

Revelation of Mystery



Kashf Al-Mahjub

The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufiism



By

Ali B. Uthman Al-Jullabi Al-Hujwiri

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(Kashf Al-Mahjub)

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Translated

By

**Lieutenant Colonel (R)
Muhammad Ashraf Javed**

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Zahid Javed Rana, Abid Javed Rana
Lahore, Pakistan

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Translator's Note

Cognitional gnosis is the foundation of all blessings in this world and in the next, for the most important thing for a man at all times and under all circumstances is knowledge of Allah, Allah Almighty hath said, "I have only created Jinee and men, that they may serve Me," and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "If you knew Allah as He ought to be known, you would walk on the seas, and the mountains would move at your supplication." In the prevailing era majority of the mankind has been led astray from the righteous path and has captivated of their sensual desires. They have not only forgotten that for what purpose they were created but have brought themselves to the level of beasts. Their whole activities are more in resemblance to them, negating their selves that were exalted to highest state among the creation. Allah gave him the status of His Deputy on earth and commanded that they should worship Him only. *Kashf al-Mahjub* is in circulation for the last over one thousand years and its reading has caused millions of hearts to find their way to the Truth. Although no translation can match the original text, particularly when the use of technical terms encompass the meanings and feelings of the trade holder, it becomes more difficult to translate the expressions in their true sense. However, earnest efforts have been made to produce the work as near to the original as possible. Persian and Arabic used by the author have been added in italic format and their closest possible vocabulary in English has been used in translation. The translation of verses of Quran has been selected from the work of Abdullah Yusuf Ali. The help taken from the scripts for this translation are given below in notes¹. Since in Islamic culture the Arabic vocabulary is much in use and understood by all folks, therefore, such phrases and words which are in common use among Muslim community are made part of the translation along with English translation. It is hoped that all those hearts who are desirous of the knowledge of the Truth would overcome their thirst by studying this book and if Allah helps them, would achieve their goal of attaining His proximity.

Lieutenant Colonel (R)
Muhammad Ashraf Javed

¹ *Kashf al-Mahjub* in Persian (Nuskhā Tehran), Printed by Tasawwuf Foundation, Lahore, *Kashf al-Mahjub* English Translation by Reynold A. Nicholson, *Kashf al-Mahjub* Urdu Translation by Sayd Muhammad Farooq al-Qadri, and *Kashf al-Mahjub* Urdu translation and commentary by Captain Wajid Baksh Syal Chishti Sabri.

Preface

Kashf al-Mahjub is one of the oldest Persian treatises on Mysticism. It was written around mid of eleventh century. The original work is in Persian and it has been translated into many Oriental and European languages. The Manuscripts of the *Kashf al-Mahjub* are preserved in several Asian and European libraries which includes 900 years old manuscripts also. The author composed many titles to which he has occasion to refer in the *Kashf al-Mahjub* but none of his works except *Kashf al-Mahjub* have been preserved.

Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Uthman b. Abi Ali al-Jullabi al-Ghaznavi al-Hujwiri (*may Allah be pleased with him*) was born in a noble family of Ghazna which was renowned for their piety and countenance. His lineage reaches to Ali through Hasan (*may Allah be pleased with them*). He was a Sunni Hanafite and in mystic way followed Junaid and was the disciple of Abu al-Fadl Muhammad b. al Hasan al-Khuttali. In his novitiate days he widely traveled in most parts of the Islamic Empire and graced himself with the knowledge of mystic path. He met many highly reputed Sheikhs of his time and benefited from their experiences. For some time he had a settled life in Iraq, where he ran deeply into debt. Finally, around 431 A.H. in the reign of Mahmud Ghaznavi he along with Abu Said Hujwiri and Hammad Sarkhasi came to Lahore and ended his days in that city. He died in 465 A.H. and buried there. His tomb at Lahore is visited by the multitudes that go there to seek their desires. The prayers are granted there. He is popularly remembered as *Data Gang Baksh* (the generous).

The *Kashf al-Mahjub*, belongs to the later years of the author's life, and was written on the request of a fellow-townsmen, Abu Said al-Hujwiri. Its object seems to set forth a complete system of Sufism, and the author's attitude throughout remains that of a teacher instructing a student. Even the biographical section of the work is largely expository. Before stating his own view the author examines the current opinions on the same topic and refutes them if necessary. The discussion of mystical problems and controversies is enlivened by many illustrations drawn from his personal experiences. The author keeping in mind the ordinary seeker has

avoided any philosophical and intellectual discussion and in a very simple and Quranic way has desired seekers to follow Quran and Sunnah in their true spirit and totally denies any act falling out of the bounds of Quran and Sunnah. It maintains equilibrium in *Shariat* and Mysticism. He very often warns his readers that none follower of the path including those who have attained the highest degree of holiness, are exempt from the obligation of obeying the *Shariat*. The centre point of *Kashf al-Mahjub* is that the man should annihilate himself in the essence of the Truth to such an extent that none of his act should take place through his own thoughts or efforts, rather it should emerge as acts of the Divine and his own condition should be mere of a puppet which only works through the movements of string controlled by its owner.

It will not be a boasting opinion to mention *Kashf al-Mahjub* as the primary source on the laws of mysticism. It elaborates all the stages of the Path of Sufism in such a manner that in the words of the author the seeker studying and following the book would not need the auspicious guidance of a Sheikh (spiritual guide). He has touched upon the doctrines held by the different sects of Sufis, in which he enumerates special doctrine of each. The work has always been applauded by majority of the theologians and Sheikhs representing different schools of thought and it has been always a source of excellent guidance to the seekers of the Path. It leads one to straight path and mind of the seeker is enlightened with the purity of *Shariat* and reality of the Truth and he feels independent of any doubt or uncertainty.

Lieutenant Colonel (R)
Muhammad Ashraf Javed

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most
Compassionate**

All Praises be to Allah, who hath revealed the secrets of His kingdom to His Auliya اولياء (Saints), and hath manifested the mysteries of His Almightyness to His intimates, and hath shed the blood of Lovers with the sword of His Glory, and hath let the hearts of Gnostics taste the joy of His union! He is Who bringeth dead hearts to life by the splendor of the perception of His Eternity and Majesty, and breathes them with the comforting spirit of Marifat معرفت (knowledge of Allah) by divulging His Names. And peace be upon His Prophet Muhammad, and his family and his companions and his wives!

Introduction

Sheikh Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Uthman b. Abi Ali al-Jullabi al-Ghaznavi al-Hujwiri (*may Allah be pleased with him*) says that I performed *istikhara* استخاره (*seek for Allah's blessing*) and after turning away all self worldly motives from my heart, and O Abu Said Hujwiri may Allah bless you, I have decided to write this book in accordance to your request. I have titled this book as "*Kashf al-Mahjub* كشف المحجوب" (The Revelation of Mystery). The beneficence of this book is evident from its title and having known your desire, I have arranged the book in different chapters suitable for the purpose. I pray Allah Almighty to help and prosper me in completion of this book, and I divest myself of my own strength and ability, as I have trust only on Him and He is the only Helper.

There are following two reasons to mention my name at the beginning of the book, one particular, and the other general. As regards to the general reason, the ignorant of Sufism, not finding the author's name at different places in the book try to attribute his work to themselves and thus the author's aim is defeated, since it is the desire of each author that his name be

kept alive and the readers may reward him with their blessings. I have already been cheated on this account twice.

Once an individual took *Diwan* of my poetical works, of which I had no other copy and he omitted my name from it and publicized it as his own work, and caused all my efforts to go in vain. May Allah forgive him! The second incidence took place when I composed a book on manners of Sufism titled *Minhaj al-Din* منهاج الدين. An indecent pretender of Sufism, after omitting my name from the book, introduced it to the people with his own name. Although, the connoisseurs knowing his capabilities laughed at his claim, until, Allah withdrew His grace from him and erased his name from the register of those who seek to enter the Divine Court.

As regards to the particular reason, the people after seeing author's name on a book, know that how skilled and versed is he on the subject. They try to protect his rights and attempt to read and understand it more seriously. This leads to better satisfaction and desire of both readers and the author is fulfilled.

