who were the hypocrites and nonbelievers by giving them the occasion to deny, as they would not believe in angels.

The proof that the Holy Qur'an was revealed directly to the Prophet ﷺ is in the Qur'an itself.

And thou art surely made to receive the Qur'an from the All -Wise, the All-Knowing, (Sura Naml, 6)

Since the Prophet ﷺ received revelation before the angel Gabriel brought it to him, each time Gabriel delivered the holy verses, the Prophet ﷺ found them in his heart and recited them before they were given. That is the reason for the verse:
And make not haste with the Qur'an before its revelation is made complete to thee . . .
(Sura Ta Ha, 114)

This situation is made clear by the fact that when Gabriel accompanied the Prophet ﷺ on the night of his ascension, he could not go any further than the seventh heaven, and saying, 'If I take another step I will burn to ashes', he left our Master ﷺ to continue on his own.

Allah describes the blessed olive tree, the tree of unity, as being neither of the East nor of the West. In other words, it has neither a beginning nor an end, and the light of which is the source has no rising or setting. It is eternal in the past and never -ending in the future. Both Allah's Essence and His attributes are ever -existent, because His attributes are light generated from His Essence. Both the manifestation of His Essence and the manifestation of His attributes are dependent on His Essence.

True worship can only be performed when the veils hiding the heart are lifted so that that eternal light shines upon it. It is only then that the heart is enlightened by the divine light. It is only then that the soul sees the truth through that celestial niche.

The purpose of the creation of this universe is to discover, to see that hidden treasure. Allah says through His Prophet ﷺ 'I was a hidden treasure, I willed to be known. I created the creation so that I would be known.' That is to say, that He would be known in this material world through His attributes manifested in His creation. But to see His very Essence is left to the hereafter. There, the vision of Allah will be direct, as He wills, and it will be the eye of the child of the heart that sees Him.

On that day some faces will beam (with joy and beauty), looking at their Lord.
(Sura Qiyama, 22-3)

Our Master the Prophet ﷺ says, *I have seen my Lord in the shape of a beautiful youth.' Perhaps this is the manifestation of the child of the heart. The image is the mirror. It becomes means, rendering visible that which is invisible. The truth of Allah Most High is exempt from and free of any kind of description or any kind of image or form. The image is the mirror, though what is seen is neither the mirror nor the one who is looking into the mirror. Ponder on that and try to understand, because that is the essence of the realm of secrets.

Yet all this is happening in this world of attributes. In the realm of the Essence all means disappear, burn into thin air. The ones in that realm of Essence themselves do not exist, but they feel the Essence and nothing else. How well the Prophet ﷺ explains this when he says, 'I knew my Lord by my Lord'. In His Light, by His Light! The truth of man is the secret of that light, as Allah says through His Prophet: 'Man is My secret and I am his secret'.

The place of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ whose light is the first of Allah's creation, is described in his own words, 'I am from Allah and the believers are from me'. And Allah, speaking through His Prophet ﷺ says: 'I have created the light of Moharnmad from the light of My own existence'. The meaning of Allah's own existence is His divine Essence manifested in His attribute of the Most Compassionate. This He declares through His Prophet ﷺ, saying: 'My compassion far surpasses My punishment'. The beloved Messenger of Allah ﷺ is the light of the Truth, for Allah says, We sent thee not but as a mercy to the whole creation. (Sura Anbiya', 107) and Indeed Our Messenger has come to you, making clear to you much of that which you concealed of the Book and passing over much. Indeed, there has come to you from Allah a light. (Sura Ma'ida 15)

The importance of the beloved Prophet of Allah is made clear when Allah speaks to him and says: 'But for you, I would not have created creation'.

CHAPTER TEN

The Veils of Light and Darkness

ALLAH says: Whoever is blind in this world, he -will be blind in the hereafter. (Sura Ban! IsraTI, 72) It is not the blindness of the eyes in one's head but the blindness of the eyes of one's heart that will prevent one from seeing the light of the hereafter. As Allah says: For surely it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are in their breasts. (Sura Hajj, 46) The only cause of the heart becoming blind is heedlessness, which makes one forget Allah and one's function, one's purpose, one's promise to Him, while one is in this world. The principal cause of heedlessness is ignorance of the reality of the divine laws and orders. What keeps one in this stage of ignorance is a darkness that completely covers one from the outside and fully invades one's inner being. Some of the properties of this darkness are arrogance, pride, envy, miserliness, vengeance, lying, gossiping, backbiting and so many other hateful traits. It is these traits that reduce the best creation of Allah to the lowest of the low.

To rid oneself of these evils one has to cleanse and shine the mirror of the heart. This cleansing is done by acquiring knowledge, by acting upon this knowledge, by effort and valour, fighting against one's ego within and without oneself, by ridding oneself of one's multiplicity of being, by achieving unity. This struggle will continue until the heart becomes alive with the light of unity -and with that light of unity, the eye of the clean heart will see the reality of Allah's attributes around and in it.

Only then will you remember the true home from which you come. Then you will have the yearning and longing to return to the true home, and when the time comes, with the help of the Most Compassionate, that spirit which is pure in you will go to join Him. When the attributes of darkness lift, light takes its place, and the one with the eye of the soul sees. He recognizes what he sees with the light of the Names of divine attributes. Then he himself is flooded by light and becomes light. These lights are still veils hiding the light of the divine Essence, but the time comes when they too are drawn back, leaving only the light of the divine Essence itself.

The heart has two eyes, one lesser, the other greater. With the lesser eye one may be able to see the manifestation of Allah's attributes and Names. This vision continues all through one's spiritual evolution. The greater eye sees only that which is rendered visible by the light of unity and oneness. Only when one comes to the regions of Allah's intimacy does it see, in the ultimate realm of the manifestation of Allah's Essence, the unity of the Absolute.

In order to reach these levels on this earth in this life you must cleanse yourself from your worldly attributes, which are egoistic and egotistical. The distance you must travel in your ascent towards these levels depends on the distance that you have put between yourself and the low desires of your flesh and your ego.

Your attainment of the goal you wish for is not like a material thing's arriving at a material place. Neither is it like knowledge leading one to a thing that becomes known, nor like reason obtaining that which is rational, nor like the imagination joining with that which it fancies. The goal that you wish to attain is the realization of your emptiness of all else except the Essence of Allah. This attainment is a becoming. There is no distance, nor closeness nor farness, nor reaching, nor measure, nor direction, nor dimension. He is All-glorious, all praise is due to Him, He is Most Merciful. He becomes visible in what He hides from you. He manifests Himself as He puts veils between Himself and you. His being known is hidden in His not being known.

If any of you reach that light which is suggested in this book while you are here in this world, try to balance your book of deeds. It is only under light that you can see what you have done, what you are doing; do your accounting, make it balance. You will have to read your book in front of your Lord on the day, of Last Judgment. That is final. You will not then have the chance to balance it. If you do that here, while you have the time, you will be of those who are saved. Otherwise pain and disaster is your lot in this world and in the hereafter. This life will end. There is the pain of the grave, there is the day of Last Judgment, there is the balance that will weigh the smallest sin and the tiniest of good deeds. Then there is the test of that bridge, thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword, at the end of which is the Garden, under which is the Fire and so much hardship, and for so long, when this short life ends.

Hazreth Ahmad ibn Harb (RAA)
by Hazreth Fariduddin Attar (RAA)

Ahmad ibn Harb al-Nisaburi was a noted ascetic of Nishapur, a reliable traditionist and a fighter in the holy wars. He visited Baghdad in the time of Ahmad ibn Hanbal and taught there; he died in 234 (849) at the age of 85.

Ahmad-e Harb and the Zoroastrian

Ahmad-e Harb had for neighbour a Zoroastrian named Bahram. Now this neighbour had sent a partner out on a trading mission, and on the way thieves had carried off all his goods.

"Rise up," Ahmad called to his disciples when he heard the news. "Such a thing has happened to our neighbour. Let us go and condole with him. Even though he is a Zoroastrian, yet he is a neighbour."

When they reached the door of his house Bahram was kindling his Zoroastrian fire. He ran forward and kissed his sleeve. Bahram, thinking that perhaps they were hungry, though bread was scarce made to lay the table.

"Do not trouble yourself" Ahmad said. "We have come to sympathize. I heard that your goods had been stolen."

"Yes, that is so," said Bahram. "But I have three reasons to be grateful to God. First, because they stole from me and not from someone else. Second, that they took only a half. Third, that even if my worldly goods are gone, I still have my religion; and the world comes and goes."

These words pleased Ahmad.

"Write this down," he told his disciples. "The odour of Islam issues from these words."

Then he added, turning to Bahram, "Why do you worship this fire?"

"So that it may not burn me," Bahram replied. "Secondly, as today I have given it so much fuel, tomorrow it will not be untrue to me but will convey me to God,"*

"You have made a great mistake," commented Ahmad. "Fire is weak and ignorant and faithless. All the calculations you have based on it are false. If a child pours a little water on it, it will go out. A thing so weak as that -how can it convey you to One so mighty? A thing that has not the strength to repel from itself a little earth -how can it convey you to God? Moreover, to prove it is ignorant: if you sprinkle musk and filth upon it, it will burn them both and not know that one is better than the other -that is why it makes no distinction between filth and frankincense. Again, it is now seventy years that you have been worshipping it, and I have never worshipped it; come, let us both put a hand in the fire, and you will see that it burns both our hands. It will not be true to you."

These words struck the Zoroastrian to the heart. "I will ask you four questions," he said.

"If you answer them all, I will accept your Faith. Say: why did God create men? And having created them, why did He provide for them? Why does He cause them to die? And having caused them to die, why does He raise them up again?"

"He created them that they might be His servants," Ahmad replied. "He provided for them that they might know Him to be the All-provider, He causes them to die that they may know His overwhelming Power. He makes them to live again that they may know Him to be Omnipotent and Omniscient."

As soon as Ahmad had finished, Bahram recited the attestation,

"I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I bear witness that Mohammad is the Apostle of God."

Thereupon Ahmad cried aloud and fainted. Presently he recovered consciousness,

"Why did you faint?" his disciples asked.

"The moment that he raised his finger in attestation," Ahmad replied, "a voice called to me in my inmost heart. 'Ahmad' the voice said, 'Bahram was a Zoroastrian for seventy

years, but at last he believed. You have spent seventy years in the Faith; now at the end what will you have to offer?,"

Ahmad-e Harb and Ahmad the Merchant

There lived in Nishapur two men, one named Ahmad -e Harb and the other called Ahmad the Merchant.

Ahmad-e Harb was a man so wrapped up in the recollection of God, that when the barber wished to trim his moustache he kept moving his lips.

"Keep still just while I trim these hairs," said the barber.

"You busy yourself with your own affairs," answered Ahmad -e Harb.

And each time the barber trimmed, some part of his lips was nicked.

On one occasion he received a letter and for a long while intended to answer it but did not find a spare moment. Then one day the muezzin was chanting the call to prayer.

Just while he was saying "It is time" Ahmad called to a companion.

"Answer my friend's letter. Tell him not to write to me any more, because I have not the leisure to reply. Write, 'Be busy with God. Farewell!'"

As for Ahmad the Merchant, he was so wrapped up in love of worldly things that one day he asked his maidservant for food. The maidservant prepared a dish and brought it to him, but he went on with his calculations until night fell, and he dropped off to sleep.

When he woke next morning he called to the maid.

"You did not make that food."

"I did make it. But you were so taken up with your calculations."

She cooked a dish a second time and laid it before her master, but again he did not find the leisure to eat it. A third time the girl prepared food for him, and still he found no opportunity. The maid came and found him asleep, so she rubbed some of the food on his lips, Ahmad the Merchant awoke.

"Bring the basin," he called, thinking that he had eaten.

Ahmad-e Harb and his son

Ahmad-e Harb had a little son whom he was training to trust in God.

"Whenever you want food or anything," he told him, "go to this window and say, 'Lord God I need bread.'"

Each time the child went to that place, the parents had so arranged to place in the window what the child desired.

One day they were out of the house when the child was overcome by the pangs of hunger. As usual he came under the window and prayed. "Lord God, I need bread."

Immediately food was sent down to him by the window. The household returned to find him sitting down and eating. "Where did you get this from?" they asked. "From the one who gives me every day," he replied. So they realized that he was well established in this way.

Excerpts from "Awariful Maarif"
by Hazreth Shahbuddin Sharawardi (RAA)
KHILVAT (RETIREMENT)

Keeping khilvat (retirement) in the way of the sufis is an innovation. In Muhammad's time, the sunnat was naught save suhbat (society); and its excellence excelleth other excellences.

Thus, by suhbat they have described the Sohabah and by no other description; and outside the society of Muhammad, their description is naught, because their souls were, by the grandeur of prophecy, described with rest, and by the light of integrity encompassed with purity; hearts were void of love for the world and solaced by the vision of the beauty of certainty, and filled with love for God, with affection, with purity and with fidelity.

When the sun of prophecy became hidden, the souls of the Companions came gradually into motion; opposition became manifest, and in time reached a place where suhbat (society) became overwhelmed, and kh'ilvat (retirement), pleasant and beloved. For the safety of faith, the seekers of God sought the sauma'ah (convent) and khihat, as Junaid hath said.

Though in the time of the sending of the sunnat was no khilvat, yet before that time, Muhammad, through exceeding love for God, and sincerity of desire -held esteemed khilvat; used to go to the caves of Hira'; and there used to pass nights in dhikr and in devotion.

In the choice of khilvat, the tradition is firmly held by the sufis, but the appointing of forty days is from a tradition from Muhammad and from God's word.

With Musa, God promised to speak. and appointed a place of meeting and a stated time. God said: "Keep fast thirty days and nights." Ten days more. He afterwards added. During that time Musa, consumed neither food nor drink; he was engaged in worshipping God; and for talking with Him became prepared. Since, for propinquity to God and for talk* with Him, Musa. had need of khilvat, -so have others.

Even so in the case of Muhammad:

his being cut off from suhbat;

his retiring (to talk) with God;

his separating himself from the people;

his reducing his daily food:

his constant dhikr in desire's path in the beginning of divine impressions; are further proofs.

Thus for the seekers of God, acceptable is the obligation (of khilval) and, indeed, wajib (necessary), The source whence the shari'at fixed the appointed time (forty days) is obscure, and knowledge of it difficult save by the Prophets, by the special ones, and by the holy ones.

In the 'Awarif-u'l-Ma'arif the Shaikh-u'l-Islam saith:

"When God wished to appoint Adam to His own khildwat, and to make him architect of this world after he had, by his existence, made Paradise prosperous. He gave to him a composition of elements of earth, fit for this world, and for forty mornings made them ferment.

"Every morning signifieth the existence of a quality that becometh the cause of his attachment to this world, and every attachment became his veil against beholding the glory of qidam (eternity).

"Every veil is: the cause of farness from the hidden world; every farness, the cause of nearness to the material world till that time when the veil becometh heaped up, and this world's fitness, complete in Adam."

In the establishing of forty mornings with sincerity (which is the condition of khilvat) its hikmat (philosophy) is:

For every morning (of khilvat), a veil should lift and a nearness (to God) appear, so that in forty mornings, the forty-fold veil should lift, and refined human nature, from farness to the native land of nearness to God (the summation of beauty and of glory; the essence of Um, and of ma'rifat) return; and for it, the vision of the grandeur of eternity without beginning should be verified and painted; the sight of its resolution, from inclination to the world's impurity, be preserved; and the fountain of hikmat go running from its heart and on its tongue.

The mark of khilvat is: the preservation of the condition of that revelation of hikmat.

The revelation of hikmat is in the proof of the lifting of the veil and the doubtless manifestations,

Khilvat is like unto a smith's forge whereon, by the fire of austerity, lust becometh fused, pure of nature's pollution, delicate and gleaming like unto a mirror; and without (beyond, through) it, appear-eth the form of the hidden; and is a collection of contrarieties of nafs (lust) and accustomed austerities'

Little eating.

Little talking.