As regards to the words "I performed *istikhara* استخاره", I wished to observe the respect due to Allah, who said to His Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers:

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

"When thou does read the Quran, seek Allah's protection from Satan the Rejected One," (Q 16:98)

The meanings of *istaadat* استعادت, *istikharat* استخارت, and *istaanat* استعانت, are to ask for, committing all one's affairs to Allah and seeking His protection from all worldly contamination and mischief. The companions relate that Prophet (peace be upon him) used to educate them to seek Allah's blessing as it has been commanded in the Quran.

When one recognizes that goodness and improvement of each act does not depend on his own efforts and foresight, but all good and evil that happens to him is decreed by Allah, Who knows best what is beneficial for him, then he having no alternative but to surrender himself to the Destiny and pray Allah to deliver him from wickedness of his own soul and bless him with His mercy in all his acts. It is mandatory to perform *istikhara* before committing to any act, so that Allah may save

one from all the evils and misfortunes, as He is the Only to grace favors.

As regards to "turning away all self worldly motives from my heart", it means that any act which evolves around self interest is devoid of Divine's Grace and diverts one's heart from straight path. The result of every act is either success or failure. If the desire of the self motivated person is fulfilled, it brings him perdition, for any achievement of the *nafs* نفس (lower soul) is the key to Hell. And if he fails, he would still remain under constant inward pressure. Nevertheless, the key to Paradise is to restrain one's *nafs* from its desires. Allah has said:

وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ - فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

"And had restrained (their) souls from lower Desires, their abode will be the Garden." (Q 79:40-41)

The desires of the *nafs* نفس (lower soul) mean, is neither to desire blessedness and acquiescence of Allah in one's act nor to aim at saving *nafs* from Divine punishment. Similarly, the misdeeds and follies of *nafs* have neither any limit nor it feels disgusted. Allah willing, a chapter on this will be found at appropriate place in this book.

Now as to the words "I have decided to write this book in accordance to your request," since you considered me worthy enough for the answer of your question and asked to write this book, and you had a righteous aim before you, therefore, it was incumbent on me to write a comprehensive answer to your question. It may be possible that I might not fully justify your request; however, I have wholeheartedly made an intention to complete this work.

One must have right intention before committing to any act, so that if during completion if some flaws develop in his work, he may be excused. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *نِيَّتُهُ الْوَمِنْ خَيْرٍ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ* the intention of believer is better than his deed." It is better to start something with intention than doing without it. In committing to any act intention is a vital force and a reality through which one instantly moves from one command to another, though apparently no signs are manifested. For example, if one remains hungry throughout the day without having intended to fast, he gets no recompense for it but if he does the same with an intention to

fast and bears hunger, he would be counted among the favorites of Allah, although apparently there is no difference between both. Similarly, if a traveler without any intention stays at one place for a longer duration he will remain a traveler but if he makes an intention to stay there, he will be considered resident. Many such examples can be given in this regard. Therefore, it is always must to make an earnest intention before any assignment is taken in hand.

When I said that I had named this book "*Kashf al-Mahjub* كشف المحجوب (The Revelation of Mystery)", my object was that the name of the book should proclaim its contents to readers of insight. Beware that save Allah's saints and His chosen friends, the rest of the mankind is veiled from the subtlety of the spiritual truth. Since this book is an elucidation of the Way of Truth, a clarification of mystical sayings, and an uplifting of the veil of mortality, therefore this title is much suitable to it.

As *Kashf* كشف (unveiling) destroys the *hajib* حجاب (veil), similarly veil is the cause of the destruction of *Kashf*. As there is no concept of remoteness in proximity and nearness or there is no existence of proximity in distance and remoteness or as an insect which germinates from vinegar dies when it is exposed to any other matter, while those animals which are the creation from other substances perish if they are put in vinegar, it is difficult to divert the meanings to others than they were meant for. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "كل مسير لما خلق" there is an ease in everything for what it has been created."

There are two types of veils which exist between Allah and the mankind:

- one is the *hajib rayni* حجاب ريني (veil of covering), these can never be removed, and
- the other is the *hajib ghayni* حجاب غيني (veil of clouding), these can easily be removed.

There are people whose own self is a veil between them and the Truth, so for them the truth and falsehood are the same. There are others who are veiled from the Truth because of their own attributes. The nature and heart of such people persistently seek the Truth and evade falsehood.

The veil of essence "*hajib rayni*" is never removed and *rayn* رين, *Khatim* ختم, and *Tabaa* طبع have the same meaning, i.e.

sealing and imprinting. Thus Allah has said, " كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا " by no means! But on their hearts is the stain of the (ill) which they do!" (Q 83:14); then they are like those about whom Allah has said, " إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ " as to those who reject Faith, it is the same to them whether thou warn them or do not warn them: they will not believe." (Q 2:6); and He explained the cause thereof, saying, " خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِم وَآلِهِمْ " Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing," (Q 2:7) and " طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ " Allah hath sealed their hearts," (Q 9:93).

The veil of attributes (*hajib ghayni*), may be removed at times, though change of essence is not achievable but the alteration of attributes is possible. The Sheikhs have contributed many subtle hints on the subject of *rayn* رین and *ghayn* غین, as Junaid has said:

الرين من جملة الوطنات و الغين من جملة الخطرات

"*Rayn* belongs to the class of permanent things and *ghayn* to the class of transitory things."

Therefore, *watan* وطن (the permanent thing) is perpetual, and *khatar* خطر (hazards) are momentary. It is impossible to make a mirror out of a stone, even if thousand experts may apply their skill together, but a rusty mirror can easily be made bright by polishing, for darkness is innate in the stone, and brightness is innate in the mirror. The essence is permanent and accepts no alteration but the temporary attribute is changeable and does not last.

I have composed this book to polish the hearts of those who are subject to *hajab ghayni* (veil of clouding), but in whom the substance of light of the Truth is existent, in order that the veil may be lifted from them by the blessing of reading it, and that they may find their way to spiritual reality. But those who are habitual defiant of the Truth and follower of falsehood, and they may be presented with ample proofs, will never find their way thither, and this book will be of no use to them.

Now with reference to my saying that having known your desire, I have arranged the book in different chapters suitable for the purpose, I mean that until and unless one fully gets aware of the quest of the questioner, suitable reply cannot be furnished. A question presupposes a difficulty, and it is insoluble until its nature is ascertained. General reply is only

possible when the questioner has full knowledge of the subject but with a novice one needs to go into detail, and offer diverse explanations and definitions. In this case especially, you desired me to answer your questions in detail and write a book on the matter.

And with reference to my saying, "I pray Allah Almighty to help and prosper me," means that without Allah's help man cannot achieve any good; and *taufiq* توفيق means that when Allah blesses one to perform acts deserving reward, this is truly success given by Him. The Quran and *Sunnah* (Tradition of Prophet, peace be upon him) also affirm to seek *taufiq* from the Lord Almighty. The whole *Ummah* is unanimous in this regard, except *Mutazilites* and some who have a belief on *qadar* قدر (predetermination). They assert that the expression *taufiq* is void of meaning. *Sufi* Sheikhs have said, "التوفيق هو القدر على الطاعة عند الاستعمال Allah increases the working strength of a man who shows obedience to Him." When a man renders obedience and submits himself to Allah's command, he is graced with more strength and courage from Allah and he step by step advances to higher rank. Allah is the creator of all human actions and movements. In short the strength which forces a man to obedience to Allah is *taufiq*.

This very discussion is out of place here, as the aim of this book is different. I now return to the actual subject which is your desire and start this book by repeating your question.

The Questions Proposed

The questioner, Abu Said al-Hujwiri, has asked the answers of the following questions:

- Explain the true meanings of the Path of Sufism.
- Explain mystical allegories and hints and different *maqamat* (stations) of *Sufis*.
- How the love of Allah and ecstasy overwhelm the hearts, elucidate it.
- Why the intellect is incapable to perceive the reality of the Truth, explain it.
- Why the *nafs* (lower soul) is reluctant to attain the proximity of the Truth and how the spirit gets enrichment and life thereof.

-Explain the doctrine, sayings and the practical aspects of Sufism which are connected with these theories.