Shunning the society of man,

Perseverance in dhikr.

Denying thoughts.

Constant muraqibah (fearful contemplation). The meaning of riyadat (austerity) is the abandoning of desire and of the requisites of effort.

THE CONDITIONS OF KHILVAT

In the opinion of the sufis, khilvat is not restricted to forty days. The being severed from the people and the being engaged with God is a desired matter, the duration whereof is for life.

The advantage of appointing forty days is that, on the completing of this period, the manifestation begins to appear.

If to a person who to life's end keepeth his time engaged in devotion to God, and in freedom from the people, that manifestation appeareth, -beyond it is no greater favour.

If this bounty of God be not his, it is necessary for him at certain periods to practise khilvat.

At least once a year, he should sit "in khilvat, so that when, for forty days and nights, he shall have accustomed his nafs-to the preservation of times; to the observance of readings (of the Qur'an) and of rules, he may be expectant that the order will not be extended to his former mixing with people; that, in God's protection, his khilvat may be; and that his khilvat may be the aider of the structure of the times of glory.

Only in the preservation of its conditions appeareth the advantage of khilvat,

Who resolveth upon khilvat must purify his intention from 'the pollution of desire for the objects of this world; and of prayers for (his welfare in) the next world.

According to intention is the reward of deeds. As intention is better than the deeds, more full is its reward.

No object is better than propinquity of God-whatever is exterior to Him is called the indigo of huduth (calamity), and is directed by the disgrace of fand' (effacement).

In the heart's purification, inclination to the polluted is the essence of pollution; propinquity thereto, especially impure.

Who hath desire for that exterior to God, great and glorious of both worlds, is polluted; from that pollution, purification is necessary for approach to the holy God, and for fitness of prayer to Him.

His intention should be restricted to propinquity to God by practising worship; and far from desire:

for rank, for hypocrisy, for the revelation of miracles, and for the explanation of the verses of power (the Qur'an).

If to that crowd-whose desire from khilvat and austerity is the revelation of miracles and not propinquity to God, -something of that desired be revealed, it is the essence of deceit, and the cause of far-ness, of folly and of pride.

In the purifying of the interior, in the cleansing of the heart, in affecting nafs,, -freedom from occupations, reduction of food, and continuity of dhikr have perfect effect.

When by khilvat, his interior becometh luminous and the outward form of some unattainable knowledge appeareth, and true thoughts appear to him and over his nafs gain sway,-the seeker of miracles thinketh that that is the lofty and far object of khilvat; and by the exalting of wicked shaitan be-cometh proud; and contemptuously glanceth at others-(let us flee to God for refuge).

Possibly out from his heart, he bindeth up the chattels of the Shari*at and of prophecy; considereth not the abandoning of laws, of orders, and of the lawful and unlawful -so by the path of retrogression, he becometh cast out from the highway of the Skar' and from the path of Islam.

If, to one who is in intention pure, the manifestation of miracles falleth, it becometh the cause of the power of certainty and of the confirmation of resolve.

The condition of sincerity being observed, it is necessary that, out from the bond of debt, by cancelling tyranny; by making right (apologising for) calumny; by removing enmity, hate, malice,-he should come; and pure to all make his heart.

If, in his property, there be something whereto his heart clingeth, -it, from his property, be should expel

If he be possessed of property in respect to family he perfonneth (so that outwardly acid inwardly he may be free and pure) complete washing; exerciseth care as to the cleansing of raiment and of the prayer-mat ; and chooseth for his khilvat a place where, from occupations, he may be free.

When he reacheth the door of khilvat, he saith:

"O God! by the right ingress, let rfre enter; by the right egress, let me pass out. By Thy grace, me make a conquering . king,"

When to the prayer-mat he wisheth to go, he first advanceth the right leg and sai th:

"In the name of God; by the grace of God; praise be to God, and peace and blessing be on the Prophet of God ! "O God ! my sins pardon ; open me the door of mercy."

Then, with the desire of the presence of God, he performeth two rak'ats of prayer with khushu and with khudu' (humility of the heart and of the limbs).

In the first rak'at, after the Fatihab, he saith :

"O God of ours! on Thee is our reliance ; in Thee, be our refuge; in Thee, our shelter."

Then, with sincerity and humility, he asketh pardon for all his sins* To God, he displayeth in his heart penitence for turning to that exterior to Him.

Before the Qiblah he sitte'th, and, .as long as he can, is in tashahhud.

With himself he reflecteth that God is present, also the Prophet of God, so that he may be bound with the bond of reverence, and is ever wishing within that he may, outwardly and inwardly, offer himself in devotion and in praise, and in the raiment of concordance with divine decrees,

Thus, may he become the meeting place of divine brea things, ready for the dcscending;of bound

less bounty.

In khilvat, after the purifying of resolution, penitence and continuity of employment wUh God, he must observe seven conditions:

(i) Constant ablution. When he seeth in himself he should renew ablution, so that in his interior the light of outward purity may be brightened and be the aider of the heart's luminosities.

(ii) Constant fasting Ever should he be in fast, so that the blessing of the Sunnah may comprehend his times.

(iii) Little eating. At breakfast the quantity of food should be not more than a ritl. If he restrict as to bread and salt, 'tis well.

If to relish (that is in the place of food) he stretcheth his hand, to its extent, he should reduce the bread. If he begin with a ritl, he should in the last tenth (of the period of forty days) reduce to half a ritl. If he be strong and begin with half a ritl he should reduce to quarter of a ritl.

The companions of khilvat are of three kinds: the strong ones, the middle ones, the weak ones.

The weak break their fast every night: the middle every two nights; and the strong every three nights.

He may devour all on the firsts, or on the last night; or some on the first night and some on the last night.

The last division is the best, so that he may have power (a) for devotion, (b) for standing up for the midnight prayers.

In reducing the clayey parts - the source of pollution, of darkness, of coarseness - scantiness of food is wholly effective.

(iv) Little sleep. So long as he is able he should not sleep. If sleep be overpowering, he should repel it by renewing ablution, or by reading the Qur'an. If it cannot be repelled and involuntarily sleep seizeth him, he should (when he returneth from sleep) renew ablution and be engaged in prayer.

Every sleep that is of necessity is the essence of devotion when thereby is attainable the repelling of lassitude of the senses and of nafs (which are the cause of weariness of the soul of devotion and of the delight of worship).

By sleep, the purity of the senses and the expansion of the interior (which are the cause of wajd of the soul) return to him. Then are his times immersed in devotion.

In putting lust to death and in keeping the heart alive, -ever keeping awake is profitable by loosening the humours of the body, by weakening the points of forgetfulness, of sins, of ignorance and of carelessness.

(v) Little talking. He should ever guard his tongue from talking with people.

The sage practiseth silence though no calamity he expecteth.

Whether the speech be beautiful or ugly, it is not void of calamity. For so long as to perfect purification it shall not have reached, nafs hath in the revealing of beautiful speech a delight, wherefrom is expected the revealing of the qualities of pride and the thickening of the veil. Doubtless, ugly speech is followed by punishment.

Save by silence, not attainable is the path of safety.

In the tale of Maryam and of 'Isa, God maketh Maryam's silence the forerunner of 'Isa's speech. Even so the 'Isa of the heart cometh into speech when the Maryam of mufs is silent of talk.

(vi) The negation of thoughts. By dhikr and by the occupation of the heart in contemplation of the divine aspect, he should repel the crowd of thoughts. Excellent though the penetration of some thoughts is, discrimination of thoughts occurreth not to beginners. Then, the being engaged in thought is for him the way of the hadith -u'n-nafs, and to him is formidable.

The meaning of hadith-u'n.' is this. The nafs of man, by its connection with the ruh (soul) of speech, is innate in the qualities of speech; and is ever expectant of the opportunity of converse with the heart which is its beloved.

Whenever nafs seeth the heart inclined to itself, and findeth its ears void of other sayings, immediately with the heart, it cometh into speech; and to it, by way of remembrance, confirmeth past matters of things spoken, heard, seen, tasted, touched; or giveth future news of hope; and keepeth engaged the ear of the heart with hearing its own speech rather than with hearing the speech of the soul and of God, -so that the heart may ever be before it, and averse to aught save nafs.

When the possessor of khilvat persevereth in the heart as to negation of thoughts, and as to the confirmation of tauhid, the source of hadith -u'n-nafs becometh effaced; nafs, silent; the ear of the heart, void of its saying, ready for the hearing of divine words.

(vii) The perpetuality of deeds. Outwardly and inwardly, he should keep himself arrayed in the garb of devotion. Every moment in a work which at that time is most important and best, he should be engaged. Thus who is "a first one" should limit himself to divine precepts, and to the sun-nah of prayer, and at other times to dhikr.

Out of all the adhkdr (dhikrs) the shaikhs have chosen: La ilaha illallah (no god but God), because its form is formed of negation and of affirmation, so that at the time of the flowing of this speech on his tongue, the dhakir is present (alive to God) and preseryeth conformity between the heart and the tongue.

As to negation, he regardeth the existence of hadith wholly with the glance of fana"; as to affirmation, the existence of qadim with the eye. of baqa.

By repeating this creed (La ilaha, etc., etc.) the form of Tauhid reposes in his heart; its root is established in his heart, its branches are extended to the soul.

At this time, dhikr becometh the necessary quality of the heart; its aid is continuous. To it, at times of lassitude, the dhikr of the tongue of languor findeth no path; after that, it reacheth a place where dhikr becometh enjewelled in the heart.

The dhdkir in dhikrj the dhikr in the heart; the heart in madhkur (the origin of dhikr, God) become effaced.

At this stage if the form of the phrase of Tauhid (which is the meaning of dhikr) become effaced from the outward face of the heart, to the inward face of the heart its truth is joined. The meaning of this is hal.

Dhikr, dhakir and madhkur are one.

But for the "middle one" assiduity in the reciting of the Qur'an after the performance of divine precepts is best.

Verily that speciality (that to "the first one" from assiduity in dhikr appeareth) becometh acquired from reading the Qur'an with other specialities as the glory of the qualities (of God), the various spiritual truths, the subtleties of understanding and the truths of knowledge, -by readings of various Qur'anic verses.

To "the last one" to whom the light of dhikr may have become his innate quality, - excellent is the reading (of the Qur'an), and perfect, the act of prayer (salat).

Because this form of prayer is a devotion completely comprehending, wherein are comprehended:

dhikr.

tilawat reading,

khushu' humility (of the limbs).

khudtu humility (of the heart).

As long as nafs is in obedience, -in it is concordance with the heart.

The aid of the soul of propinquity, the proclaiming, the delight of society, and the need of forms of prayer become joined to the prayer -mat. In it, perseverance is best.

If, on account of it, an abhorrence should appear in nafs, the descending from praying to reading is best, for reading in comparison with praying is easy. If reading end in weariness, the descending from it to dhikr is best.

For perseverance in respect to dhikr merely, and the repeating of light phrase is easier to nafs than the preservation of words weighty and of varied signification.

If languor fall upon the dhikr of the tongue, - best is assiduity in dhikr of the heart - which they call muraqabah (fearful contemplation), that is, considering the manifestations of God- in respect to his own state.

If as to muraqabah languor chance, he may rest awhile his limbs and senses, and in sleep give ease.

Thus from nafs, fatigue may depart; and, again with pleasure, he may advance to deeds. Verily it is unfit that, with detestation and compulsion, he should engage nafs in a work (whereby it may be vexed and the power whereof it hardly hath).

The possessor of khilvat should devote all his time to these readings, so that the path of hidden events may be disclosed.

THE DREAMS OF THE MEN OF KHILVAT

In the midst of dhikr it sometimes happens to men of khilvat that, from things felt (this world) they become concealed (in unconsciousness), and that to them become revealed, as to the sleeper truths of hidden matters. It the souls call waqi'ah (dream). Sometimes this (revelation of truths) appeareth in the state of being present (in consciousness) without being absent (in unconsciousness).

Often the waqi'ah is like to nawm; of waqi'ah and manamat some are true and some false,

In most waqa'i' and manamat nafs is partner with the ruh (soul), and in some absolute (alone). Truth is the quality of ruh, and falsehood of nafs.

Mukashafah is never false; it signifieth oneness of soul by contemplating mysteries in the state of freedom from the gloomy thoughts of the body.

Waqi'ah and manam are divided into three parts.

(1) Free revelation (kashf). Thus, with the eye of the free soul, by the imagination, a person, in sleep (khwab) or in waqi'ah (dream), contemplateth the state of things which is yet in the hidden.

After that, even as he may have seen, it happeneth in the material world. But to the beholder it hath, on account of its concealment from outward sense, the order of the hidden,

If in khwdb (sleep), a person seeth that a certain spot containeth hidden treasure, and on searching findeth it, -it is kashf-i-mujarrad (pure revelation).

If this meaning fall to the understanding: (a) by way of manifestation, it is "the vision of the soul"; (b) by invisible messengers, it is "the ear of the soul".

Once in Baghdad was a dervish, who took the path of reliance on God, and closed the path of question. One day great need befell him, and he wished to beg. Becoming penitent, he said: "Much time in reliance on God I have passed; that reliance shall I now reject?" That night, in khwdb, he beheld a vision. An invisible messenger said: "In a certain place is deposited a blue rent khirqah wherein are folded gold filings. Take it, and expend upon thy need." When out from sleep he came, he found it to be even so. This khwdb, they call true ruyd' (a dream) which is a part of prophecy. For, in the beginning of prophecy, every khwdb (dream) that Muhammad beheld came true. In this kind (of dream) is no falsehood, for, to the wise, after proof given by the traditions of the Prophets, the sense in this revelation is a proof.

After separation from the body, the soul knoweth even of the small things heard and seen of this world.

The soul's knowledge is not restricted to small matters in respect to the outward and the inward senses. Nay, from the use of the outward senses, gain occurreth. By it, in the free state from the body, it discovereth the form of things felt. From using the vision, in it becometh painted the eye; from using the hearing, the ear.

(2) Imaginary revelations from kinds of naum and waqi'ah. In khwab or in waqi'ah the soul beholdeth some of the things hidden; and in it, through connection with the soul, nafs displayeth partnership.

On the soul, by the power of imagination, nafs putteth the garment of a form fit for things felt, and thus beholdeth it.

In waqi'ah the murid warrior seeth that he is in contest with the lion, and wild beasts; with serpents and scorpions; and with kuffar.

The true shaikh knoweth that nafs is with him in strife, and its meaning he seeth to be:

(a) in the form of wild beasts, violence; (b) in the form of serpents and scorpions, enmity; (c) in the form of kuffar, disobedience and separation (from God's mercy).

If he see that he travelleth deserts and wastes, passeth over rivers and seas, ascendeth in the air, or passeth over the fire-the shaikh knoweth that he travelleth the stages of

lust, and beholdeth him in the form of the elements (the four natures). If he see that from the qualities of a

clayey,
watery,
airy,
fiery,

nature, something passeth, the imaginary power giveth it glory to the dreamer's eye in the fancy-garment of travelling over wastes, over seas, in the air, over fire.

The natures are:

Clayey

Parsimony
Slothfulness
ignorance
iniquity
darkness
foulness

Watery

haste to society
union with wicked lusts
acceptance of change and of effect of society forgetfulness
inclination to sleep

Airy

inclination to lust
great grief
haste to change from state to state

Fiery

anger
pride
desire for rank
exaltation

The last stage of the stages of nafs, over which he passeth, is this.

If it be revealed to him, he seeth:

- (a) the soul's truth in the form of the Sun
- (b) the heart's truth in the form of the moon:
- (c) the heart's qualities in the form of the constellation.

Every truth that is revealed to him, he seeth in a suitable fancy-garment. Hence, this is called kashf-i-mukhayyal (fancied revelation).

In this is possibility of falsehood but not of pure falsehood, for it is not void of the soul's understanding.

If, in the state of the soul's understanding, sensual thoughts join not with the soulish understanding, and the imaginary power clothe not the soul with the fancy-garment, that waqi'ah, or khwab, is all true.