Ali b. Uthman al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri to whom question has been made, says:

Sufism is obsolete in our age and particularly in this country (India) where majority of the people is captivated with worldly lust. They have turned away their faces from being satisfied with the decree of the Truth. The divines and those who pretend to have knowledge of the path have formed a conception of Sufism which is conflicting to its basics. Therefore, wake up and gather your strength to attain that where the worldlings have no access. Who other than the chosen one can have access to this rare jewel? The prevailing conditions are such that leaving aside the elects rest all have lost their hearts and lack desire to acquire the knowledge of the path. The common people and the elite both derive delight from mere expressions and feel satisfied in veiled conditions. Their blind conformity has taken the place of spiritual enthusiasm. Search does not exist in their dictionary. The common people like these conditions and say that they recognize the Truth. The elects are happy and contended on that their hearts have desire and their *nafs* (lower soul) throb to seek the Truth. They feel in their hearts a desire for the next world and claim it to be a vision and ardent love. The claimants because of their pretensions are far away from attaining the reality. The seekers while neglecting their ascetic practices indulge in idle thoughts, and claim that to be contemplation.

I have already written few books on this subject, but all these efforts of mine went in vain as some pretenders picked out selected passages from them to impress their followers as it was their work and they destroyed rest of the works. This sort of people considers such sadism and denial as Allah's blessing. Some did occupy themselves willingly but failed to gain anything from it. Some gained the knowledge of works, but did not comprehend the meaning. Such people only like the expressions thereof and think that the memorization and copying of such expression is the Sufism. This is their misfortune.

This all has been said because the state of the knowledge of Sufism is like alchemy which is very rare and when it is

obtained very little of it converts brass into gold. One only desires that medication which may heal his ache. As a venerable man has said:

فكل من في فواده وجع يطلب شيئا يوافق الوجع

"One seeks only that medicine which fits to his disease."

That means nobody wants to mix pearls and coral with common remedies like *shalitha* and *dawa al-musk*. This is a very subtle hint and everyone cannot really apprehend it. Earlier also, when the works of eminent *Sufis*, fell into the hands of those who could not appreciate them, sold these works in the hands of binders who used them making lining for caps or binding for the poetry and made these works at par with that of Abu Nuwas and the pleasantries of Jahiz. The other example is that of the king's falcon who when resting on an old woman's cottage suffered in the hands of such illiterates who clipped away his wings.

We are born in the era when our contemporaries have given the name of:

- Shariat* (religious law) to their lusts; pride and desire "honor and knowledge"; hypocrisy "fear of Allah"; concealment of anger "clemency"; and disputation is called discussion;
- For them wrangling and foolishness is dignity; insincerity is renunciation; and cupidity is "devotion to Allah"
- Their senseless fancies are called divine knowledge and the motions of the heart and affection of the *nafs* (lower soul) they call divine love";
- For them heresy is poverty and skepticism is purity;
- Deviation and disbelief in religion is "self-annihilation".
- The neglect of the *Shariat* is the mystic path and evil communication with time servers is exercise of piety.

They have really subdued the true *Sufis* and have created the similar situation for them as it existed for *Ahl-i Bayt* (family of the Prophet) during the rule of the family of Marwan. As Abu Bakr al-Wasti said:

ابتلينا بزمان ليس فيه اداب ولا اخلاق الجاهليه ولا الحكام ذي المروة

"We are afflicted with a time in which there are neither the religious tenants of Islam nor the morals of Paganism nor the virtues of Chivalry."

Shibli adds to the same:

لحاح الله ذي الدنيا مناخالراكب فكل بعيد الهم فيها معذب

"Allah has provided refuge to the humankind at the halts which fall on their way, and who has to go afar, he remains agitated at these halts."

I have found this universe an abode of Divine mysteries, which are deposited in created things. The whole creation is a trustee of His Grace and everything possess subtleties and marvels for His friends. Substances, accidents, elements, bodies, forms, and properties all are veils of Divine mysteries. From the standpoint of *tawhid* توحيد (Unification) it is polytheism to affirm them. Allah has kept this universe in a state of veil, so that every identity according to its nature and being remained within the bounds find satisfaction from His decree and their own selves develop veil between them and the Truth. Their spirits become captive because of their association with the phenomenal being and go afar from the *maqam* مقام (station) of intimacy, so much so that their intellect and thoughts fail to apprehend the Divine mysteries and the spirit can but dimly perceives the marvels of proximity to the Truth. They get entangled into their own selves because of the darkness of their heedlessness and in concern to higher objectives they are lost behind self created veils. Therefore, Allah describing the condition says,

وَالْعَصْر - إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ

"By (the token of) time (through the ages), verily Man is in loss," (Q 103:1-2), i.e. the way universe has been created and designed because of that man is in loss (he has been veiled from the Truth). Further it is said, "إِنَّمَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ" except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds," (Q 103:3), and "إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا he was indeed unjust and foolish," (Q 33:72).²

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has also said,

خلق الله الخلق في ظلمته ثم ألقى عليه نورا

"Allah created the universe in dark and then enlightened it with His *Tajalli* (Nur)."

² The translation of the full verse is: "We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: But man undertook it-- He was indeed unjust and foolish."

Thus, these veils are part of the human nature, and intervene in proportion to the use of nature and intellect, until one becomes ignorant. One whole heartedly accepts the veil and prefers life over these. He remains unaware of the beauty of the revelation and by renouncing the mysteries of the Truth, he down grades him to the level of beasts. Such an individual enamored of his gross environment, remains sunken in ignorance and apathy, making no attempt to cast off the veil that has fallen upon him. Blind to the beauty of Oneness, he turns away from Allah to seek the vanities of this world and allows his appetite to oppress his reason.

Hence, his nature, all his acts and deeds get committed to satisfy his animal desire, so that he is left with no activity but eat, sleep and follow the *nafs* (lower soul). But Allah saves His friends from these miseries. He says, " ذُرْهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَمْتَعُوا وَيُلْهِمِ الْأَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ leave them alone, to enjoy (the good things of this life) and to please themselves: Let (false) Hope amuse them: soon will knowledge (undeceive them)," (Q 15:3). The inclination of their nature has hidden the mysteries of the Truth so as they are engulfed with misfortunes and deprivation. They are subdued by the *nafs* (lower soul) which is a great veil and root of all evils. The Quran describes it as " إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ" the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil." (Q 12:53).

Now I begin and explain to you, fully and lucidly, what you wish to know concerning the *maqamat* (stations) and the veils. I will interpret the expressions of the learned and add thereto some sayings of the Sheikhs and anecdotes about them, in order that your object may be accomplished. Even if the learned *Ulama* or others look into this work may recognize that the Path of Sufism has a firm root and fruitful branches. All the *Sufi* Sheikhs possessed this knowledge and encouraged their disciples to acquire it. They preserved it in doing so. They have never been addicted to frivolity and levity. Many of them have composed treatises on the method of Sufism. They elucidated excellent expressions of what were manifested on them by the Divine.

Chapter I

Knowledge

Allah describing the savants (*Ulama*) has said:

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

“Those truly fear Allah, among his servants, who have knowledge:” (Q 35:28).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم

“To seek knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim;”

اطلبوا العلم و لو كان بالصين

“Get knowledge, may it be from China.”

Knowledge is immense and life is short, therefore, it is not obligatory for the human beings to learn every aspect of knowledge, such as Astronomy, Medicine, and Arithmetic etc, but only so much of each as desirous upon by *Shariat* (religious law), i.e., enough astronomy to know the time (of prayer) at night; sufficient knowledge of medicine to abstain oneself from what is injurious; enough arithmetic to understand the division of inheritances and to calculate the duration of the *iddat*³, etc. Knowledge is obligatory only to that extent which helps one to act rightly. Allah condemns those who learn useless knowledge, وَيَعْلَمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ, and they learned what harmed them, not what profited them.” (Q 2:102). Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray daily, “اعوذ بك ” I take refuge with Thee from knowledge that profits naught.” The practice must be more even with little knowledge and knowledge should be adorned with practice. Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “المتعبد بلا فقه كالحمار في الطاحونته” the devotee without divinity is like a donkey turning a mill,” because the donkey goes round over its own track and never makes any advance. The same falls true on ignorant pious.