If some of the sensual thoughts join with the soulish understanding, and the imaginary power clothe all with the fancy-garment, - some are true, some false.

The dream interpreter freeth the soulish truths of understanding from the impurity of sensual thoughts, and interpreteth.

(3) Pure fancy, when sensual thoughts have superiority over the heart, wher eby the ruh (soul) is veiled from considering the hidden world. In the state of naum and waqi'ah those thoughts become more powerful. Each one the imaginary power clotheth with the fancy-gajment ; the form of those thoughts is seen by the eyes of the imagi nary power ; and its deceit be-cometh clear.

Thus, that one who ever hath the thought of finding treasure, and who in khwab seeth that he hath found it; or the austere one, who claimeth the people's acceptance of him, and seeth in wdqi'ah that he is their adored, - the shaikh knoweth that this manifestation is only the result of lust's desire, which on its beholder hath become depicted.

If he calleth it vain desire ; or

(a) in khwab, azghatk-i-ahlam, confused uninter-
pretable dream.

(b) in waqi'ak, false dream.

In these, the truth never appeareth, because nafs possessed of doubt is void of partnership with ruh (soul), the composer of those thoughts. From nafs, truth is far.

The conditions of true waqi'ah (dream) are: (0 the being immersed in dhikr, and bein g hidden from things felt.

(ii) the existence of sincerity and freedom of desire from the observance of others.

Possibly, free fancy, in respect to the sincere man, becometh "fancied revelation"! and, by reason of being immersed in dhikr and in God's prese nce, the ruh (soul) of revelation becometh transmitted 'into the form of the fancy of nafs.

Then becometh true waqi'ah, and capable of interpretation.

In all states, waqi'ah with naum is similitude, - except when free fancy (khayal i-mujarrad) in khwab is not proved. In waqi'ah, free fancy may be proved.

It is evident that in waqi'ah and manam, truth occurreth and also falsehood. In other manifestations, truth is impossible, because there is naught save "free revelation (kashf - i-mujarrad)".

Free revelation is:

(a) in mukashafah in the state of wakefulness.

(b) in khwab or in wdqi'ah, in the state of being
hidden from things felt.

In mukashafah, the soul's understanding is attached to what is:

(a) either in the hidden world;

(b) or in the material world.

In the first case, its appearance in the material world

(a) is impossible such as:

Paradise,
Hell,
God's throne and seat,
the preserved tablet,
the pen of creation.

(b) is possible in the natural form as-possible
events, necessary of acquirement, the form
whereof shall not, in the hidden world,
have yet been manifested.

(c) is possible in an accidental form as:
angels,

souls free from the body.

To Muhammad, Jibra'il used to appear in the human form, sometimes as a divine inspiration and sometimes as a desert-dweller, as in the hadith of 'Umar; Once a desert-dweller with white raiment and very black hair saluted Muhammad, and sat close to him, knee to knee. Of Islam, of faith and of bounty he asked Muhammad and heard his reply. When he disappeared, Muhammad said to the Companions: "Know ye who this asker is?" They said: "God knoweth and His Prophet." He said: "It was Jibra'il who came from God to teach you the dogmas of faith." In this form, 'Dinar and the other Companions beheld him.

Then it became known that the form was not the result of imaginary power, otherwise everyone, according to contrariety of state, would have seen it in a different form as the semblance of free soul (fa) in separation from the body (b) in attachment to the body. The semblance of angels and of free souls in the human form is an accidental form. The manifestation of their natural (spiritual) state is, save in the hidden world, impossible. In every way that they desire, they make semblance of the human form, as is stated in the hadith and in the verified speech of holy shaikhs,

In the second case, we have the following instances:

(a) Muhammad's beholding the masjid of Jerusalem, when he returned from the Mi'raj (ascent to the highest heaven).

The infidels denied this tale and said: "If truly thou speakest, say how many columns there are in that remote masjid (of Jerusalem)?"

In hal, it became revealed; from his gaze the world uprose; he counted its columns; and gave the information.

(b) They asked Muhammad to give some news of a qafilah near unto Sham.

The veil being lifted, Muhammad saw that the qafilah has reached to a distance of one stage from Mecca. He said: "Early in the morning, the qafilah will arrive." Even so it did.

(c) Once at Medina, 'Umar Khattab was on the mimbar reading the khutbah after he had sent Sariyah with an army to Nihazar. Suddenly, in the midst of the khutbah, he went into mukdshafah and saw that, against him, the enemy had made an ambush. He cried out: "O Sariyah! (go) to the mountain." Sariyah heard; went to the mountain; and gained the victory.

The Shaikh-u'l-Islam-Shaik'h Shahab-u'd-Din 'Umar b, Muhammad Sahrawardi-telleth many a tale like unto these.

The true murid is he whose khilvat is not weakened by the desire for semblances of these revelations and miracles, and whose spirit is not restricted to their acquisition.

For to the rahibin (Christian monks) who are not on the highway of the Shari'at and of the Sunnah of Islam, this kind of revelation is not withheld.

This kashf (revelation) is naught save deceit, for, in its wajd, the rahibin are daily prouder and farther from the path of salvation.

If in the path of the true and the sincere, this kashf fall, it is a miracle, for it is the cause of strengthening of certainty, and of increase of devotion.

**Excerpts Continued from Book-1
of Masnavi-e-Rumi by Moulana Rumi (RAA)**

How the Jewish king made afire and placed an idol beside it , saying, " Whoever bows doron to this idol shall escape the fire"

Now see what a plan this currish Jew contrived I He set u p an idol beside the fire,
Saying, "He that bows down to this idol is saved, and if he bow not, he shall sit in the heart of the fire,"

Inasmuch as he did not give due punishment to this idol of self, from the idol of his self the other idol was born.

The idol of your self is the mother of (all) idols, because that (material) idol is (only) a snake, while this (spiritual) idol is a dragon.

The self is (as) iron and stone (whence fire is produced), while the (material) idol is (as) the sparks: those sparks are quieted (quenched) by water.

(But) how should the stone and iron be allayed by water? How should a man, having these twain, be secure

The idol is the black water in a jug; the self is a fountain for the black water,

That sculptured idol is like the black torrent; the idol-making self is a fountain full of water for it.

A single piece of stone will break a hundred pitchers, but the fountain is jetting forth water incessantly.

Tis easy to break an idol, very easy; to regard the self as easy (to subdue) is folly, folly. O son, if you seek (to know) the form of the self, read the story of Hell with its seven gates.

Every moment (there proceeds from the self) an act of deceit, and in every one of those deceits a hundred Pharaohs are drowned together with their followers.

Flee to the God of Moses and to Moses, do not from Pharaoh's quality (rebellious insolence) spill the water of the Faith.

Lay your hand on (cleave to) the One (God) and Ahmad (Mohammed) ! O brother, escape from the Bu Jahl of the body !

How a child began to speak amidst the fire and urged the people to throw themselves into the fire. That Jew brought to that idol a woman with her child, and the fire was blazing.

He took the child from her and cast it into the fire: the woman was affrighted and withdrew her heart from (abandoned)her faith.

She was about to bow down before the idol (when) the child cried, "Verily, I am not dead. Come in, O mother: I am happy here, although in appearance I am amidst the fire.

The fire is a spell that binds the eye f or the sake of screening (the truth); this is (in reality) a Divine mercy which has raised its head from the collar (has been manifested from the Unseen).

Come in, mother, and see the evidence of God, that thou mayst behold the delight of God's elect.

Come in, and see water that has the semblance of fire; (come away) from a world which is (really) fire and (only) has the semblance of water.

Come in, and see the mysteries of Abraham, who in the fire found cypress and jessamine.

I was seeing death at the time of birth from thee: sore was my dread of falling from thee; (But) when I was born, I escaped from the narrow prison (of the womb) into a world of pleasant air and beautiful colour.

Now I deem the (earthly) world to be like the womb, since in this fire I h ave seen such rest;

In this fire I have seen a world wherein every atom possesses the (life -giving) breath of Jesus.

Lo, (it is) a world apparently non-existent (but) essentially existent, while that (other) world is apparently existent (but) has no permanence.

Come in, mother, (I beseech thee) by the right of motherhood: see this fire, how it hath no fieriness.

Come in, mother, for felicity is come; come in, mother, do not let fortune slip from thy hand.

Thou hast seen the power of that (Jewish) cur: come in, that thou mayst see the power of God's grace.

'Tis (only) out of pity that I am drawing thy feet (hither), for indeed such is my rapture that I have no care for thee.

Come in and call the others also, for the King has spread a (festal) table within the fire. O true believers, come in, all of you: except this sweetness ('adhbi) all is torment ('adhab).

Oh, come in, all of you, like moths; (come) into this fortune which hath a hundred springtimes."

(Thus) he was crying amidst that multitude: the souls of the people were filled with awe. After that, the folk, men and women (alike), cast themselves unwittingly into the fire.

Without custodian, without being dragged, for love of the Friend, because from Him is the sweetening of every bitterness

Until it came to pass that the (king's) myrmidons were holding back the people, saying, "Do not enter the fire!"

The Jew became black-faced (covered with shame) and dismayed; he became sorry and sick at heart,

Because the people grew more loving (ardent) in their Faith and more firm in mortification (fana) of the body.

Thanks (be to God), the Devil's plot caught him in its toils; thanks (be to God), the Devil saw himself disgraced.

That which he was rubbing (the shame he was inflicting) on the faces of those persons (the Christians) was all accumulated on the visage of that vile wretch.

He who was busy rending the garment (honour and integrity) of the people -his own (garment) was rent, (while) they were unhurt.

How the mouth remained awry of a man who pronounced the name of Mohammed, on whom be peace, derisively.

He made his mouth wry and called the name of Ahmad (Mohammed) in derision: his mouth remained awry.

He came back, saying, "Pardon me, O Mohammed, O thou to whom belong the (Divine) gifts of esoteric knowledge.

In my folly I was ridiculing thee, (but) I myself was related to ridicule and deserving it." When God wishes to rend the veil of any one (expose him to shame), He turns his inclination towards reviling holy men.

When God wishes to hide the blame of any one, he (that person) does not breathe a word of blame against the blame worthy.

When God wishes to help us, He turns our inclination towards humble lament.

Oh, happy the eye that is weeping for His sake! Oh, fortunate the heart that is seared for His sake!

The end of every weeping is laughter at last; the man who foresees the end is a blessed servant (of God)

Wherever is flowing water, there is greenery: wherever are running tears, (the Divine) mercy is shown.

Be moaning and moist-eyed like the water-wheel, that green herbs may spring up from the courtyard of your soul.

If you desire tears, have mercy on one who sheds tears, if you desire mercy, show mercy to the weak.

How the fire reproached the Jewish king.

The king turned his face to the fire, saying, "O fierce-tempered one, where is thy world-consuming natural disposition?

How art thou not burning? What has become of thy specific property? Or has thy intention changed because of our fortune?

Thou hast no pity (even) on the fire-worshipper: how (then) has he been saved who does not worship thee?

Never, O fire, art thou patient: how burnest thou not? What is it? Hast thou not the power?

Is this a spell, I wonder, that binds the eye or the mind? How does the lofty pyre not burn?

Has some one bewitched thee? Or is it magic, or is thy unnatural behaviour from our fortune?"

The fire said: "I am the same, I am fire: come in, that thou' mayst feel my heat.

My nature and element have not changed: I am the sword of God and by (His) leave I cut.

The Turcoman dogs fawn at the tent-door before the guest,

But if any one having the face of a stranger pass by the tent, he will see the dogs rushing at him like lions.

I am not less than a dog in devotion, nor is God less than a Turcoman in life (living power)."

If the fire of your nature make you suffer pain, it burns by command of the Lord of religion;

If the fire of your nature give you joy, (that is because) the Lord of religion puts joy therein.

When you feel pain, ask pardon of God: pain, by command of the Creator, is efficacious.

When He pleases, pain itself becomes joy; bondage itself becomes freedom.

Air and earth and water and fire are (His) slaves: with you and me they are dead, but with God they are alive.

Before God, fire is always standing (ready to do His best), writhing continually day and night, like a lover.

If you strike stone on iron, it (the fire) leaps out: 'tis by God's command that it puts forth its foot.

Do not strike together the iron and stone of injustice, for these two generate like man and woman.

The stone and the iron are indeed causes, but look higher, O good man!

For this (external) cause was produced by that (spiritual) cause: when did a cause ever proceed from itself without a cause?

And those causes which guide the prophets on their way are higher than these (external) causes.

That (spiritual) cause makes this (external) cause operative; sometimes, again, it makes it fruitless and ineffectual.

(Ordinary) minds are familiar with this (external) cause, but the prophets are familiar with those (spiritual) causes.

What is (the meaning of) this (word) "cause" (sabab) in Arabic? Say: "cord" (rasan). This cord came into this well (the world) by (Divine) artifice.

The revolution of the water-wheel causes the cord (to move) (but) not to see the move r of the water-wheel is an error.

Beware, beware! Do not regard these cords of causation in the world as (deriving their movement) from the giddy wheel (of heaven),
Lest you remain empty and giddy like the (celestial) wheel, lest through brainlessness you burn like markh wood.

By the command of God air becomes fire: both are drunken with the wine of God.

O son, when you open your eyes you will see that from God too are the water of clemency and the fire of anger,

Had not the soul of the wind been informed by God, how would it have distinguished (the believers and unbelievers) amongst the people of 'Ad ?

The story of the wind which destroyed the people of 'Ad in the time of (the prophet) Hud, on whom be peace.

Hud drew a line round the believers: the wind would become soft (subside) when it reached that place,

(Although) it was dashing to pieces in the air all who were outside of the line.

Likewise Shayban the shepherd used to draw a visible line round his flock

Whenever he went to the Friday service at prayer -time, in order that the wolf might not raid and ravage there:

No wolf would go into that (circle), nor would any sheep stray beyond that mark;

The wind of the wolf's and sheeps' concupiscence was barred because of (by) the circle of the man of God.

Even so, to those who know God ('drifan) the wind of Death is soft and pleasant as the breeze (that wafts the scent) of (loved) ones like Joseph.

The fire did not set its teeth in Abraham: how should it bite him, since he is the chosen of God?

The religious were not afflicted by the fire of lust which bore all the rest down to the bottom of the earth.

The waves of the sea, when they charged on by God's command, discriminated the people of Moses from the Egyptians.

The earth, when the (Divine) command came, drew Qarun (Korah) with his gold and throne into its lowest depth.

The water and clay, when it fed on the breath of Jesus, spread wings and pinions, became a bird, and flew.

Your glorification (of God) is an exhalation from the water and clay (of your body): it became a bird of Paradise through the breathing (into it) of your heart's sincerity.

Mount Sinai, from (seeing) the radiance of Moses, began to dance, became a perfect Sufi, and was freed from blemish.

What wonder if the mountain became a venerable Sufi? The body of Moses also was (formed) from a piece of clay.

How the Jewish king scoffed and denied and would not accept the counsel of his intimates.

The king of the Jews beheld these marvellous things, (but) -he had naught (to say) except mockery and denial.

His counsellors said, "Do not let (this injustice) go beyond bounds, do not drive the steed of obstinacy so far."

He handcuffed the counsellors and confined them, he committed one injustice after another.

When the matter reached this pass, a shout came -"Hold thy foot (stop), O cur! for Our vengeance is come."

After that, the fire blazed up forty ells high, became a ring, and consumed those Jews.

From fire was their origin in the beginning: they went (back) to their origin in the end.
That company were born of fire: the way of particulars is towards the universal.
They were only a fire to consume the true believers: their fire consumed itself like rubbish.

He whose mother is hawiya (Hell-fire) Hawiya shall become his cell (abode).
The mother of the child is (always) seeking it: the fundamentals pursue the derivatives.
If water is imprisoned in a tank, the wind sucks it up, for it (the wind) belongs to die original (source);

It sets it free, it wafts it away to its source, little by little, so that you do not see its wafting;

And our souls likewise this breath (of ours) steals away, little by little, from the prison of the world.