A group of people regards knowledge as superior to action, while another group prefers action first. In my opinion they

³ Probationary period (incumbent upon a woman in consequence of dissolution of marriage either by divorce or by the death of her husband).

both are wrong, because action cannot be called action without knowledge. It cannot become action until it has the backing of knowledge. Knowledge leads action to recompense. For instance, prayer is not really a prayer, unless performed with knowledge of the principles of purification and those which concern with the direction of *Qibla* (the direction of Kaba) and with knowledge of the nature of intention. Similarly, without the knowledge of the pre-requisites of prayer its performance will not be right. Thus, when all actions are based on knowledge, then how one can separate knowledge from action.

Those who prefer knowledge over action are also wrong, because knowledge without action really cannot be called knowledge. To gain knowledge, memorizing and repeating it are also acts for which a man is rewarded, but if knowledge is without action, its acquisition will not be rewarded. Allah has said,

نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"A party of the People of the Book threw away the Book of Allah behind their backs. As if (it had been something) they did not know!" (Q: 2:101).

These are the claims of the two groups. One of them gains knowledge to earn worldly honor and repute and by so is devoid of paying its due. Since they are unaware of beneficence of knowledge therefore they separate knowledge from action.

Some others say that they only require knowledge and need not to act. Such lot neither can be named as savants nor practitioners. Ibrahim b. Adham narrated that once on his way he saw a stone on which was written, "turn me over and read!" When he turned it, he found this inscription, "انت لا تعمل بما " أنت لا تعلم فكيف تطلب ما لا تعلم you do not practice what you know; why, then do you seek what you do not know?" It means that when you act upon what you know so that by its blessing you might be rewarded with the knowledge of that which you do not know. Uns b. Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said, " همته " العلماء اند رايه و همته السفهاء الروايته *Ulama* spend their strength in meditation and ignorant waste their strength in relating the anecdotes."

Since *Ulama* are far above from ignorance, therefore, he who uses his knowledge as a means of winning power and honor and wealth is not a savant, rather an ignorant because desire for wealth and power is ignorance. There is no better degree than knowledge because without knowledge one cannot apprehend the essence and attributes of Allah. It is only knowledge which leads a man to the higher stages of *maqamat* (stations), and he is blessed with *Kashf* (revelation).

Knowledge is of two kinds:

- Divine knowledge and
- Human knowledge.

The human knowledge is worthless in comparison with the Divine knowledge, because knowledge of Allah is an attribute of Himself, subsisting in Him, and His attributes are infinite. Our knowledge is an attribute of ourselves, subsisting in us, and our attributes are limited. As Allah has said,

وَمَا أَوْتَيْنَاكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

"of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you (O men!)" (Q 17:85).

In short, knowledge is among the praiseworthy manners and it has been defined as comprehension and investigation of the object known, but the best attribute of knowledge is, " العلم صفته " knowledge is such an attribute which makes an ignorant wise." Allah said, "والله مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ" but Allah is ever round the rejecters of faith!" (Q 2:19), "وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ" and Allah doth know all things." (Q 24:35).

Allah has absolute knowledge through which He knows all things existent and non-existent. None of His creature has any partnership in His knowledge. Allah's knowledge is neither capable of division nor separable from Himself. The layout of the universe is a proof of His knowledge, for each good act speaks of the knowledge of the causer. Therefore, His knowledge comprehends what all is hidden and encompasses all which is manifest. It behooves on seeker to contemplate Allah in every act, knowing that He sees him and all that he does.

Once, a rich man of Basra went to his orchard and there he saw beautiful wife of his gardener. He sent the fellow away on some business and in his absence to fulfill his evil desire asked

the woman to shut the door. She complied but said that she was unable to shut one door. On inquiry she replied that it was the door which was between us and Allah. On receiving that answer the man repented and begged to be forgiven.

Hatim al-Asam said that by adopting four things he had got rid of rest of the knowledge:

- I know that my daily food is apportioned to me, and my greed can not increase it, so I saved myself from desire of its increase.
- I know that Allah has rights on me which no one other than me can pay.
- I know that death is pursuing me, from whom I cannot escape and I am ready for it.
- I know that my Lord is fully aware of my state, and I feeling ashamed of Him have been saved from evils.

When man fully realizes that Allah is watchful over his every act, then he does not commit himself to any act which may become cause of his humiliation on the Day of Resurrection.

The man's knowledge should be of *Marifat* (knowledge) of Allah and His Commandments and the mandatory knowledge is that which is according to the time and fulfills the demands of the time. Knowledge of "time" i.e. spiritual state is recognized that one is able to apprehend the outward and inward affects of all circumstances. This is of two types, i.e. the root and the branch

The outward division of the root class is Faith, i.e. affirmation of Oneness of Allah and Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His Prophet. The inward division consists in the attainment of cognition of the Truth. The external division of the branch class consists in earnest practice of *Shariat* (religious law), and the inward division consists in rendering one's intention sincere. The outward and inward aspects cannot be divorced. The exoteric aspect of Truth without the esoteric is hypocrisy, and the esoteric without the exoteric is heresy. So, if one is formally following the *Shariat*, it is a defect and while mere spirituality is also ineffective.

The knowledge of the Truth (*Haqiqat*) has three pillars:

- Knowledge of the Essence and Unity of Allah and denial of likening of anything with Him.

- Knowledge of the Attributes, and Commandments of Allah.
- Knowledge of the Actions and Wisdom of Allah.

Similarly, the *Shariat* (Religious Law) also has three pillars:

- The Quran
- The *Sunnah*
- The Consensus of the Muslim *Ummah* (community).

The three pillars of knowledge of Truth are evident from these verses:

فَاعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

"Known therefore, that there in no god but Allah," (Q 47:19),

فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ

"Be sure, Allah is your protector –" (Q 8:40),

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ

"Hast thou not turned thy vision to thy Lord?—how He prolong the Shadow!" (Q 25:45),

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ

"Do they not look at the Camels, how they are made?" (Q 88:17).

There are many such verses in the Quran which assert on meditating on Allah's attributes, so that one may be able to recognize His attributes of Creation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

من علم ان الله تعالى ربه و اني نبيه حرم الله تعالى لحمه و دمه علي النار

"One who has recognized that Allah is his Lord and I am His Prophet, Allah will forbid the fire of Hell on his meat and blood."

Knowledge of the Divine Essence involves recognition, on the part of one who is sensible and has reached puberty, that:

- Allah exists externally by His essence,
- He is infinite and not bounded by space,
- that His essence is beyond any change,
- that none of His creatures is like unto Him,
- that His essence is not the cause of evil and calamity,
- that he has neither wife nor child, and

-that He is the Creator and Sustainer of all that one's imagination and intellect can conceive.

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

"There is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the One that hears and sees (all things)." (Q 42:11).

Knowledge of the Divine Attributes, asserts to sincerely know that Allah has attributes existing in Himself, which are not He nor a part of Him, but exists in Him and subsist by Him, e.g. Knowledge, Power, Life, Will, Hearing, Sight, Speech, etc. It is revealed in the Quran that, "وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ" verily He has full knowledge of all that is in (men's) hearts." (Q 35:38), "وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ" and Allah has power over all things." (Q 3:29), and "هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ" He is the Living (One): There is no god but He:" (Q 40:65), "وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ" and He is the One that hears and sees (all things)." (Q 42:11) and "فَعَالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ" is the (sure) Accomplisher of what He planneth." (Q 11:107) and "قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ" His word is the Truth. His will be the dominion-" (Q 6:73).

The knowledge of the Divine Actions is that one has complete faith that Allah is the Creator of all things and their actions, as He says "وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ" but Allah has created you and your handiwork!" (Q 37:96). That he brought the non-existent universe into being, that He predestines good and evil and creates all that is beneficial and injurious, as He says, "اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ" Allah is the Creator of all things, (Q 39:62).

The knowledge of the *Shariat* (Religious Law) involves knowing that:

- Allah has sent us Prophets with miracles and
- that our Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a true Messenger, who performed many miracles, and
- that whatever he told us concerning the Unseen and the Visible is entirely true.

The first pillar of *Shariat* is Quran. Allah said, "مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ" in it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning): They are the foundation of the Books:" (Q 3:7).