The perfumes of our (good) words ascend even unto Him, ascending from us whither God knoweth.

Our breaths soar up with the choice (words), as a gift from us, to the abode of everlastingness;

Then comes to us the recompense of our speech, a double (recompense) thereof, as a mercy from (God) the Glorious;

Then He causes us to repair to (makes us utter) good words like those (already uttered), that His servant may obtain (something more) of what he has obtained.

Thus do they (our good words) ascend while it (the Divine mercy) descends continually: maysthou never cease to keep up that (ascent and descent)

Let us speak Persian: the meaning is that this attraction (by which God draws the soul towards Himself) comes from the same quarter whence came that savour (spiritual delight experienced in and after prayer).

The eyes of every set of people remain (turned) in the direction where one day they satisfied a (longing for) delight.

The delight of (every) kind is certainly in its own kind (congener) : the delight of the part, observe, is in its whole;

Or else, that (part) is surely capable of (attachment to) a (different) kind and, when it has attached itself thereto, becomes homogeneous with it,

As (for instance) water and bread, which were not our congeners, became homogeneous with us and increased within us (added to our bulk and strength).

Water and bread have not the appearance of being our congeners, (but) from consideration of the end (final result) deem them to be homogeneous (with us).

And if our delight is (derived) from something not homogeneous, that (thing) will surely resemble the congener.

That which (only) bears a resemblance is a loan: a loan is impermanent in the end.

Although the bird is delighted by (the fowler's) whistle, it takes fright when it (sees him and) does not find its own congener.

Although the thirsty man is delighted by the mirage, he runs away when he comes up to it, and seeks for water.

Although the insolvent are pleased with base gold, yet that (gold) is put to shame in the mint.

(Take heed) lest gildedness (imposture) cast you out of the (right) way, lest false imagination cast you into the well

Seek the story (illustrating this) from (the book of) Kalila (and Dimna), and search out the moral (contained) in the story.

Setting forth how the beasts of chase told the lion to trust in God and cease from exerting himself.

A number of beasts of chase in a pleasant valley were harassed by a lion.

Inasmuch as the lion was (springing) from ambush and carrying them away, that pasturage had become unpleasant to them all.

They made a plot: they came to the lion, saying, "We will keep thee full -fed by means of a (fixed) allowance.

Do not go after any prey beyond thy allowance, in order that this grass may not become hither to us."

How the lion answered the beasts and explained the advantage of exertion,

"Yes," said he, "if I see (find) good faith (on your part), not fraud, for oft en have I seen (suffered) frauds from Zayd and Bakr.

I am done to death by the cunning and fraud of men, I am bitten by the sting of (human) snake and scorpion;

(But) worse than all men in fraud and spite is the man of the flesh (nafs) lying in wait within me.

My ear heard 'The believer is not bitten (twice),' and adopted (this) saying of the Prophet with heart and soul,"

How the beasts asserted the superiority of trust in God to exertion and acquisition.

They all said: "O knowing sage, let precaution alone: it is of no avail against the Divine decree.

In precaution is the embroilment of broil and woe: go, put thy trust in God: trust in God is better.

Do not grapple with Destiny, O fierce and furious one, lest yio 1 Destiny also pick a quarrel with thee.

One must be dead in presence of the decree of God, so that no blow may come from the Lord of the daybreak."

How the lion upheld the superiority of exertion and acquisition to trust in God and resignation.

"Yes," he said; "(but) if trust in God is the (true) guide, (yet use of) the means too is the Prophet's rule (Sunna).

The Prophet said with a loud voice, 'While trusting in God bind the knee of thy camel.'

Hearken to the signification of 'The earner (worker) is beloved of God': through trusting in God do not become neglectful as to the (ways and) means."

How the beasts preferred trust in God to exertion.

The party (of beasts) answered him, saying, "Regard acquisition (work), arising from the infirmity of (God's) creatures, as a mouthful of deceit proportionate to the size of the gullet.

There is no work better than trust in God: what, indeed, is dearer (to God) than resignation?

Often do they flee from affliction (only) to (fall into) affliction; often do they recoil from the snake (only) to (meet with) the dragon.

Man devised (something), and his device was a snare (whereir; he was trapped): that which he thought to be life was (actually) the drainer of his blood (his destroyer).

He locked the door while the foe was in the house; the plot of Pharaoh was a story of this sort.

That vengeful man slew hundreds of thousands of babes, while the one he was searching after was in his (Pharaoh's) house.

Since in our eyesight (foresight) there is much defect, go, let your own sight pass away (fana) in the sight of the Friend (God).

His sight for ours-what a goodly recompense In His sight you will find the whole object of your desire.

So long as the child could neither grasp (exert strength) nor run, he had nothing to ride on but his father's neck;

When he became a busybody and plied hand and foot (exerted himself), he fell into trouble and wretchedness

The spirits of created beings, before (the creation, of) hand and foot, by reason of their faithfulness were flying in (the realm of) purity;

When they were constrained by the (Divine) command, Get ye down, they became engaoled in anger and covetousness and contentment.

We are the family of the Lord and craving after milk (like infants): he (the Prophet) said, 'The people are God's family.'

He who gives rain from heaven is also able, from His mercy, to give us bread."

How the lion again pronounced exertion to be superior to trust in God.

"Yes," said the lion; "but the Lord of His servants set a ladder before our feet.

Step by step must we climb towards the roof: to be a necessitarian here is (to indulge in) foolish hopes.

You have feet: why do you make yourself out to be lame? you have hands: why do you conceal the fingers (whereby you grasp) ?

When the master put a spade in the slave's hand, his object was made known to him (the slave) without (a word falling from his) tongue.

Hand and spade alike are His (God's) implicit signs; (our powers of) thinking upon the end are His explicit declarations.

When you take His signs to heart, you will devote your life to fulfilling that indication (of His will).

He will give you many hints (for the understanding) of mysteries, He will remove the burden from you and give you (spiritual) authority.

Do you bear (His burden)? He will cause you to be borne (aloft). Do you receive (His commands)? He will cause you to be received (into His favour).

If you accept His command, you will become the spokesman (thereof); if you seek union (with Him), thereafter you will become united.

Freewill is the endeavour to thank (God) for His beneficence: your necessitarianism is the denial of that beneficence.

Thanksgiving for the power (of acting freely) increases your power; necessitarianism takes the (Divine) gift (of freewill) out of your hand.

Your necessitarianism is (like) sleeping on the road: do not sleep! Sleep not, until you see the gate and the threshold!

Beware! do not sleep, O inconsiderate necessitarian, save underneath that fruit-laden tree,

So that every moment the wind may shake the boughs and shower upon the sleeper (spiritual) dessert and provision for the journey.

Necessitarianism is to sleep amidst highwaymen; how should the untimely bird receive quarter?

And if you turn up your nose at His signs, you deem (yourself) a man, but when you consider (more deeply), you are (only) a woman.

This measure of understanding which you possess is lost: a head from which the understanding is severed becomes a tail,

Because ingratitude is "wickedness and disgrace and brings the ingrate to the bottom of Hell-fire.

If you are putting trust in God, put trust (in Him) as regards (your) work: sow (the seed), then rely upon the Almighty."

How the beasts once more asserted their superiority of trust in God to exertion.

They all lifted up their voices (to dispute) with him, saying, "Those covetous ones who sowed (the seed of) means.,

Myriads on myriads of men, and women-why, then, did they remain deprived of fortune?

From the beginning of the world myriads of generations have opened a hundred mouths, like dragons:

Those clever people devised plots (of such power) that the mountain thereby was torn up from its foundation.

The Glorious (God) described their plots (when He said): (though their guile be such) that the tops of the mountains might be moved thereby.

(But) except the portion which came to pass (was predestined) in eternity, nothing showed its face (accrued to them) from their scheming¹ and doing.

They all fell from (failed in) plan and act: the acts and decrees of the Maker remained.

O illustrious one, do not regard work as aught but a name! O cunning one, think not that exertion is aught but a vain fancy ! "

How 'Azra'il (Azrael) looked at a certain man, and how that man fled to the palace of Solomon; and setting forth the superiority of trust in God to exertion and the uselessness of the latter.

One forenoon a freeborn (noble) man arrived and ran into Solomon's hall of justice, His countenance pale with anguish and both lips blue. Then Solomon said, "Good sir, what is the matter?"

He replied, "Azrael cast on me such a look, so full of wrath and hate."

"Come," said the king, "what (boon) do you desire now? Ask (it)!" "O protector of my life," said he, "command the wind.

To bear me from here to India. Maybe, when thy slave is come thither he will save his life."

Lo, the people are fleeing from poverty: hence are they a mouthful for (a prey to) covetousness and expectation.

The fear of poverty is like that (man's) terror: know thou that covetousness and striving are (like) India (in this tale).

He (Solomon) commanded the wind to bear him quickly over the water to the uttermost part of India.

Next day, at the time of conference and meeting, Solomon said to Azrael :

"Didst thou look with anger on that Moslem in order that he might wander (as an exile) far from his home?"

Azrael said, "When did I look (on him) angrily? I saw him as I passed by, (and looked at him) in astonishment,

For God had commanded me, saying, 'Hark, to-day do thou take his spirit in India.

From wonder I said (to myself), '(Even) if he has a hundred wings, 'tis a far journey for him to be in India (to-day).'"

In like manner judge of all the affairs of this world and open your eye and see !

From whom shall we flee? From ourselves? Oh, absurdity! From whom shall we take (ourselves) away? From God? Oh, , crime !

How the lion again declared exertion to be superior to trust in God and expounded the advantages of exertion.

"Yes," said the lion* "but at the same time consider the exertions of the prophets and the true believers.

God, exalted is He, prospered their exertion and what they_ suffered of oppression and heat and cold.

Their plans were excellent in all circumstances: everything done by a goodly man is goodly.

Their snares caught the Heavenly bird, all their deficiencies turned to increment."

O master, exert thyself so long as thou canst in (following) the way of the prophets and saints!

Endeavour is not a struggle with Destiny, because Destiny itself has laid this (endeavour) upon us.

I am an infidel if any one has suffered loss a single moment (while walking) in the way of faith and obedience.

Your head is not broken: do not bandage this head. Exert yourself (in doing good works) for a day or two (i.e, during this brief life), and laugh unto everlasting!

An evil resort sought he that sought this world; a good state sought he that sought the world to come.

Plots for gaining (the things of) this world are worthless, (but) plots for renouncing this world are inspired (by God).

The (right) plot is that he (the prisoner) digs a hole in his prison (in order to escape); if he blocks up the hole, that is a foolish plot.

This world is the prison, and we are the prisoners: dig a hole in the prison and let yourself out!

What is this world ? To be forgetful of God; it is not merchandise and silver and weighing-scales and women.

As regards the wealth that you carry for religion's sake, " How good is righteous wealth (for the righteous man)!" as the Prophet recited.

Water in the boat is the ruin of the boat, (but) water underneath the boat is a support. Since he cast out from his heart (the desire for) wealth and possessions, on that account Solomon did not call himself (by any name) but "poor."

The stoppered jar, (though) in rough water, floated on the water because of its wind -filled (empty) heart.

When the wind of poverty is within (any one), he rests at peace on the surface of the water of the world;

Although the whole of this world is his kingdom, in the eye of his heart the kingdom is nothing.

Therefore stopper and seal the mouth of your heart, and fill it from the inward ventilator. Exertion is a reality, and medicine and disease are realities: the sceptic in his denial of exertion practised (and thereby affirmed) exertion.

How the superiority of exertion to trust in God was established.

The lion gave many proofs in this style, so that those necessitarians became tired of answering (him).

Fox and deer and hare and jackal abandoned (the doctrine of) necessity and (ceased from) disputation.

They made covenants with the furious lion, (ensuring) that he should incur no loss in this bargain,

(That) the daily ration should come to him without trouble, and that he should not need to make a further demand.

Day by day the one on whom the lot fell would run to the lion as (swiftly as) a cheetah.

When this cup (of death) came round to the hare, the hare cried out, "Why, how long (are we to endure this) injustice?"

How the beasts of chase blamed the hare for his delay in going to the lion.

The company (of beasts) said to him: "All this time we have sacrificed our lives in truth and loyalty.

Do not thou seek to give us a bad name, O rebellious one! Lest the lion be aggrieved, go, go! Quick! Quick!"

How the hare answered the beasts.

"O friends," said he, "grant me a respite, that by my cunning ye may escape from calamity,

That by my cunning your lives may be saved and this (safe ty) remain as a heritage to your children."

Every prophet amidst the peoples used to call them after this manner to a place of deliverance,

For he had seep from Heaven the way of escape, (though) in (their)sight he was contracted (despicable) like the pupil of the eye.

Men regarded him as small like the pupil: none attained to (understanding of) the (real) greatness (worth) of the pupil.

How the beasts objected to the proposal of the hare.

The company (of beasts) said to him: "O donkey, listen (to us)! Keep thyself within the measure of a hare!

Eh, what brag is this-(an idea) which thy betters never brought into their minds?

Thou art self-conceited, or Destiny is pursuing us; else, how is this speech suitable to one like thee?"

How the hare again answered the beasts.

He said: "O friends, God gave me inspiration: to a weakling there came a strong judgement (wise counsel)."

That which God taught to the bees is not (belonging) to the lion and the wild ass.

It (the bee) makes houses of juicy halted (sweetmeat): God opened to it the door of that knowledge;

That which God taught to the silkworm -does any elephant know such a device?

Adam, created of earth, learned knowledge from God: (his) knowledge shot beams up to the Seventh Heaven.

He (Adam) broke the name and fame (pride) of the angels, to the confusion of that one who is in doubt concerning God.

He (God) made the ascetic of so many thousand years (Iblis) a muzzle for that young calf (Adam),

That he (Adam) might not be able to drink the milk of knowledge of religion, and that he might not roam around that lofty castle. .

The sciences of the followers of (external) sense became a muzzle, so that he (the believer in sense-perception) might not receive milk from that sublime knowledge.

(But) into the blood-drop (core) of the heart there fell a jewel which He (God) gave not to the seas and skies.

How long (this regard for) form? After all, O form -worshipper, has thy reality-lacking soul not (yet) escaped from form?

If a human being were a man in virtue of form, Ahmad (Mohammed) and Bu Jahl would be just the same.

The painting on the wall is like Adam : see from the (pictured) form what thing in it is wanting.

The spirit is wanting in that resplendent form: go, seek that jewel rarely found!

The heads of all the lions in the world were laid low when They (God) gave a hand to (bestowed favour on) the dog of the Companions (of the Cave).

What loss does it suffer from that abhorred shape, inasmuch as its spirit was plunged in the ocean of light?

'Tis not in pens to describe (the outward) form (what is written) in letters is (qualities like) "learned" and "just";

(And qualities like) 'learned " and "just" are only the spiritual essence which thou wilt not find in (any) place or in front or behind.

The sun Of the spirit strikes (with its beams) on the body from the quarter where (the relation of) place does not exist: it (that sun) is not contained in the sky.

An account of the knowledge of the hare and an explanation of the excellence and advantages of knowledge.

This topic hath no end. Give heed! Listen to the story of the hare.

Sell your asinine (corporeal) ear and buy another ear, for the asinine ear will not apprehend this discourse,

Go, behold the foxy tricks played by the hare; behold how the hare made a plot to catch the lion.

Knowledge is the seal of the kingdom of Solomon: the whole world is form, and knowledge is the spirit.

Because of this virtue, the creatures of the seas and those of mountain and plain are helpless before man.

Of him the pard and lion are afraid, like the mouse; from him the crocodile of the great river is in pallor and agitation.

From him peri and demon took to the shores (sought refuge): each took abode in some hiding-place,

Man hath many a secret enemy: the cautious man is a wise one.

(There are) hidden creatures, evil and good: at every instant their blows are striking on the heart.

If you go into the river to wash yourself, a thorn in the water inflicts a hurt upon you.

Although the thorn is hidden low in the water, you know it is there, since it is pricking you.

The pricks of (angelic) inspirations and (satanic) temptations are from thousands of beings, not (only) from one.