The second pillar is *Sunnah* (tradition) of Prophet (peace be upon him). Allah said, "وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا" so take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourself which he withholds from you." (Q 59:7).

The third pillar of *Shariat* is consensus of the Muslim *Ummah* (community). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, " لا تجتمع " امتي علي الضلالة عليكم بالسواد الاعظم my *Ummah* will never be united on aberrance, so it is mandatory on you to join *Sawad-i Azam* (i.e. *Ahl-i Sunnah*)."

There is a sect of heretics called Sophists, who believes that it is difficult to attain right knowledge of anything and that knowledge itself also does not exist. We ask from them that to know "knowledge is not attainable", is it knowledge or not? If their answer is positive, that would mean they affirm the reality of knowledge and if their reply is "no" then to argue against an avowedly incorrect claim is absurd.

Some say that since we cannot attain any knowledge therefore negation of knowledge is more perfect than its affirmation. This is ridiculous and foolishness on their part. The negation of knowledge must be the result either of knowledge or of ignorance because negation of knowledge is either possible through knowledge or through ignorance. It is impossible for knowledge to deny knowledge. Such people, who deny it through ignorance, are ignorant and blameworthy. Ignorance leads one to infidelity and falsehood, for there is no connection between ignorance and truth. All the *Sufi* Sheikhs oppose such people and their doctrine. Had Sheikhs not objected it, people inclined to this doctrine might have ruined their faith and would have been difficult for them to differentiate between truth and evil. We commit them to Allah, with Whom it rests whether they shall continue in their error. When Sheikhs got hold of them, they behave discreetly and subdue their evil acts towards Friends of Allah. Although some heretics claims to be mystics in order to conceal their own foulness under the beauty of others, why should it be supposed that all *Sufis* are like these pretenders, and that it is right to treat them all with disdain and contumely?

Once I happened to discuss with an individual who claimed to be well learned. Actually he was devoid of religious knowledge and slave of selfish motives whom he gave the name of following *Shariat*. During a course of debate he said to me that there were twelve heretical sects and one of them was of Sufism. I replied him that if one sect belonged to us, eleven belongs to him and the *Sufis* could protect themselves from one better than you could from eleven. All this heresy springs

from the corruption and degeneracy of the present time, but Allah always keeps His friends (Saints) safe from it. Well said by the eminent spiritual guide, Ali b. Bundar al-Sayrafi, "فساد القلوب علي حسب فساد الزمان واهله" the depravity of men's hearts is in proportion to the depravity of the age."

Now I will cite some sayings of the *Sufis* for the benefits of those with whom Allah is kind, so that they may remain safe from the misdeeds of skeptics.

Muhammad b. Fadl al-Balkhi says that knowledge is of three kinds:

- knowledge from Allah,
- knowledge with Allah,
- knowledge of Allah.

Knowledge of Allah is the *Marifat* of the Truth (cognition), through which all the Prophets and saints got familiar with Divine. It is impossible to acquire it through one's own efforts. It is bestowed upon by Divine through His blessing and guidance.

Knowledge from Allah is the *Shariat* (Religious Law), which He has commanded and made obligatory upon human being.

Knowledge with Allah is that discipline which leads one to the Divine and helps determining *maqamat* (stations), the Paths and the Degrees of the saints. Gnosis is unsound without *Shariat*, and the *Shariat* is not practiced rightly unless the *maqamat* (stations) are manifested.

Abu Ali Thaqfi says:

العلم حيوة القلب من الجهل و نور العين من الظلمته

"Knowledge is the life of the heart, which delivers it from the death of ignorance: it is the *Nur* (light) of the eye of faith, which saves from the darkness of infidelity."

It means that knowledge saves from death of ignorance and provides light of faith by saving one from infidelity. One who is not blessed with *marifat*, his heart is dead because of ignorance and one, who is ignorant of the knowledge of *Shariat*, he is affected by the disease of ignorance. That's why the hearts of the infidels are dead because they don't have *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) and the hearts of the heedless are sick, because they are ignorant of His Commandments.

Abu Bakr Warraq says:

من اكتفي بالكلام من العلم دون الزهد تنندق و من اكتفي بالفتنة دون الورع فقد تفسق

"One who is satisfied with disputation about knowledge of Allah and does not practice asceticism becomes heretic; and one who is satisfied with jurisprudence and do not practice abstinence become impious."

This means that *Tawhid* (Unification), without following *Shariat*, is predestination, whereas the assertor of Unification ought to hold the doctrine of predestination but to act as though he believed in free will, taking a middle course between free will and predestination. Such is the true sense of another saying uttered by the same Sheikh:

التوحيد دون الجبر و فوق القدر

"*Tawhid* (Unification) is below predestination and above free will." So one who is satisfied with disputation of *Tawhid* and does not practice *Shariat* and asceticism, become heretic. Similarly one who restricts himself to jurisprudence and *Shariat* (Religious Law) and does not practice abstinence gets into doubts and involves himself in sinful acts. This arises from heedlessness.

Yahya b. Maud al-Razi said:

اجتنب صحبته ثلاثه اصناف من الناس العلماء الغافلين والفقراء المداهنيين والمتصوفه الجاهلين

"Avoid the society of three classes of men - heedless savants, greedy beggars, and ignorant pretenders to Sufism."

The heedless savants are those who have set their hearts on worldly gains. They remain in search of ease in following the religious obligations but are active in paying court to governors and tyrants. Achieving an honor in the public eyes is their biggest rank and they feel proud in their deceitful and artificial conducts. They are dishonest in their talk, criticize the leading *Ulama* and religiously learned celebrities and talk very low of them. Greed and sadistic attitude have become their nature. This all is not part of knowledge, rather it is ignorance. Knowledge repels ignorance and does not nourish it.

The greedy beggars praise those who act according to their wishes, may the act be wrong. When someone opposes or talks against their wishes, may he be truthful in his acts, they

become his enemy. They seek honor with the people of their deeds and act hypocritically even for the wrongs.

The ignorant pretenders to Sufism are they who never got associated with *Sufi* Sheikhs (spiritual guide), neither learnt discipline from them, nor got the rigging of the Path. So without any experience, clad in green dress they animate *Sufis* and feel pleasure while people dishonor them and because of their foolishness they consider everyone like themselves. They cannot even distinguish between truth and falsehood.

These are the groups about whom the Sheikh has mentioned and stressed on the seekers to avoid their company, as they are liar in their claims and their acts are faulty.

Abu Yazid Bastami says:

"For thirty years I strived in the spiritual combat, and I found nothing harder to me than knowledge and its pursuits."

It is easier for human nature to walk on fire than to act on knowledge. An ignorant will more readily cross the Bridge (*Sirat*) a thousand times than learn a single piece of knowledge. It is easier for a wicked man to pitch his tent in Hell than for a learned to learn one lesson of knowledge. Therefore, you must acquire knowledge and seek perfection therein. The perfection of human knowledge is ignorance of Divine knowledge. You must know enough to know that you do not know. That is to say, human knowledge is alone possible to man, and humanity is the greatest barrier that separates him from Divinity.

Some poet says:

العجز عن درك الا درك ادراك والوقف في طريق الاخيار اشراك

"True perception is hopelessness of attaining perception, But not to advance on the paths of the virtuous is polytheism."

He who stops in the way commits infidelity and who does not learn and perseveres in his ignorance is a polytheist, but who learns and excels and his knowledge becomes perfect, the reality is revealed to him and he perceives that his knowledge is no more than inability to know what his end shall be, since realities are not affected by the names bestowed upon them. The helplessness of such person about the reality of knowledge is actually knowledge for him.

Chapter II

Poverty (*Faqr* فقر)

Poverty (*Faqr* فقر) occupies an exalted position in the Way of the Truth, and that the *dervishes* are generally honored. Allah has said:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ
التَّعَفُّفِ

“(Charity is) for those in need, who, in Allah’s cause are restricted (from travel), and cannot move about in the land, seeking (for trade or work): the ignorant man thinks, because of their modesty, that they are free from want.” (Q 2:273).

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَمْلُوكًا لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ

“Allah sets forth the Parable (of two men: one) a slave under the dominion of another. He has no power of any sort;” (Q 16:75).