Wait (patiently) for your (bodily) -senses to be transmuted, so that you may see them (the hidden beings), and the difficulty may be solved,

So that (you may see) whose words you have rejected and whom you have made your captain.

How the beasts requested the hare to tell the secret of his thought.

Afterwards they said, "O nimble hare, communicate what is in thy apprehension.

O'thou who hast grappled with a Uon, declare the plan which thou hast thought of.

Counsel gives perception and understanding: the mind is helped by (other) minds.

The Prophet said, 'O adviser, take counsel (with the trustworthy), for he whose counsel is sought is trusted.'

How the hare withheld the secret from them.

He said, "One ought not to say forth even' secret: sometimes the even number turns out to be odd, and sometimes the odd number to be even."

If from guilelessness you breathe words to a mirror, the mirror at once becomes dim to us.

Do not move your lip in explanation of these three things, (namely) concerning your departure and your gold and your religion;

For to these three there is many an adversary and foe standing in wait for you when he knows (about any of them).

And if you tell (only) one or two (a few people), farewell (to our secret): every secret that goes beyond the twain (who share it) is published abroad.

If you tie two or three birds together, they will remain on the ground, imprisoned by grief; (But in truth) they hold a consultation well-disguised and mingled, in its (apparent) significance, with that which casts error (into the mind of any one who observes them).

(Similarly) the Prophet used to take counsel, (speaking) cryptically, and they (his companions) would answer him and (would be) without knowledge (of his real meaning).

He would speak his opinion in a covert parable, in order that the adversary might not know foot from head.

He (the Prophet) would receive his answer from him (the adversary), while the other would not catch the smell (drift) of his question.

The story of the hare's stratagem.

He delayed awhile in going, then he went before the lion who rends (his prey) with claws.

Because he tarried late in going, the lion was tearing up the earth and roaring.

"I said," cried the lion, "that the promise of those vile ones would be vain -vain and frail and unfulfilled.

Their palaver has duped me: how long will this Time deceive me, how long? "

The prince that hath no strength in his beard is left sorely in the lurch when by reason of his folly he looks neither backwards nor forwards.

The road is smooth, and under it are pitfalls: amidst the names there is a dearth of meaning.

Words and names are like pitfalls: the sweet (flattering) word is the sand for (the sand that sucks up) the water of our life.

The one sand whence water gushes is seldom to be found; go, seek it.

He that searches after wisdom becomes a fountain of wisdom; he becomes independent of acquisition and (ways and) means .

The guarding tablet becomes a Guarded Tablet; his understanding becomes enriched by the Spirit.

When a man's understanding has been his teacher, after this the understanding becomes his pupil.

The understanding says, like Gabriel, "O Ahmad (Mohammed), if I take one (more) step, it will burn me;

Do thou leave me, henceforth advance (alone): this is my limit, O sultan of the soul!"

Whoever,, through heedlessness, remains without thanksgiving and patience (self - control), knows (no resource) but this, that he should follow in the heels of necessity (jabr).

Anyone who pleads necessity (as an excuse) feigns himself to be ill, with the result that the (feigned) illness brings him to the grave.

The Prophet said, "Illness (assumed) in jest brings (real) disease, so that he (the jester) dies like a lamp."

What is (the meaning of) Jabir? To bind up a broken (limb) or tie a severed vein.

Inasmuch as you have not broken your foot in this path, whom are you mocking? Why have you bandaged your foot?

But as for him who broke his foot in the path of exertion, Buraq came up to him, and he mounted (and rode).

He was a bearer of the (true) religion, and he became one who is borne; he was an accepter of the (Divine) command, and he became accepted.

Until now, he was receiving commands from the King; henceforth he delivers the (King's) commands to the people.

Until now, the stars were influencing him; henceforth he is the ruler of the stars.

If (on this account) perplexity arise in thy sight (mind), then thou wilt have doubts concerning The moon was cloven asunder.

Refresh thy faith, (but) not with talk of the tongue, O thou who hast secretly refreshed thy (evil) desire.

So long as desire is fresh, faith is not fresh, for 'tis this desire that locks (against thee) that gate.

Thou hast interpreted (and altered the meaning of) the virgin (uncorrupted) Word: interpret (alter) thyself, not the (Divine) Hook.

Thou interpretest the Qur'an according to thy desire: by thee the sublime meaning is degraded and perverted.

The baseness of the foul interpretation given by the fly,

The fly was lifting up his head, like a pilot, on a blade of straw and (a pool of) ass's urine. "I have called (them) sea and ship," said he; "I have been pondering over that (interpretation) for a long while.

Look ! here is this sea and this ship, and I am the pilot and skilled (in navigation) and judicious."

He was propelling the raft on the " sea " : that (small) quantity appeared to him illimitable.

That urine was boundless in relation to him : where was the vision that should see it truly?

His world extends (just) as far as his sight reaches; his eye is so big, his "sea" is big in the same proportion.

So with the false interpreter (of the Qur'an): like the fly, his imagination is (foul as) ass's urine and his conception (worthless as) a straw.

If the fly leave off interpreting by (following his own) opinion, Fortune will turn that fly into a humay.

One who possesses this (Divine) indication (of the true meaning) is not a fly: his spirit is not analogous to his (outward) form.

How the lion roared wrathfully because the hare was late in coming.

As (for example) the hare who struck against the lion : how was his spirit analogous to his stature?

The lion from fury and rage was saying, "By means of my ear the enemy has bound up my eye.

The tricks of the necessitarians have bound me (in captivity) ; their wooden sword has wounded my body.

After this I will not hearken to their palaver : all that is (only meant to deceive, like) the cry of demons and ghouls.

O my heart, tear them to pieces, do not lag; rend their skins, for they have naught but skin."

What is skin? Specious words, like ripples on water which have no continuance.

Know that these words are as the skin (rind), and the meaning is (as) the kernel ; these words are as the form, and the meaning is like the spirit.

The skin hides the defect of the bad kernel! ; it (also) hides jealously the secrets of the good kernel.

When the pen is of wind and the scroll of water, whatever you write perishes speedily ; It is written on water: if you seek constancy from it, you will return biting your hands (in disappointment).

The wind in men is vanity and desire; when you have abandoned vanity, (then) is (the time for) the message from Him (God).

Sweet are the messages of the Maker, for it (that message) from head to foot (from first to last) is enduring.

The khutbas for kings change (and pass), and their empire; (all will pass) except the empire and khutbas (insignia) of the prophets,

Because the pomp of kings is from (earthly) vanity, (while) the glorious privilege of the prophets is from (Divine) Majesty.

The names of kings are removed from the dirhems, (but) the name of Ahmad (Mohammed) is stamped on them for ever.

The name of Ahmad is the name of all the prophets: when the hundred comes (is counted), ninety is with us as well -.

Further setting forth the stratagem of the hare,

The hare made much delay in going; he rehearsed to himself the tricks (which he was about to play).

After long delay he came on (took) the road, that he might say one or two secrets into the ear of the lion.

Think, what worlds are in commerce with Reason! How wide is this ocean of Reason!

In this sweet ocean our forms are moving fast, like cups on the surface of water:

Until they become full, (they float) like bowls on the top of the sea, (but) when the bowl is filled it sinks therein.

Reason is hidden, and (only) a world (of phenomena) is visible: our forms are the waves or a spray of it (of that hidden ocean).

Whatsoever (thing) the form makes (uses as) a means of approach to It (to Reason), by that (same) means the ocean (of Reason) casts it (the form) far away.

So long as the heart does not see the Giver of (its) conscience, so long as the arrow does not see the far-shooting Archer.

He (who is thus blind) thinks his horse is lost, though (all the while) he is obstinately speeding his horse on the road.

That fine fellow thinks his horse is lost, while his horse is sweeping him onward like the wind.

In lamentation and inquiry that scatterbratn (runs) from door to door in every direction, asking and searching:

"Where and who is he that stole my horse?" What is this (animal) under thy thigh, O master?

" Yes, this is the horse, but where is the horse?" O dexterous rider in search of thy horse, come to thyself!

The Spirit is lost (to view) because of its being So manifest and near: how, having thy belly full of water, art thou dry-lipped like a jar?

How wilt thou see red and green and russet, unless before (seeing) these three (colours) thou see the light?

But since thy mind was lost (absorbed) in (perception of) the colour, those colours became to thee a veil from (debarred thee from contemplating) the light.

Inasmuch as at night those colours were hidden, thou sawest that thy vision of the colour was (derived) from the light.

There is no vision of colour without the external light: even so it is with the colour of inward phantasy.

This outward (light) is (derived) from the sun and from Suha, while the inward (light) is from the reflexion of the beams of (Divine) Glory.

The light which gives light to the eye is in truth the light of the heart: the light of the eye is produced by the light of hearts.

Again, the light which gives light to the heart is the Light of God, which is pure and separate from the light of intellect and sense.

At night there was no light: thou didst not see the colour; then it (the light) was made manifest by the opposite of light (by darkness).

(First) comes the seeing of light, then the seeing of colour; and this thou knowest immediately by the opposite of light (darkness).

God created pain and sorrow for the purpose that happiness might be made manifest by means of this opposite.

Hidden things, then, are manifested by means of their opposite; since God hath no opposite, He is hidden;

For the sight fell (first) on the light, then on the colour: opposite is made manifest by opposite, like Greeks and Ethiopians.

Therefore thou knewest light by its opposite: opposite reveals opposite in (the process of) coming forth.

The Light of God hath no opposite in (all) existence, that by means of that opposite it should be possible to make Him manifest:

Necessarily (therefore) our eyes do not perceive Him, though. He perceives (us): see this (fact) from (the case of) Moses and the mountain (Sinai),

Know that form springs from spirit (reality) as the lion from the jungle, or as voice and speech from thought.

This speech and voice arose from thought; thou knowest not where is the sea of thought,

But since thou hast seen that the waves of speech are fair, thou knowest that their sea also is noble.

When the waves of thought sped on from (the sea of) Wisdom it (Wisdom) made (for them) the form of speech and voice.

The form was born of the Word and died again, the wave drew itself back into the sea.

The form came forth from Formlessness and went back (thither), for Verily unto Him are we returning.

Every instant-, then, thou art dying and returning: Mustafa declared that this world is (but) a moment.

Our thought is an arrow (shot) from Him (//u) into the air (hazud): how should it stay in the air? It comes (back) to God.

Every moment the world is renewed, and we are unaware of its being renewed whilst it remains (the same in appearance).

Life is ever arriving anew, like the stream, though in the body it has the semblance of continuity.

From its swiftness it appears continuous, like the spark which thou whirlst rapidly with thy hand.

If thou whirl a firebrand with dexterity, it appears to the sight as a very long (line of) fire.

The swift motion produced by the action of God presents this length of duration (Time) as (a phenomenon arising) from the rapidity of Divine action.

Even if the seeker of this mystery is an exceedingly learned man, (say to him), "Lo, Husamu'ddin, who is a sublime book (where you will find the mystery revealed)."

The hare's coming to the lion and the lion's anger with him.

The lion, incensed and wrathful and frantic, saw the hare coming from afar,

Running undismayed and confidently, looking angry and fierce and fell and sour,

For by coming humbly (he thought) suspicion would be (excited), while by boldness every cause of doubt would be removed.

When he came further on, near to the "shoe-row," the lion shouted-" Ha, villain!

I who have torn oxen limb from limb, I who have rubbed the ear of (chastised and vanquished) the ferocious elephant-

Who (what) is a half-witted (feeble) hare, that he should thus throw on the ground (disregard) my behest?"

Abandon the hare's slumber and heedlessness! Give ear, O donkey, to the roaring of this lion!

The hare's apology

"Mercy!" cried the hare, "I have an excuse, if thy Lordship's pardon come to my aid."

"What excuse?" said he. "Oh, the shortsightedness of fools! Is this the time for them to come into the presence of kings?"

Thou art an untimely bird: thy head must be cut off. One ought not to hear the excuse of a fool.

The fool's excuse is worse than his crime; the excuse of the ignorant is the poison that kills wisdom.

Thy excuse, O hare, is devoid of wisdom: what hare am I that thou shouldst put it in my ear?"

"O king," he replied, "account a worthless one to be worthy: hearken to the excuse of one who has suffered oppression.

In particular, as an alms (thank-offering) for thy high estate, do not drive out of thy way one whose way is lost.

The ocean, which gives some water to every stream, lays on its head and face (surface) every piece of rubbish.

By this bounty the sea will not become less: the sea is neither increased nor diminished by its bounty."

The lion said, "I will bestow bounty in its (proper) place, I will cut every one's clothes according to his stature."

"Listen," cried the hare, "if I am not a fit object for (thy) grace, I lay my head before the dragon of (thy) violence.

At breakfast-time I set out on the way, I came towards the king with my comrade.

That party (of beasts) had appointed, for thy sake, another hare to go along with me as consort and companion.

On the road a lion attacked thy humble slave, attacked both the companions in travel who were coming (to thee).

I said to him, 'We are the slaves of the King of kings, the lowly fellow-servants of that (exalted) court.'

He said, 'The King of kings! Who is he? Be ashamed! Do not make mention of every base loon in my presence.

Both thee and thy king I will tear to pieces, if thou and thy friend turn back from my door.'

I said to him, 'Let me behold once more the face of the king and bear the news of thee (to him).'

He said, 'Place thy comrade with me (in my keeping) as a pledge; otherwise, thou art a sacrifice (thy life is forfeit) according to my law.'

We entreated him much: it was no use. He seized my friend and left me to go alone.

My friend, from his plumpness made three of me both in comeliness and beauty and (size of) body-

Henceforth this road is barred by that lion: the thread of our convenants is broken.

Cut off (abandon) hope of the allowance henceforth; I am telling thee the truth, and truth is bitter.

If thou want the allowance, clear the way! hey, come on and repel that irreverent one!

How the lion answered the hare and set off with him.

Come on in God's name," said he, "let me see where he is! Go thou in front, if thou art speaking truth.

That I may give him and a hundred like him the punishment they deserve, or if this is a lie, that I may give thy deserts to thee."

The hare set out on the way (going) in front like a guide, that he might lead him towards his snare.

Towards the well which he had designated: he had made the deep well a snare for his (the lion's) life.

(Thus) were these twain going till (they arrived) near the well., Look you, (this was) a hare (Deceitful) as a (pool of) water (hidden) under straw.

The water bears a blade of straw (down) to the plain: how, I wonder, will the straw bear away a mountain?

The snare of his (the hare's) guile was a noose for the lion: a marvellous hare (he), who was carrying off a lion (as his prey)!

A Moses draws Pharaoh, with his army and mighty host, into the river Nile:

A single gnat with half a wing cleaves intrepidly the suture of Nimrod's skull.

Behold the state of him who hearkened to the words of his enemy, and the retribution of him who became the friend of the envious one. The state of Pharaoh who hearkened to Haman, and the state of a Nimrod who hearkened to Satan.

Albeit the enemy speak to thee in friendly wise, know (his words to be) the snare, though he speak to thee of the grain (bait)

If he give thee some candy, regard it as poison; if he do a kindness to the body, regard it as cruelty.

When th (Divine) destiny comes to pass, you see naught but the skin (outward appearance): you do not distinguish enemies from friends.

Since the case is thus, begin humble supplication: set about lamenting and glorifying (God), and fasting.

Lament continually, crying, "O thou who well knowest the hidden things, do not crush us beneath the stone of evil contrivance.

O Creator of the lion, if we have wrought curishness, do not set the lion (to spring) on us from this covert.

Do not give to sweet water the form of fire, do not put upon fire the form of water."

When Thou makest (us) drunken with the wine of Thy wrath, Thou givest to things non-existent the form of existence."