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا

“Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in Fear and Hope:” (Q 32:16).

Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) chose poverty and said,

اللهم احيني مسكينا وامتني مسكينا واحشرني في زمرة المساكين

O Allah, make me live lowly and die lowly and rise from the dead amongst the lowly on Resurrection Day!”

And Prophet (peace be upon him) also said that on the day of Resurrection Allah will say, “Bring ye My loved ones nigh unto me;” then the angels will say, “Who are Thy loved ones?” and Allah will answer them, saying, “The poor and destitute.”

There are many verses of the Quran and *Hadith* (Traditions of Prophet) to the same effect, which being commonly known, need not be mentioned here.

In the Prophet’s time, a group of poor refugees existed who to get benefited of the company of Prophet (peace be upon him) used to live in the mosque of the Prophet and had fully devoted themselves to the worship of Allah. They were free of

all worldly activities and had firmly put their trust in the Real Provider and believed that He would give them their daily sustenance. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was enjoined by Allah to keep their company and take due care of them. For Allah said, "وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ" send not away those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His face." (Q 6:52), and "وَلَا تَعُدُّ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تَطُوعُ مَنْ أَعْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا" and let not thine eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this Life; nor obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us," (Q 18:28). Hence, whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw any one of them, he would say; "May my parents be your sacrifice! Since it was for your sake Allah admonished me:"

Allah, therefore, has exalted the Poverty of the Dervishes and has made a special distinction of them. This is because they by renouncing all the apparent inward and outward causes and turning entirely to the Causer of the causes. The poverty become pride for them, so they grieve on its going and rejoice at its coming. They have adopted poverty in such a way that everything else has become worthless before their eyes.

Poverty has an outward form and a reality. Outward form is destitution, indigence and distress but its reality is fortune, success and satisfaction. He who contented and rested in the outward form, when fails to achieve his desire turns away from its reality also. And who has attained the reality of *Faqir* (poverty), averts his gaze from all created things, and in complete annihilation, seeing only the All-One, achieves fullness of eternal life. He who has adopted the outward of *Faqir* only he gains nothing, as the wise elder has said, "من لم يعرف سوي رسمه لم يسمع سوي اسمه" one who got stranded in the outward form of *Faqir*, he does not know any thing beyond its name."

The *faqir* فقير (poor man) is, who does not have anything and nor ownership of things brings any change in him. He does not feel becoming rich by having anything, nor indigent by having nothing. The presence or absence of things is equal in his eyes, rather feels more joyful when he has nothing. The Sheikhs have said, "the more a dervish is poverty stricken, the more extensive is he in his (spiritual) state," because it is harmful for a dervish to own material goods. He should not even have a thought of anything, so that he might not get captivated in love of that. The friends of Allah lives by means of His secret bounties. Worldly wealth holds them back from

the path of quietism. Once a king met a dervish and said that he might ask him for some favor. The dervish replied that he would not ask a benefit from one of his slaves. On king's inquiry he explained him that his two slaves i.e. covetousness and expectation, were king's masters.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "الفقر عز لا هله" poverty is glorious to those who are worthy of it." That which is glorious for the worthy is an embarrassment for the undeserving. It is glorious for the worthy because his body is divinely preserved from base and sinful acts, and his heart from evil and contaminating thoughts. His outward becomes trustee of manifested grace and inward of luminous visions, so that his body is spiritual and his heart divine. The mankind has no relations with him and neither people have any kinship with him, so much so, that he feels empty handed as regards to creation. He does not feel wealthy even if he is rewarded with the whole worldly assets. For him the wealth of the whole universe weigh less than a gnat's wing in the scales of his poverty and both worlds may not be able to contain even his one breath.

The *Sufi* Sheikhs differ in opinion as to whether *faqr* فقر (poverty) or *ghina* غني (wealth) is superior, for true *ghina* belongs to Allah, who is exalted in all His attributes. Yahya b. Maud al-Razi, Ahmad b. Abi al-Hawari, Harith al-Muhasibi, Abu al-Abbas b. Ata, Abu al-Hasan b. Simun, and among the moderns Abu Said Fadalallah b. Muhammad al-Mahani, all hold the view that *ghina* (wealth) is superior to *faqr* (poverty). They argue that *Ghana* غناء (wealth) is an attribute of Allah, whereas *faqr* (poverty) cannot be ascribed to Him, therefore, an attribute common to Allah and Man is superior to one that is not applicable to Allah. I say this kinship is merely nominal, and has no existence in reality. As real kinship involves mutual resemblance and equality, but the Divine attributes are Eternal and the human attributes are created, hence their argument is incorrect.

I, Ali b. Uthman al-Jullabi, declare that *Ghana* (wealth) is a term that may only be applied to Allah. The created are not worthy of this attribute. While term *faqr* (poverty), is an attribute of Man and it cannot be applied to Allah. Metaphorically when we call a man *ghani* (rich), but in reality he is not so, because effectiveness of man's *Ghana* (wealth) depends on various causes, and we are rich only after

accepting the causes, whereas the wealth of Allah, who Himself is the Author of all causes, is not due to any cause. Therefore, the partnership of Man with Allah in regard to this attribute is wrong and false. When nothing can be part of Allah, then how one can share His attributes, therefore, when it is impossible to be associated with His attributes, similarly, there cannot be any association with His names as well. As regard to call a man *ghani*, it is just phenomenal for reference purpose only and is used in a very limited sense.

The meaning of Allah's being *Ghani* (rich) is that He is independent of and from everything. He does whatsoever He wills, as nothing in the universe can disobey, deny or divert His will. He is competent to bring together opposites in the creature, such He has always been and such He shall be for ever. The *ghina* (wealth) of Man on the other hand, is for example, a means of livelihood, the presence of joy and delight, being saved from miseries, and the consolation of comfort. All these things are of phenomenal nature and subject to change. There end is helplessness and baseness. Therefore, *ghina* when used for Man is with its outward form, but when used for Allah, it is with its real inward essence. As Allah has said, "يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ" O ye men! It is ye that have need of Allah:" (Q 35:15) and "وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ" but Allah is free of all wants, and it is ye that are needy." (Q 47:38).

Some prefer the rich man to the poor, on the ground that Allah has blessed the former in both worlds and has bestowed the benefit of richness on him. They mean by *ghana* (wealth) abundance of worldly goods, attainment of desires and enjoyment of pleasures and pursuit of lusts. They argue that Allah has commanded us to be thankful for *ghana* (prosperity) and patient in *faqr* (adversity). Since patience is commanded on adversity, and thankfulness on prosperity which is better than the former, therefore *ghana* is preferred over *faqr*. But I say that, when Allah commanded us to be thankful for prosperity, He also commanded that thankfulness increases the prosperity, but when He commanded us to be patient in adversity He made patience the means of drawing nigh unto Himself. He said, "لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ" if ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you;" (Q 14:7) and "إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ" for Allah is with those who patiently persevere," (Q 2:153). This means that one who thanks for which has its origin in heedlessness, Allah will increase his heedlessness, whereas, one who shows

patience on *faqr* (adversity) which has its origin in distress will be graced with proximity.

The Sheikhs who prefer *ghana* (wealth) to *faqr* (poverty) do not use the term *ghana* in its popular sense i.e. acquisition of worldly benefits but what they intend is "acquisition of the Benefactor". Thus, the grace of union (with Allah) is different from gaining forgetfulness (of Allah). Sheikh Abu Said says, "الفقير هو الغني بالله" the one who's *ghana* is with Allah, is a poor" i.e. everlasting revelation which is based on contemplation of the Truth.