What is (this) drunkenness? That which binds (prevents) the eye from (true) eyesight, so that a (common) stone appears a jewel, and wool (pashm) a jasper (yashm),

What is (this) drunkenness? The perversion of the senses, the change of tamarisk-wood into sandal-wood in the (perverted) sight

Patience is the "Mother of Virtue"

By Dr. Syed Liaqath Peeran

Now, we are living in an advance age of our civilization, with advancement in every field. The door of communication has opened up to new vistas of knowledge and learning. The march of time has quickened its pace, so much so, that the vitals of the modern life is being devoured by new viruses, which are threatening to end the very existence of Man on this beautiful planet. From the time a child is born, he is being prepared to face the fast life. From the age of two or even less, a child is admitted to a play school. No longer the nannies and grannies, aunts and uncles play with the child. There is a cultural breakdown and due to shortage of space of living, cramped living, living in concrete jungles, children are bereft of the beauty of nature and to watch the pleasantness the fauna and flora provides to thrill the senses and the opportunities it provides for observation and learning.

The masses and so also the privileged class are no longer in a position to spare time to learn the nuances of music, language and various other aspects of culture. They have to be content with by watching films on the screen and be content with entertainment provided to appease the cheap senses of mind and heart. Today more importance is given to that type of entertainment which satisfies the baser elements in man. This has been the major cause for breakdown of one's personality and a person to become 'egocentric', 'selfish', 'self-centred'; 'spend thrift', 'greedy', 'jealous' and such other weaknesses that robs a person of peace and solace.

Mankind has realized now that the advancement achieved with scientific and medical inventions besides great progress in the art of living has at the same time robbed man of the happiness of joint family system and age old traditions. Every age has found this loss around it in its time and tenure. Holy Quran in Sura C-III has referred to man being in a state of loss and points out that only those who are believers (in Almighty God, and in eternal goodness) and do good works and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to endurance (patience) are saved from loss. Loss means loss of every good aspects of living, culture and civilization. Thus patience has been considered as a mother of virtue. Every human being has to have endurance and develop patience in every walk of life so that the baser elements in man does not strike him like a poisonous snake to death. The disturbing elements in mind and heart are required to be curbed. The multiple desires erupting like fountain constantly requires to be controlled and checked and one has to set limits of tolerance. The living needs to be cultivated and it can be done only by exerting in endurance and patience. A seed takes its own time to sprout to a sapling and to a tree then to reach the flowering stage before it can bear sweet fruits for us to relish. So also all good deeds need and require time, patience and endurance to bear sweet fruits.

Loss of patience is a sure way to defeat and it ruins all the good that is likely to happen in our life. Self control can be cultivated only through patience. Just as a mother exhibits enormous patience in the upbringing of a child; so also virtues and good deeds requires at its root level patience.

God praised those who adopt patience and mentioned more than several times in the Holy Quran. He kept most good deeds and merits linked with patience. God Says: When they kept patience, I created leaders from amongst them who showed guidance according to my instructions - Sura 32.V.24. God says owing to the patience of Banu

Israil, the words of your Lord were perfected well over them. God Says: I will reward those for their good works and who are patient. God Says: They will be given double rewards for their patience. God Says: The patient will be given rewards fully without accounts. God Says: Fasting is only for Me and I will give its rewards. He kept connection with those having patience with Himself and promised that He is with the patient. God says: Take to patience, God is with the patient Sura 2 : V 249. God Says: If you keep patience and fear God... your Lord will help you with five thousand well armed angels. God Says: These are blessings and mercy upon them from their Lord and they are those who are guided Sura 2 V 58. The Prophet (SAS) said patience is half of faith. He said: The lowest measure of what you have been given is sure faith and firm determination of patience. He who has been given a portion of those two qualities has got no fear even if he prays little at night and fasts little during day time. If you can stand with firm foot with patience just as you are now and do not turn away from this way, it is dear to me. If anybody does divine service equal to all of you after turning away from patience, it will not be dear to me. I fear the world will be opened to you after me. You will then cherish hatred for one another and the dwellers of heaven will then be dissatisfied with you. He who keeps patience and expects rewards, will get full reward. Then he recited this verse: What is near you will come to an end and what is near God will only remain. I will give full rewards to those who being patient do good words Sura 16 V 96.

The Prophet (SAS) once said that patience is a jewel among the jewels of paradise. The Prophet (SAS) was once asked: 'What is faith? He said: Patience. The Prophet said: To say what patience dictates is the best act. Prophet Jesus Christ (PBUH) said: You cannot earn what you love till you keep patience at what you do not love. The Prophet (SAS) said: Had patience been given the form of a man, it would have been kind. God loves the patient.

Imam Ghazali in his monumental work Ihya Uloom -id-din Vol. IV in Chapter II has elaborately dealt with "Patience and Gratefulness". The above saying are extracted from that book. The Imam has further dealt in great detail on the said subject. Some portions are extracted here for our readers benefit.

Sayings of the wise: Hazrat Omar (RAA) wrote to Abu Musa Asharai: Take to patience. Know that patience is of two kinds, one is better than the other. It is good to have patience at disaster but better than this is to protect oneself from unlawful things. Know that patience is the gist of faith. The reason is that God's fear is the greatest religious act and that is gained by patience. Hazrat Ali (RAA) said: Faith is built upon four things - sure faith, patience, Jihad and good judgment. He also said: Patience is to faith just as head is to body. He who has got no head has got no body. Similarly he who has got no patience has got no faith. Hazrat Omar (RAA) Said: Iman has got two burdens - blessings and mercy. This appears from the following Verse 2: 157 - On them is blessing from their Lord and Mercy and they are those who are guided. We found him patient. How good is the servant as he is most repentant. Hazrat Abu Darda'a (RAA) said: To remain patient at commands and to remain satisfied with fate is the best rank of faith.

Meaning of patience:

Patience is an attribute of man only and angels, birds and beasts have no such attribute. An angel has got no necessity of patience as he has got no nature of evil. Man has got animal propensities in his infancy. At first he has got no power for patience, then after dawn of intellect clashes within begins and at that time patience is necessary. To

establish at that time patience is necessary. To establish the instinct of good, patience is acquired, then comes marifat or knowledge for God which is the cause of fortune in the next world and in this world. The knowledge of God which is deep rooted is called faith or Iman.

Patience is half of faith: There are two reasons and two necessities to show that patience is half of faith. The first reason is to confirm basic principle of religion and to act according to it. Therein there are two pillars of faith - sure faith and patience. The meaning of the sure faith is immutable - knowledge with God shows to a man about the fundamental principles of Islam. The meaning of patience is an action to the requirement of the immutable faith. This grows knowledge that sin is injurious and virtue is beneficial and to give-up sin and to gain virtue are not possible without patience. Patience is to put in to action the inclination of virtue after suppression of evil propensities. In this angle of vision, patience is half of faith. For this reason, the Prophet (SAS) mentioned patience and faith go together. He said : You have been given but little of sure faith and patience.

Second Reason : Faith arises out of knowledge which again arises out of the good deeds of a man. Man's actions are divided into two - what is beneficial both in this world and the next and what is injurious to men in both the worlds and gratefulness is necessary about what is beneficial in both the worlds. In this view, gratefulness is half of faith. Ibu Masud (RAA) said: Iman is divided into two patience and gratefulness.

Different kinds of patience:

The first kind is to have patience over physical pains, such as patience in the difficult tasks of divine services and in the sudden accidents and dangers such as severe beating and serious disease. If patience is observed according to the dictates of religion, it is praiseworthy. The second kind is to have patience at the inclination of evil and greed of passion. To have patience of the greed and belly and sexual passion is named -Afat or self control. Bravery is patience in battles. Forbearance is patience by appeasement of anger. Expansion of breast in patience at turns of fortunes. Renunciation is patience from happiness and pleasure, satisfaction is patience at present possession. Most conduct of faith lie in patience. For this reason, when the Prophet (SAS) was asked about faith, he replied that patience is faith as there is no act of faith more difficult than patience. The Prophet (SAS) said: Pilgrimage is Arafat. In other words, the acts of Arafat are more difficult out of actions of pilgrimage. To forebear all these hardships is called patience. God says: Those who keep patience in dangers, wants and struggles are the truthful ones and they are also God fearing ones.

Patience in consideration of strength and weakness

(a) To control the evil inclinations of nature requires the constant exercise of patience. Their numbers are few and they say: God is our Lord and they are firm in this. They are the truthful ones. They are addressed by God as thus: O satisfied Soul, return to thy Lord well pleased with Him and well pleasing Him - 89 : 28.

(b) To surrender to the forces of devil and all inclinations towards religious are routed. They are the headless ones and their numbers are many. The enemies of God rule over their souls. God says about them: I would have guided everyone had I wished, but my promise will come out true: I will fill up Hell with man and Jinn - 9 : 112. God says regarding them: Turn away from those who turn away from my remembrance and who

do not wish except the pleasures of this world's life. The signs of this life are despair and hopelessness. For that reason, the Prophet (SAS) said: Wise is he who humbles himself and acts for what will come after death and fool is he who follows his low desire and hopes against God.

(c) To continue struggles between two forces - forces of goods and forces of evil. Sometimes the forces of good prevail and sometimes forces of evil such a man has mixed up good with evil.

Patience in consideration of severity and ease

The first kind of patience is not acquired without great efforts and the second kind of patience does not require such efforts. God says: He who gives charity and fears God and takes to patience and considers good as good, I shall make his path easy - 92 : 7. The practice of patience leads to contentment which is therefore higher than patience. The Prophet (SAS) said: Do divine service with contentment. If you are unable to do it, there is abundant good in keeping patience in fighting with your baser self. A friend of God said: A patient man stands on three stages. In the first stage, he gives up the following the baser self. In the second stage, he remains satisfied with his fate and this is the rank of one who renounces the world. In the third stage, he likes what his Master does about him and this is the rank of the truthful and this is the stage of love. The stage of love is higher than that of contentment and the stage of contentment is higher than that of patience.

A wise man said: A believer can keep patience in untoward circumstances but nobody other than a truthful man can keep patience in pleasures and happiness. The saint Sahal Tastari (RAA) said: To keep patience in pleasures and happiness is more difficult than to keep patience in disasters. When the treasures of the world fell into the hands of the companions, they said: we have been tried with various kinds of dangers and difficulties and we kept patience over them. But now we are being tried with wealth and riches and we can't keep patience about them. For this reason the Almighty warned us from the followings: God says: O believers, let not your property or your children keep you forgetful from the remembrance of God - 63:9.

God says: There are enemies for you amongst your wives and children. So be careful of them. 64:14.

The Prophet (SAS) said: Children are the cause of miserliness, cowardice and sorrows. When the Prophet (SAS) saw his grandson Hasan coming towards him drawing up his clothes, he descended from his pulpit, lifted him up and said : God has truly said: your properties and your children are trails for you. When I saw my grandson faltering, I could not help but lift him up. There are lessons from this for the wise men. He who can keep patience at pleasures and happiness is called real man. The meaning of patience from pleasures and happiness is not to be addicted to these things. Such a man thinks that everything has been kept as trust to him and soon he shall have to return it. He does not let himself swayed by the strain of happiness and does not keep himself engaged in sports and plays, enjoyments and happiness. He spends his properties and wealth in the way of God, and towards fulfillment of his duties towards God and His creations.

Patience at things against nature

This patience is divided into three classes:

- (a) Patience at things within the control of man such as divine service, giving up sin, etc.
- (b) Patience which is out of control of man, such as natural calamities, dangers and difficulties.

(c) And patience at a thing in which a man has got no freedom but he can remove it, such as removing the difficulty of man by avenging.

With regard to the subjects within the control of man, they are sub-divided into two. The first sub-division includes such divine services in which patience is necessary. To have patience in divine services is difficult, as nature does not want to be slave but loves to be Master. For this reason, a certain sage said: There is no such man who does not say Pharaoh said: I am your biggest Lord. There is no such man who does not say this kind of words with his servants, slaves and persons subordinate to him. As the serfdom of body is difficult, so also divine service is difficult. One is not willing to serve God by prayer and other services owing to idleness and to pay zakat and other charities owing to miserliness. It is difficult to do divine service through pilgrimage and Jihad and owing to idleness and miserliness. A worshipper feels necessity of this patience under three circumstances. Firstly by having patience in divine services, such as to make motive sincere, to free himself from the evil of show, to determine firmly to do sincere deeds. The Prophet (SAS) said: All actions are based on motive and everyone gets what he intends for. God Says: they are not ordered but to do divine service being sincere to him. For this reason, God preceded patience before action saying: Those who have patience and do good deeds. Secondly, patience in divine services, such as observing rules of Shariat in worship restraining oneself in evil actions and thoughts in the midst of prayer and to remain attentive to the thoughts of God. The third circumstance is to have patience after divine service such as patience from broadcasting it to the people, from restraining oneself from a desire of getting honour. God says: Don't make your action void. He says: Don't make your charitable actions void by harsh treatment and rebuke - 2: 264.

Patience in sinful actions:

To restrain oneself from sinful deeds means patience in sinful deeds. The necessity of such patience is beyond description. God prohibits sinful deeds in this verse: He prohibits you from obscene and abominable actions and rebellion - 16:9. The Prophet (SAS) said: The refugee is one who gives up evil deeds and Mujahid is one who fights with his passions. Sin is committed if one acts according to the promptings of his passions. If habit is added to passions, two enemies of devil stand against the party of God. Under these circumstances, only inspiration of religion is not sufficient and not strong enough to control it, such as back-biting, telling falsehood, self-praise, to take pride etc.

The objects of the second class are things out of control of man. Though these subjects are not under control, yet a man can remove them. If anybody gives trouble to another by his words and deeds, patience is sometimes compulsory in such a case and not to take retaliation and sometimes it is regarded as additional virtuous act. A certain companion said: if anybody cannot have patience at the trouble inflicted by another, he can't regard his faith as real faith. God says: we shall certainly have patience at what they trouble us with those who rely on God. Once the Prophet (SAS) was distributing alms among the poor and the distressed. A certain desert Arab said to him at that time: By this distribution God's pleasure is not sought. When the Prophet (SAS) who informed of this, his two cheeks turned red and then he said: May God show mercy on my brother Moses. He suffered more than this and he took patience. God says: Leave the trouble inflicted by them and rely on God - 33:48. God says: Have patience at what they say and leave them a good leave - 73:10. God says: I know that your heart is saddened at what they say. Do glorify your Lord - 5:98. God says: you will certainly hear many words troubling you from the people of the Book and polytheists. If you can have patience at

that and fear God, it will be an act of bravery - 3:186. For this reason, God praised those who restrain themselves from taking revenge. God says: if you take revenge for religion; inflict such trouble as has been inflicted on you, but if you take to patience, there are abundant good for the patient 16:126. The Prophet (SAS) said: Join the tie with one who severs it from you Give Charity to one who deprives you. Forgive one who oppresses you. I saw in the Injil in which Jesus (PBUH) said: You have been said before: Take a tooth for a tooth and a nose for a nose but I say to you: Don't do harm in lieu of harm but turn your left cheek to one who slaps your right cheek. Give your cloth to one who takes your shirt. Walk with one two miles with his load who takes you to one mile with his load. These are instructions of patience at the injuries inflicted by others. So high injuries inflicted by others. So high merits are obtained through patience.

Third class of Patience - which is outside human control. Examples of such patience are sudden mishaps, dangers, pangs of death, loss of health owing to illness, loss of eyesight. Hazrat Ibn Abbas (RAA) said: There are news of three kinds of patience in the Holy Quran - (1) to have patience in doing compulsory things ordained by God. (2) To keep oneself away from the forbidden things and (3) to have patience at sudden dangers and difficulties. Good merits are obtained for such patience. Every believer can have patience at unlawful things, but it is only the Prophets who can have patience at the natural calamities. For this reason, the Prophet (SAS) said: O God, I pray to you to grant me such firm faith as can make dangers and difficulties from Thee easy on me. It is understood from this that sure faith is linked with patience.

(1) Abu Solaiman (RAA) said: by God, we can't have patience at what we love. How can we then have patience at what we do not love?

(2) The Holy Prophet (SAS) said : God says: When I send on My servant any physical, economic or family trouble and if he forbears it, I will feel shame to set up for him balance and measure on the Resurrection Day.