But I say that revelation is a temporary phase and it implies the possibility of a veil. Therefore, if the person who enjoys revelation is veiled from revelation by the attribute of wealth, he either becomes in need of revelation or he does not. If he does not, the conclusion is absurd, and if he does need, then necessity arises which is contrary to *ghana* (wealth). The *ghana* as attribute of Allah is everlasting, eternal and real in its meanings. But being eternal *ghana* cannot coincide with the attributes of human nature, because the essential characteristics of mortality and phenomenal being are need and intelligence. Thus, one who is eternal with his attributes and remain eternal, only he is the *Ghani* and who loses his attributes is not worth to be called *Ghani*. Therefore "الغني من الله" the rich man is he who is enriched by Allah" because the term "من الغناء الله" refers to the agent whereas the term "هو الفقير" denotes the person acted upon. The former is self-subsistent, but the latter subsists through the agent. Accordingly self-subsistence is an attribute of human nature, while subsistence through Allah involves the annihilation of attributes. I assert that *ghina* has no relation with the existence of attributes, as it has already been said that human attributes are blameworthy and decaying. Similarly this term cannot be used when these attributes are non existent; because *Fani* (mortal) possess no name and when attributes are mortal they cannot be called either *ghani* or *faqr*. All the Sheikhs and majority of the people prefer *faqr* over *ghana* because Quran and *Sunnah* expressly declare it to be superior and majority of *Ummah* has consensus on it.

Once the matter was discussed by Junaid and Ibn Ata, and the later maintained the superiority of the rich. He argued that according to *Hadith* (traditions), at the Resurrection they would be called to account for their wealth, and that such an

account entails the hearing of the Divine Word, without any mediation, may it be in the form of reproach: and reproach addressed by the Beloved is also endearing to the lover. Junaid replied that wealthy will be accounted for but poor will be asked for excuse and asking for an excuse is better than calling to account. There is a unique observation in it, for in true love to ask for excuse or to be excused is a sign of strangeness and reproach is contrary to companionship. Lovers regard both as blemish, because excuse is made for some disobedience to the command of the Beloved and reproach is also made on the same score. Therefore, both are out of the question in true love, because, under all circumstances patience is expected from the poor and thanks from the rich. In real friendship one neither demands anything from a friend nor disobeys his command. So "ظلم من سمي ابن آدم" whoever called a man rich, he acted wrongly, because Allah has called him *faqir* (poor)," i.e. Allah has called Man *Faqir* (poor), may he be rich worldly but he would be called poor (*faqir*). Wrong is the one who calls a person rich, may the person be a king, because, before Allah Almighty he is *faqir* (poor). Reason for this is that rich is *Sahib-i Sadqa* (capable to dish out alms) and poor (*faqir*) is *Sahib-i Sidq* (Friend to the Truth), therefore, former cannot be placed equal to the later. Thus the *Ghana* (wealth) of Suleman (may blessings of Allah be on him) and the poverty of Salman Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him) are one. Allah said to Ayub (may blessings of Allah be on him) in extremity of his patience, and likewise to Suleman (may blessings of Allah be on him) in the plentitude of his dominion: "نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ" how excellent in Our service! (Q 38:30,44). It means when Allah's blessings are bestowed upon, it makes no difference between the poverty of Salman Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him) and the wealth of Suleman (may blessings of Allah be on him). I heard Abu al-Qasim Qushayri saying:

"People have spoken much concerning *faqr* (poverty) and *ghana* (wealth), and have chosen one or the other for themselves, but I choose whichever Allah chooses for me and protects me in. If He keeps me *ghani* (rich) I pray, He may not make me forgetful, and if He wishes me to be a *faqir* (poor) I pray not to be a covetous and rebellious."

Ghana (wealth) is a gift but forgetfulness is its evil, similarly *faqr* (poverty) is also a gift but covetousness is its evil. Both

conceptions are excellent, but their practice creates different results. Poverty is the separation of heart from all but Allah, and wealth is the preoccupation of the heart with that which does not admit of being qualified. When the heart is cleansed from all save Allah then neither *faqr* is superior to *ghana*, nor is *ghana* superior to *faqr*. *Ghana* is the name of abundance of worldly goods and *faqr* (poverty) is the name of scarcity of them. Since all belongs to Allah, therefore, when the seeker acknowledges it and forgoes its ownership the problem of partnership vanishes and he gets free from both the names.

Sheikhs have described the inward and outward meanings of *ghana* and *faqr*, some mention of which is included here. One of the modern Sheikhs says:

ليس الفقير من خلا من الزاد انما الفقير من خلا من المراد

"The poor is not he who is free of provisions, but he who is free of *Murad* (desire)." That is to say, if Allah gives him wealth and he cares for it, then he will be called *ghani* (rich) and if he renounces it, still he is *ghani*, because under both the circumstances he is interfering in other's ownership. But *faqr* (poverty) consists in ceasing to act on one's own prerogative.

Yahya b. Maud al-Razi says:

علامته الفقر خوف زوال الفقر

"The sign of *faqr* is that one remains scared of losing it."

The sign of the rightness of *faqr* is that one inspite of the excellence of *Walayat* (saintship), steadfastness of contemplation and attributes of annihilation, remains fearful of loss or decline of *faqr*. The sign of the excellence in *faqr* is that one gets independent from the fear of the loss or decline of *faqr*.

Khawaja Muhammad Ruwaym says:

من نعت الفقير حفظ سره وصيانته نفسه و اداء فرائضه

"The characteristic of *faqir* (poor) is that he safeguards his inward secrets and guards his *nafs* (lower soul) from contamination, and is regular in performance of the obligatory duties of religion:"

The dignity of *faqir* (poor) is that he remains free from worldly gains, his outward is clean of evils and he is regular in performance of the obligatory duties of religion. He must not speak out his inwards meditation and whatever turns up on his tongue the heart must not be committed to that. He should be so overwhelmed by his state at this *maqam* (station) that nothing should affect him and this is the sign of the annihilation of the human wants and one is totally subdued to the obedience of the Truth.

Bashr Hafi says:

افضل المقامات اعتقاد الصبر على الفقر الي القبر

"The best *maqam* (station) of this Path is to remain steadfast to endure poverty with patience till death."

The patience and its belief are the *maqamat* (stations) of seekers. Since *faqir* (poverty) negates all *maqamat*, therefore, the resolution to be patient while enduring poverty demands negation of works and deeds and aspire to annihilate human attributes. This saying pronounces poverty to be superior to wealth, and expresses a resolve never to abandon it.

Shibli says:

الفقير لا يستغني بشيء دون الله

"The *faqir* (poor) is he who does not rest content with anything except Allah," because he has no other object of desire.

The apparent meaning of this saying is that no one can get rich without Allah. His attainment is actual *ghana* and richness. Our existence is separate from Allah and when *ghana* and richness cannot be obtained without attaining Him that means our existence is a veil for *ghana* and if one abandons this Path (of attaining Allah) then how can *ghana* be obtained? This saying is very subtle and obscure. The spiritualists have some different meanings of this and they say, "الفقير لا يستغني عنه" *Faqir* (poor) never gets satisfied with the proximity of the Truth (Allah)." i.e. he keeps on striving for further proximity and does not desire end to it. This has been elaborated by Sheikh Abdullah Ansari Harwi who said:

"Our sorrow is everlasting. Neither can we see our aspirations meet their goal (Truth) nor our existence can

become non-existence may it be this world or the next, because for the fruition of anything homogeneity is necessary, but Allah is above to be a genus. Though turning away from Allah takes place because of forgetfulness of Him, but the dervish can not be forgetful. This is a permanent obedience and a difficult path. Our lover is that Whose presence is unattainable through effort and union with him is not Man's destiny. Nothing is averted both in the state of *Fana* (dead) and in *Baqa* (living), the *fani* (dead) never becomes living (*baqi*) so as to be united with Him and the living never becomes dead, so as to attain His presence. So the work of their lovers is very difficult and ever demanding, therefore, to console themselves they have invented a fine-sounding phraseology and have formed *maqamat* (stations), stages, and paths. These symbolic expressions are limited to themselves and their stations, stages, and paths are only related to their own states. Allah is exempted from every human attribute and relationship."

Abu al-Hasan Nuri says:

نعت الفقير السكوت عند العدم والبذل عند الوجود

"The characteristic of *faqir* (poor) is that when he has nothing he is calm and when he has something he spends it on others."

And he also says, "الاضطراب عند الوجود" He feels perturbed, when he gets something."

The practice pronounced in this saying is of great importance. It has two meanings, his calmness when he gets nothing is *rida* (satisfaction), and his liberality when he gets something is a proof of his love with Allah. One, who is satisfied with the will of Allah, is prized with a robe of honor, which is the sign of proximity (with Allah) but lover of the Truth is never desirous of robe of honor because the robe of honor indicates strangeness. His quiescence when he gets nothing is expectation of getting something, and when he has got it, that something is other than Allah; and he does not feel satisfied with other than Allah, rather gets disturbed and finds the liberality as way out to quickly get rid of something.