(3) The Prophet (SAS) said : To await with patience of release from a danger is included within divine service. He also said: If a servant prays with the following according to the order of God after falling in a danger, his prayer is accepted. We are surely for God and to Him we shall return. O God, give me blessing in my danger and leave good behind it.

(4) Hazrat Anas (RAA) said: The Prophet (SAS) said that God said: O Gabriel, do you know what reward I give to one whose eyes I have robbed? He says: O God, we don't know anything except what You have taught us. God said: Its reward is his constant living in My abode and his look towards My face.

(5) The Prophet (SAS) said: God says: When I examine a servant with a trial and he keeps patience at that and does not complain of Me to his visitors, I give him better flesh in lieu of his former flesh and better blood in lieu of his former blood. When I cure him, I cure him after forgiving his sins.

(6) Hazrat Daud (PBUH) prayed once: O Lord, what is the reward of a person who keeps patience at his dangers by seeking your pleasure? God said: His reward is this that I will dress him with the dress of faith and will never take it from him

(7) The caliph Omar bin Abdul Aziz (RAA) once addressed the people thus : If God takes away a gift which He gave to a person, He gives him a gift better than his previous gift provided he keeps patience. Then he read this Verse: The patient will be given full reward without account.

(8) When the saint Fazil (RAA) was asked about patience, he said: To keep satisfied with the decree of God is patience, He was asked: How is that? He replied: The satisfied with the decree of God is patience, He was asked: How is that? He replied: The satisfied man does not expect rank more than his rank.

(9) it is narrated that when Shibli was imprisoned at Maristan, some people met him. He asked them: who are you? They said: Your Friends. We have come to meet you. He

then stoned at them. When they were about to flee away, he said to them: If you are my real friends, you would have kept patience at my difficulty.

(10) A certain sage used to take out a writing from his pocket every hour and read it. Therein it was written: Be patient at the decree of your Lord as you are in my careful sight - 52:48.

(11) It is narrated that the wife of the saint Fateh Mussalli (RAA) once slipped down and her joint was broken. She then gave thanks to God after rising up. She was asked: Have you got no pain? She said: The joy of the reward of pain removed from my heart the pangs of pain.

(12) Hazrat Daud (RAA) said to his son Solaiman (RAA): Fear of God in a believer is proved by three things. (1) He relies on God for what he cannot earn. (2) He remains satisfied with God for what he earns and

(13) Our Prophet (SAS) said : Not to complain of your wants and sufferings and not to tell anybody of your dangers appertain to the glorification of God and spiritual knowledge.

(14) A certain pious man said that he had lost a purse on the way owing to the action of a pick-pocket. He said, O God: give him similar reward. Perchance he has got greater need of the purse than mine.

(15) Another pious man said: once during my journey, I saw Abu Huzaiifa (RAA) fallen on the ground wounded in the battle field of Mawla Salem and asked him: Shall I give you water? He said Take me near the foes and put water on my shield as I am fasting. If I live upto sunset I will break my fast with it. Such was the patience of those who sought the next world.

(16) It has been reported from Ramisah Omme Salim (RAA) that she said: One of my sons died under the absence of his father. I kept him covered with one sheet of cloth in a corner of the house. A little after my husband came, I presented before him food. He ate it and asked me. How is my son? I said that he is little better by the will of God than he was before. I lay with my husband in that night being well dressed. Then I said: will you not be astonished at my neighbour? He asked me what has become of him? I told him. I let him a good thing. When I demanded it of him, he threatened me and began to weep out of sorrow. He said what he did is manifestly wrong. I said: this is your son. I took him as a loan from God but He took him close to Him. He recited. We are from God and to him we shall return. Next morning he went to the Prophet (SAS) and gave him this news. He said O God make their last night good.

(19) At the time when Ibrahim son of the Prophet (SAS) died, the Prophet (SAS) began to shed tears. He was asked: why do you weep when you have prohibited us from it? He said : It is through affection. He who is kind get kindness from God. This weeping did not oust me from the state of contentment.

From what has been discussed above, it has been clear to you that in all circumstances and actions of life, patience is absolutely necessary. If one keeps patience, still hundreds of empty thoughts may arise in the mind and keeps him forgetful of God. Thus, he is not free from the whisperings of the devil and mind is not free from the thoughts of past and future causing loss of valuable asset. When a moment is lost without remembrances of God it is spent uselessly.

When Hazrat Mausur Hallaj (RAA) was raised upon the gallows, he was asked: What is Sufism? He replied: It is your soul. If you engage it, it will keep you engaged. So the meaning of patience is to keep away from every destructive and injurious thing.

Imam Ghazali (RAA) has concluded the Chapter on "Patience" by suggesting remedies against impatience and to cultivate such manners, traditions and actions through prayers, fasting, charity and pilgrimage that would enhance 'patience' and a person becomes mentally, spiritually and socially elevated in all spheres so that the soul gets

purified to reach the higher echelons of spirituality and higher stations in the world hereafter.

HONEY OF TRUTH

by Alexander Maisirovoy, Journalist from Russia (ISC has received this article by e-mail for publication in "Sufi World" The views are of the author of the article.

"What would you want?" God asked a Teacher, "Nothing", the Teacher answered. "It is enough for me that You are..." (a Sufi Parable)

How can one define Sufism? Is it a religious movement, philosophical doctrine, sect, or spiritual movement? May be it is Islamic mysticism as encyclopedias say? And is it possible to find a definition?

Hodja Nasreddin is sitting still on a donkey in the middle of Bukhara. His head is slanted in an obliging playful bow, his legs are hanging down to the ground, his shirt is unbuttoned, and his simile is affable and ironic. The left hand is respectfully pressed to his breast, the right one is lifted in a greeting.

Here is the master of jokes and anecdotes, the hero of parables and infinite stories. He is starry-eyed by full of worldly wisdom. He scatters bread crumbs to drive away tigers, and pays back the poor man who has been robbed. He brings a bull to a horse racing, and reads the king's mind. He throws to frogs in a bog, makes curdled milk of water, and rides a donkey back-to-front. But he takes the wind out of a yogi's sails, cools the preaching ardor of a monk, and argues with a Buddhist philosopher. He is the object of ridicule, but people call him Teacher. A ninny and master, a tramp and mullah, he always is by himself and at the same time in the center of everybody's attention. He alone embodies hundreds of persons. He is a dervish, a wandering Dervish. A Sufi. How can one define Sufism? Is it a religious movement, philosophical doctrine, sect, or spiritual movement? May be it is Islamic mysticism as encyclopedias say? And is it possible to find a definition? Can love, mystery or sense or sense of eternity be defined? Sufism does not know borders, does not know rules and system. Sufism is as imperceptible and paradoxical as our life is.

Sufism is the Arabian collection of fairy-tales "Thousand nights and one night"/ Ruba iyat (Arabic: Collection of poem) by Omar Khyyam. It is "I" free of oneself. It is something that has forced the Baghdad Sufi Hussein ibn Mansur al -Hallaj to name himself God, and die for this impudence.

...A human being is dissolved in God. God descends to the ground. Daulity leaves this world. A human being becomes a part of God...

"Two Sufis, famous in their time, Jalal ad-Din Rumi and Yunus Emre met in Turkey, Rumi, the great poet, asked Yonus Emre if he had read his book. "Yes, I've read it", Yunus Emre answered. " It is beautiful, but it is a little bit long. I would write: "I descended from the sky, put on flesh and bones and named myself Younus", Emre answered. The only thing that Rumi "had forgotten" to mention was that a human being is similar to God".

Way to Himself

Yakub ibn Yusuf, telling this parable, was a Sufi, a Jew Sufi. He was born Josh Heckelman to a religious Jewish family in New York. He lived in Jerusalem and kept a small bookshop " Olam Katan" ("The small world") in the German Colony quarters. His shop was the world of mysticism and religion: Sufi verses, the Jewish Cabbala, Chassidic parables, textbooks on yoga, meditation music, curative mineral, Eastern oils. This world was boundless and "small" at one and the same time. "In traditional religions

the Universe is the creation of God, and each person is only a particle of this creation. In Sufism, on the contrary, each person is the shadow of the Creator, "the large world" Everything, surrounding him is the shadow of the Creator, "the large world" Everything, surrounding him is the shadow of the person, "the small world", Yakub told. It took him long to become a Sufi. He got Jewish education, was acquainted with well known Shlomo Carlebach, and studied Cabbala and Buddhist meditation. He was an apprentice to Zalman Shechter from Chabad. Shechter introduced Josh to the idea of Rabbi Nahman about "hidden Zadik". "Zadik" is the "righteous man" who connects people with God. He is "inside" each person. The way to the Creator passes through "him", he is the bridge between Heaven and Earth. But the "righteous man" only arouses in those few who have the talent of feeling God.

"I have learned much, but my inner world did not change", ibn Yusuf said. It was on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem that he found his teacher, and the Teacher was a Sufi master.

The Sufi Teacher showed him the way to "the Perfect person" inside himself (in Sufi terminology it is a prototype for the "Zadik" Rabbi Nahman) and to God. Josh accepted Sufism, and took the name Yakub Ibn Yusuf after his father and grandfather.

For seven consecutive years Yakub came to East Jerusalem. Then he met in Canada his new teacher, Murat Yagan.

However, those studies did not last long. Yakub felt discontent. "Polar forces collision is important for inner development. British Columbia is a real paradise: peace, a wonderful climate, polite people. To get "strain" Murat created conflicts inside the group. It looked artificial. That is why I decided to make a 180-degree turn: internal peace amidst external stresses. I came to Israel, and here, you know, there is no lack of sharp sensations", said Yakub.

His new mentor and friend, a Turkish Sufi Mehmet Celim did not see any contradiction in Yakub being a Jew. From time to time they met: Yakub went to Turkey, Mehmet to Jerusalem and Zefat, where he was intrigued by the mysticism of Cabbala.

Did Yakub have problems with self-identification? Most likely, not, but external contradiction existed. "I would go to a mosque in Israel if I could. Unfortunately, it is impossible," -he wrote.

But these contradictions are not essential: in fact if the form starts to influence the essence, it means that the defect is in the essence. "Because Sufism", Yakub continued, "does not only belong to Muslim as Cabbala does not belong exclusively to Jews, and meditation - to Buddhists. They only are different runaways of one tree. They are the same secret knowledge, given to people in different envelopes.

Extract of Eternity

Where and when Sufism arose? Scientists and historians have many different versions, but Sufis themselves remain indifferent to these researches.

Wisdom of Sufis, full of poetry and allegories, compares Sufi knowledge to wine, and religions to vineyards. People had got to know the taste of wine before they started planting vineyards. How? It is known only to great prophets sent in due time to the Earth. Sufism does not belong to specific people. But early Islam with its tolerance and depth was the best for dissemination of Sufism.

For a long time Sufis had to defend themselves from attacks of Muslim theologians who considered them sorcerers, wizards and trouble-makers. An Iraqi Sufi from Baghdad al Hallaj was hanged head down, beaten by stones and quartered because in ecstasy he had pronounced: "God is I". It was so till the XIth century when a Spanish philosopher and Sufi al-Ghazzali proved that Sufism does not put in question Islamic monotheism.

Due to Islam Sufism extended worldwide, through Spain and Sicily reaching Europe ignorant in those days.

Flight of a Bee

The word "Sufism" is a derivative from "Suf" (Wool), referring to the woolen cloaks Sufis wore. In ancient oriental tradition wool was the symbol of detachment, modesty, and piety. There are esoteric concepts, that sound alike in other cultures: "Sufia" (wisdom) in Greek, cabalistic "Ein Sof" (absolute infinity) in Hebrew, "Savfa" (sanctity) in Arabic is it accidental?

"If you remove symbols and the conception of spheres from Cabala", Yakub wrote, "you will see, that both mystical movements, Cabala and Sufism, are very much alike". Wisdom, forgotten by one nation is transferred to the second one, and then further on to the third one till it returns to the initial carrier. Here lies the greatness of the Creator's plan who has divided mankind into cultures and religions. Otherwise the world would be doomed to the dictatorship of one idea, one will and spiritual death.

The Eastern "wine of wisdom" is saturated with secret knowledge of the revelation, given to Jews. "Moses, the leader of his people, made stone as fragrant as musk", Hakim Sanai wrote in his book (The Walled Garden of Truth) (Hadiqatu'l Haqiqat). In Sufi interpretations Moses personifies the Idea of spiritualizing the animal beginning of a human being.

Jews, in their turn, appealed to the Sufi experience in order to bring light to their Law growing stiff. "The son and grandson of the great Ramban (Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon) tried to set Sufism to the language of Judaism. But their teaching was too dry and rational, without alive feeling", Ibn Yakub wrote.

However Hassid's got such a feeling. Historians consider that the technique of reaching religious ecstasy has been borrowed by followers of Baal Shem Tov (Rabbi Yisrael ben Elizer) from Sufi. Frantic dance, shouts tearing the body envelope, dilution in "brothers", submission to the "teacher" are common in Hasidism and Sufim

"There are assumption that Baal Shem Toy met Sufis in Carpathians. His concepts were the reflection of Sufi philosophy", continued.

Sufis are indifferent to clothes. They compare themselves to a bee, which collects honey from different flowers, but does not turn into honey. It is impossible to follow the flight of a bee, but it knows, where exactly it flies and what flower will sit on.

The appearance of Book of Zohar at the end of the XIIIth century coincided with the rise of Christian intellectual ideas, which gave the world Roger Bacon, Saint Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great and Meister Eckhart. It also was the heyday of Sufism. Was it a coincidence?

Bacon, a philosopher and scientist from Oxford, studied at the School of Enlightenment in Cordoba, This school was based on the doctrine of a Jewish wise man Solomon Ibn Gabirol (Avicebron). Under the influence of Ibn Gabirol Saint Francis of Assisi and Roger Bacon became members of the Franciscan Order. Ibn Gabirol himself was closely connected with Sufis.

It does not look like a coincidence. It looks like a turning point in the history of the development of the spirit, hidden behind a screen of bloody and dazzling acts.

Where does this invisible way of mystical knowledge lead the mankind? A Spanish (Sicilian) Sufi Idries Shah quoted an ancient Sufi tale in his book "Sufism"

Four traveling companions, one Persian, one Arab, one Greek and one Turk, become hungry. With just a Coin between them, they begin to argue.

"I want angur," says the Persian.

"I want uzum," says the Turk.

"I want inab," says the Arab.

"But I want stafil," says the Greek.

A passer by takes their coin and shortly, returns with grapes -"angur" in Persian, "uzum" in Turkish, "inab" in Arabic, "stafil" in Greek.

The quarrelers were the representatives of different religions. The passer by was a Sufi. Giving them grapes, he showed that their religions differed only by names. Having understood this, they should stop senseless disputes and take up their main task - learning to do wine from grapes. They should peel off the symbols to find out the quintessence of all religions - ways of comprehension of God and love for fellow creatures.

" I thought about various beliefs, passionately wishing to understand them, and understood that they are similar to many branches of one tree. Do not force a man to prefer one belief to another because it will distract him from the trunk. In fact the trunk itself searches for the person and shows him its greatness and all its secret values for him to comprehend them" (Hussein ibn Mansur al -Hallaj)

The same idea is in Omar Khayyam's verses:

"In a cloister and cell, a monastery and synagogue

Some are frightened by hell, others dream of paradise,

But in the hearts of those who have comprehended divine secrets,

There is no place to such imagination".

The Jerusalem Sheikh

In the XIIIth century a Sufi Sheikh Baha -ud-din Naqshband Bukhari from Bukhara sent his pupils to all parts of the world to spread the secret knowledge. Some of them went to the Holy Land - one of the saddest and neglected corners of the Old World at that time. They settled in Jerusalem and became a part of the huge Naqshbandi Sufi Order (Tariqat). At present it is headed by Sheikh Aziz Bukhari.

Bukhari cherishes memories of the past. His house, hidden in the " beehive" of internal yards in the Old City of Jerusalem, is decorated by carpets, as they do in Central Asia, photo of his grandfather, father and their families. Once a week Sufis gather in the house of Sheikh Aziz Bukhari for an evening vigil - zikr. Zikr is going away from every day reality. Buddhists fall into trance by meditation in silence and loneliness. Sufis lead by a teacher-Sheikh induce trance by dancing, singing, and rhythmical flapping to music. Zikr begins with conversation, reading of prayers and verses while drinking strong tea or coffee.

"We try to concentrate one of another. The sheikh sees all the people sitting opposite him. He speaks, listens, answers. Gradually people start feeling as a whole, their force accumulates", Sheikh Bukhari said.

Unification of people spirals their inspiration leading them up to the peak - the unification with Almighty. Zikr assumes its second stage. The ideas and feeling of Sufis are now directed not each other, but to God. The rhythm, rune, and movements of bodies unite everyone's pray into one bunch of the feeling sent upwards.

Ignorant find no sense in zikr. Words look as muffled mutter; movements seem chaotic, convulsive, and dancing looks mad. But there always is perfection and orientation in this act.

Every Sufi Tariqat has its own way of achieving the maximal concentration and detachment: dance, rotation, jumps, fighting movements. Sheikh Aziz Bukhari showed me how trance is reached in Naqshbandi Tariqat. He closed his eyes and started rocking himself slowly. "We sit down on the ground, our eyes are closed, and everyone repeats one and the same motive. The sounds grows louder, rocking becomes more frequent.

There are no other thoughts except of God. The recitative which we repeat is a pray: "There is no other god, except God".

We ask God to forgive us. It is the obligatory beginning, the introduction. Because everyone is sinful, everyone makes mistakes, sometimes unconscious. We ask for mercy, and then we thank Him. God gave us everything, and we do not even think of thanking Him. Take for example our eyes. How fragile, vulnerable and unique they are! We can see the world. But how many times in our lives have we thanked Him for them?"

"He Knows who tries"

Sufism is a philosophy. "A person does not know, what he wants, what he has come to this world for. He complains about his life. He addresses doctors, lawyers, officials, but not God. He forgets the rule: when you ask, ask not from the servant but from the owner. Do not accuse God of yours miseries, in fact you yourself do not know, what will be better for you", Bukhari explained.

Parables are the Sufi language. One of them is a story about a ruler of one realm who decided to become a virtuous sovereign. Twice, leaving his palace, he gave a gold ingot sewn up in a chicken to a poor man. The poor man sold the chicken to the warder almost for nothing. At last the ruler ordered his servants to accompany the poor man with "the gold chicken" to his house. "Did he cut the chicken?" the ruler asked when they returned. "Yes" - "Did he see the gold ingot? Was he happy?" - "No, he fell to the ground and died"/ a servant answered.

At night when the king was sleeping God came to him in his dream. God told him: "If I had wanted, I would have made him rich. But you decided to make him rich, and he died".

"God knows that people are poor and unfortunate. But He also knows that money will not help them but will only increase their suffering. One must be grateful to Creator for what he has, accept life as it is and appreciate it".

Sheikh Bukhari thinks that people try to deceive God. Their prayers are too often false, and their piety is ostentatious. They are similar to negligent workers who hope to deceive their master. However, nobody can deceive the Real Master...

A true religion is an inside work, not prayers in a mosque, church or synagogue. There is a story about a man who days and nights prayed in a mosque. His relatives brought him food and looked after him. He considered himself to be almost sacred. However, actually he was an egoist", Bukhari told.

One's behavior is nothing compared to the soul-perfecting process. "The Prophet has a story about a person who has come back from war. He finished his "small war" to begin a "great" one-the war with his instincts and errors"

The philosophy of Sufism teaches how to overpower this enemy. There are no rules and instructions here. It is impossible to study Sufism from books. It can be understood only through personal experience. "he knows who tries", a Sufi aphorism says.

"how to describe the difference in tastes of honey and sugarcane?" disciples asked their Sufi teacher al-Hamdani

"You need to taste honey", al-Hamdani answered.

The word Tariqat means a "palm tree". But in a more comprehensive sense it means "to be on one's way"

"When you approach the sea talks about inflows are forgotten" (Hakim Sanai, Hadiqatu'l Haqiqat or The Walled Garden of Truth).

Beam of Deity

Must a man who has taken the Path of Heavenly Love abandon earthly love? For a Sufi there is nothing more ridiculous than this question. Asceticism and solitary life are alien to Sufism, and early Sufism (as in Omar Khayyam and Ibn Arabi poems) is full of love lyrics. Love of a woman and love of God are only different sides of one truth, and every touching it is magic, Ibn Arabi believed, Jalal ad-Din Rumi thought a woman to be "a beam of Deity". Rumi, Omar Khayyam and Ibn Arabi crossed the border of such definitions as "good" and "bad". There is no good source of bad source, wile love or elevated love. There is love or absence of love; life or absence of life.

...Once Hodja Nasreddin's disciple asked his teacher to show the apple of Eden to him. Hodja Nasreddin bent down and lifted a rotten apple lying at his legs. The pupil was amazed: "The apple of Eden should be perfect!" - "The Heavenly apple is perfect, but you would not see a paradise apple in any other from", Nasreddin answered.

Our perception is limited, and a person not developed spiritually can hardly understand, how a physical body and spirit melt away into one unity. It was equally difficult for people in the past to believe that the ground was round; that vapor, hail, snow and fog were all water in its different conditions.

Spiritual Way is not the way from a town to a monastery. For Sufi live beauty is more splendid than the most brilliant theory. Any scheme emasculates the sense of creation. In his poem Masnavi Rumi tells about a mullah who found a falcon on a window sill.

"What a strange pigeon!" the mullah said indignantly. He caught the bird, shortened its beak and claws and set it free. "Thank God, now you look like a bird, you must have been badly cared about", mullah pronounced with satisfaction.

Love outside one's nature, with "the beak and claws cut" is not love. Love of God without recognition of life created by Him is not love. Love of general ideas without love of beauty, personified as a woman, is not love.

"My heart can take any shape:

For a monk it will become a monastery, for idols
temple,

For gazelles - a pasture, for the faithful - kaaba.

It can become a roll of the Torah and Koran.

My belief is Love; not matter where its camels turn,

Love remains my religion and belief.."

(In Arabi)

There is no Sufi without integrity"

A Sufi doesn't imagine himself outside of mundane world. "It is important for Sufis to live among people, in the atmosphere of spiritual pressure which wakens consciousness", Yakub Ibn Yuuf said. - "One can't love the world staying far from it, to love people staying far from them".

The majority of Sufis, including Sufi Sheikhs, try to be in the center of life, have business and families. "Every Sufi should realize himself within the limits of this world, live in it.

Many teachers have shops or stores, and it is not accidental. A shop is not only the source of income; it also is the place where people gather. A sheikh can talk, participate, listen and ask here",

One Sufi teacher was asked, what it meant to be a Sufi. The answer was: "To get up in the morning, go the market and think about God",

Sufis have neither finished formulas, nor a single accomplished school or system. Sufi notions look as unsteady and escaping, as a mercury ball.

"There are Sufis who diligently observe religious canons, and those who do not. There are supporters of mystical approaches and rationalistic ones. There are disputes about

the ways of achievement of religious ecstasy. One needs much experience and has to make efforts to feel a Sufi", Yakub explained.

Elusiveness of Sufism drives mad those people, who got used to cognizing the world by means of logic... "A person entangles himself in his chains. A Lion (a Person of the way) breaks his cage to pieces" (Hakim Sanai, The walled Garden of Truth)...

The following tale about Hodja Nasreddin and his pupil illustrated the idea. " A man came to stay with Nasreddin who lived in the mountains. Knowing that each act of the enlightened Sufi was full of sense, the beginner asked Nasreddin why he blew on his hands. " To warm them"/ the mullah answered.

Soon Nasreddin poured two cups of soup and blew on it. "What are you doing this for, Master?" the pupil asked. " To cool the soup, of course", the Teacher answered. After that the pupil left Nasreddin. He could not trust the person using the same methods for achieving opposite results",

How to connect incompatible? "Any secret protects itself, it is possible to find it out only in spirit and practice of Work", (a Sufi wisdom quote).

What Work is meant here? Jalal ad-Din Rumi answered this question. The main thing, he said, is to waken the inside consciousness concealed in the "ruins of mind", "Join to the brotherhood, become similar to brothers and you will feel the pleasure of real life. Go along the street and look at distraught owners of the "ruins". Drink a bowl of excitement for you do not feel shame. Close your eyes and learn to see with inner sight. Open your soul if you look for embraces.

...forget about your life: rely on the kindness of Pastor... Think only about the creator of the Idea; forget about everything else; for it is better to think about Life, than bread. Why do you sleep in prison, when the open space of the divine land is around you? Reject confused thoughts and you will see the secret answer. Be silent and you will hear the language of immortality. Forget about life and the world and you will see the Life of the World",

The secret opens itself to those who follow the Way.

... It is impossible to describe the taste of honey; it is necessary to try the honey. "He knows who tries",

Not Christian or Jew or Muslim,
not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or Zen.
Not any religion, or cultural system.
I am not from the East or the West,
nor out of the ocean or up
From the ground, not natural or ethereal,
Not composed of elements at all.
I do not exist, am not an entity in this world
or the next,
did not descend from Adam and Eve
or any origin story.
My place is placeless, a trace of the traceless.
Neither body nor soul.
I belong to the beloved
have seen the two worlds as one
And that one call to and know,
First, last, outer, inner, only that
Breath breathing human

Jalaludding Rumi 'Only Breath'

(from The Essential Rumi translated by Coleman Barks with John Moyne)

**Person from Divani Shams Tabrez
by Moulana Rumi (RAA)**

Show thy face, for I desire the orchard and the rose-garden
Open thy lips, for I desire sugar in plenty.
O sun, show forth thy face from the veil of cloud,
For I desire that radiant glowing countenance.
From love for thee I hearkened to the sound of the falcon-drum ;
I have returned, for the sultan's arm is my desire.
'Vex me no more,' thou saidst capriciously, 'begone!'
I desire that saying of thine, 'Vex me no more.'
And thy bidding off with 'Depart, he is not at home,'
And the airs and pride and harshness of the door-keeper I desire.
O sweet Zephyr, that blowest from the flower-plot of the Friend,
Blow on me, for I desire news of the basil.
The bread and water of destiny is like a treacherous flood;
I am a great fish and desire the sea of 'Oman.
Like Jacob I am uttering cries of grief,
I desire the fair face of Joseph of Canaan.
By God, without thee the city is a prison to me,
O'er mountain and desert I desire to wander.
In one hand a wine-cup and in one hand a curl of the Beloved:
Such a dance in the midst of the market-place is my desire.
My heart is weary of these weak-spirited companions;
I desire the Lion of God and Rustam, son of Zal.
Filings of beauty are in the possession of every one that exists;
I desire that quarry and that mine of exquisite loveliness.
Bankrupt tho' I be, I will not accept a small carnelian;
The mine of rare tremulous carnelian is my desire.
Of this folk I am full of complaint, weeping and weary;
I desire the drunkards' wailing and lamentation.
My soul is grown weary of Pharaoh and his tyranny;
I desire the light of the countenance of Moses, son of 'Imran.
They said, 'He is not to be found, we have sought Him long,'
A thing which is not to be found-that is my desire.
I am more eloquent than the nightingale, but because of vulgar envy
A seal is on my tongue, tho' I desire to moan.
Yesterday the Master with a lantern was roaming about the city,
Crying, 'I am tired of devil and beast, I desire a man,' My state has passed even
beyond all yearning and desire;
I desire to go from Being and Place toward the Essentials. He is hidden from our eyes,
and all objects are from Him; I desire that hidden One whose works are manifest. Mine,
ear listened to the tale of faith and was intoxicated;
Say, 'The limbs and the body and the form of faith are my desire,'
I myself am Love's rebeck, and Love is a rebeck to me;
I desire the band and bosom and modulation of 'Othman.
That rebeck is saying, 'Every moment passionately
I desire the favours of the mercy of the Merciful.'
O cunning minstrel, con the rest of this ode

After this fashion, for after this fashion I desire.
Display, O Sun who art Tabriz's glory, the dawning of
Love;
I am the hoopoe: the presence of Solomon is my desire.

BEAUTY OF PRAISED ONE
by S.L Peeran

The life's clock is ticking fast
The age of my life is wearing out
The light of the day is being spent
The gloom of darkness is about to dawn.

The birds and butterflies are returning home
Cattle and herds have stopped grazing
Crickets and grasshoppers are now silent
Stars in the sky have begun to twinkle.

My heart's yearning have grown heavier
Longing and sighs are deeper and deeper
Flow of tears is unabated and clear
My love's treasures are pure and simple.

My praised one's grace is about to gleam
Beauty and effulgence to shine for ever

WHAT IS LOVE
by S.L Peeran

We are all used to repeat these words
"We love Allah and His Prophet". What
is this Love? When you proclaim
something as yours, then you find
many contestants and claimants
fiercely opposing you. Among them
is the jealous and hateful. who are these?
Is it Satan, Man who? who?
You get distracted fully and then
Where is your proclamation of LOVE?
Let love be not proclaimed.
There are armies with latest armory to skin you up.
Seek only MERCY, Benevolence and Grace.
It is difficult to challenge that we are
Of Love and for love. It is equally
difficult to achieve love and great
problem to call our selves as "khudam"
(servants) of "Phanjaten" (Holy Prophet, Hz Ali,
Hz Fathima. Hz Hasan and Hz Hussain.
By proclaiming love, we cannot claim
equality and nearness. It is MERCY alone that can help. Let us recite His Names.

HOW TO REACH THE TRUTH? by S.L Peeran

Please tell me as to why it is difficult to Reach the TRUTH and so easy to lie? Truth is a steep mountain, slippery And difficult to climb. It requires courage Of convictions. Faith is its foundation and certainty is its wheels. Love is Its engine and prayers is its petrol. It has to confront obstacles, rough Weather. It requires sacrifice. It has to face hunger and thirst. Sometimes it loses face and has to face humiliation, insults. TRUTH is let down by one and all. It has to stand above like a scare-crow in a rice field. TRUTH is always simple and most humble. It fulfills all its promises and oaths. It is never deceptive neither it Camouflages. It is open-minded and open Heartted, never secretive of suspicious. It is generous and hospitable and charitalbe. It is quick in forgiveness and in repentance It is fearless and crystal-clear. It shed tears for Sufferers. One who is truthful reaches ETERNAL Light and LORD i.e. Reality.

WHY PEOPLE LIE? by S.L Peeran

Tell me why people lie? Why do they Become compulsive liars? It is due to FEAR which envelops our being and encoils us as a snake. As a child you fear your teacher and to escape punishment you lie. Allah will not ask us but will ask all our hands, tongue, For what we have done. They will stand against us as a witness. A child is Unable to make a difference between right and wrong. So also a madman. Hence They are exempted from prayers and from questioning. So also a person in deep sleep. Because at this stage. there is no intelligence. Therefore every person who is sane should stand the test. A "MAJZUB" is totally absorbed in His LOVE, for him there is no questioning Love is giving full and total attention And surrendering yourself to that Person and to Him alone. A slave has no personality. no rights nothing. Can I be that slave?

"Majzub" : God-intoxicated person

DUALITY

Tell me why there is duality in our minds?
Why this plurality? This mind playing
Hide and seek? This confusion between
Right and wrong, black and white, light
and darkness. Why do we need a peg
to hang our coat? A shoulder to weep on,
And always someone on whom you want
To unburden your soul? Is it because
Man is always at daggers drawn? Bitter,
Cold, sarcastic, angry. His various traits
Challenge each other, each trait
Trying to claim ascendancy.
The light of wisdom rarely dawns on minds,
Unless the mind is stilled to ONENESS
And purified. On confused mind polytheism
Sets in as milk turning sour unless boiled.
A Momin is one who controls his mind
and heart to Allah and His Prophet's path
So, for which, you need to practically
Surrender before a purified soul in this life.

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