On the same subject Junaid says, "الفقر خلو القلب عن الاشكال" when his heart is empty of phenomena he is poor." That's why he is always quick to reject all other than Allah.

Shibli says:

الفقر بحر البلاء و بلاء كل عز

"Poverty is an ocean of trials, and all trials for His sake are glorious."

The honor is part of other because one who is right in the centre of trouble knows nothing of glory, until he forgets his trouble and regard the Author thereof. Then his trouble is changed into glory, which leads him to the nearness of Allah. His state of glory, changes into state of love and love changes into contemplation, so that the brain of the aspirant becomes wholly a centre of vision and he sees without the eyes, similarly, he hears the Divine voice without ears. Thus, among the human the real and truthful is that man who bears all affliction with patience, for affliction is honor and grace is blameworthy. The honorable thing is that which graces one with the proximity of the Truth and blameworthy is that thing which leads one away from His Court. The pain of the *faqir* is the sign of presence (before Allah), whereas, the comfort of *ghana* is the sign of remoteness and absence (from Allah). The one who is gainer of proximity and presence (with Allah) is honorable and he who is devoid of it is deprived and wretched. The affliction and trial which result into proximity of the Truth and vision of the Lover is in any case better and praiseworthy. Junaid says,

يا معشر الفقراء انكم انما تحرفون بالله وتكرمون الله فانظروا كيف تكونوا مع الله اذا خلوتم به

"O *fuqara* (poor), you are known through Allah, and are honored for the sake of Allah, see that how you behave when you are alone with Him," i.e. when people honor you because of your being *faqir* (poor) and dervish, you also ensure that how you meet the obligations of the path of poverty. If people against your will call you by other names, do not show resentment because you are not justifying with your claim, for the basest of men is he who is thought to be devoted to Allah, but really is not. Glory to one whom people consider the Man of the Path and which he is actually. And still the noblest is the one to whom people do not consider a dervish but he is actually a dervish.

The former is like a physician who claims perfection in his trade and is busy in prescribing to patients, but since, he is a pretender to the profession, therefore, he makes their condition worse. And when he himself is sick, he needs another physician to prescribe for him. And one who is really a dervish and people also consider him to be such, he is like a physician who knows his profession and people recognize him be so, such person when get sick, can do look after himself. And the example of that person who is a pious devotee, but people thinks him not to be such, is that of a physician about whom people do not know, such person do not prescribes others, but himself enjoys with all the good feast and remedies and never get sick, and people remain unaware of his condition.

One of the moderns has said, "الفقر عدم بلا وجود" *faqr* (Poverty) is nothingness and it has no existence."

This expression is incomplete because what is non-existent does not admit of being explained. The only explanation possible is that *faqr* (poverty) is nothingness. How this can be possible that all the saints agree on such a reality which is non-existent and transient in itself. It is also not correct to say that non-existent of *faqr* does not mean non-existent of *faqr* but it denotes the non-existent of affliction. All the human attributes are subject to affliction, so when afflictions are denied it would result into annihilation of attributes, therefore, human attributes are subject to affliction and the same attributes are the source of attainment. When these are made extinct, it would close the way to the Reality and it would be nothing but wretchedness. I happened to meet with a group of scholastic philosophers who, failing to understand the drift of this saying, laughed at it and declared it to be wrong. There is another group of pretenders who although acknowledged this saying but was unable to follow its root. Both the parties are wrong. First group ignorantly denies the truth, and the second was following it because of ignorance.

Among the *Sufis* the meanings of such expressions "non-existence" and "annihilation" are the disappearance of a disapproved attribute in the course of seeking a praiseworthy attribute and not to get annihilated in the existence of the desired thing. Thus the word dervishhood is used here metaphorically and it apparently refers to poverty, but this is the route of the transcendent Divine of mysteries. So till the

time he attribute his affairs and actions to himself, *faqr* (poorness) is ascribed to him, but when his affairs are freed from the bonds of acquisition, his actions are no more attributed to him. Then he is the Way, not the wayfarer, i.e. the dervish is a place over which something is passing, not a wayfarer following his own will. Accordingly, he neither draws anything to himself nor puts away anything from himself. All that leaves any trace upon him belongs to the Essence.

I saw another group of chatty people. They being ignorant of the reality of this matter, negated its attributes altogether. It is a big deviation as negation of *faqr* leads them to contradiction of its attributes. They are utterly failure in their search of the reality of the *faqr* and that which denies the search of the Truth and reality they consider that as *faqr* (poverty) and purity. It looked as though they affirmed their own fancies but denied all else. None of them was in any knowledge of *faqr*, whereas the knowledge of *faqr* causes the perfection of saintship, i.e. to know its reality and its adoption is the cause of excellent *maqam* (station). Therefore, the seeker of this path has no choice but to journey in their path and to traverse their stations and to know their symbolic expressions, in order that he may not be an illiterate among the elect.

Those who are ignorant of general principles cannot advance and those who are occupied with the derivative branches would remain entangled therein; and the one who is entangled there remains ignorant of its principles and loses his relations with others. I have said all this to encourage you to undertake this spiritual journey and occupy yourself with the due fulfillment of its obligations.

Now I will explain some of the principles and allegories and mystic sayings of Sufism. Then I will mention brief biographies of these holy men, and afterwards elucidate the different doctrines of Sufiism. In the next place, I will treat the Verities, Sciences, and Laws of Sufism. Lastly, I will set forth their rules of discipline and the significance of their "stations", in order that the truth of this matter may become clear to you and to all my readers.

Chapter III

Sufism (*Tasawwuf* تصوف)

Allah Almighty has said:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

"And the servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "peace!" (Q 25:63).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said:

من سمع صوت اهل التصوف فلا يؤمن علي دعاءهم كتب عند الله من الغافلين

"He who hears the voice of the *Sufis* and does not say *Amen* to their prayer is inscribed before Allah among the heedless."

The true meaning of *Tasawwuf* تصوف (Sufism) has been much discussed and many books have been written on the subject. Some assert that *Sufi* is so called because he wears a woolen (*suf* صوف) garment, while others say that he is in the first row (*saf* صف). Some because of their attachment with to *Ashab-i Suffa*⁴, call them *Sufi* and still some are of the opinion that the name is derived from *safa* (purity). These explanations are far from satisfying the requirements of etymology.

The word *Safa* صفا (purity) is praiseworthy under all circumstances and its opposite is *kadar* كدر (impurity). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "ذهب صفو الدنيا وبقي كدرها" the pure part (the best) of this world is gone, and its impurity remains." The fine and the delicate part of something is called *safwa* صفو (purity), whereas its impure and dirty part is called *kadar* (impurity). Since the seekers of the path of *tasawwuf* keep their morals and conduct pleasing and pure their inwards from the evils and worldly desires, on that account they are called *Sufis*. So, this name has become a sign of recognition whereas the nobility of the *Sufis* is too great for their dealings to be unknown, so that name should need a derivation.

In the present age, Allah has kept the majority of the people away from the path of *tasawwuf* and *Sufis* and has veiled them from the mysteries and realities of *tasawwuf*.

⁴ See Chapter IX

Accordingly some imagine that it consists merely in practice of outward piety and does not have any inward contemplation. Some others suppose that it is a meaningless form which has no essence and root. They by adopting the views of scoffers and worldly *Ulama* have denied Sufism altogether and because of ignorance feel delighted on their search. The people in general, conforming to this opinion, have expunged from their hearts the quest for inward purity and have discarded the tenets of the virtuous ancestors and the companions of the Prophet.

ان الصفا صفت الصديق ان اردت صوفيا علي التحقيق

"Verily, purity of heart is the characteristic of *Siddiq*, if you desire to be a true *Sufi* see him".

The *Safa* صفا (purity) has a root and a branch, its root being separation of the heart from others (other than Allah), and its branch is that the heart should be empty of this deceitful world. Both these are the characteristics of the *Siddiq* (the Caliph) Abu Bakr Abdullah b. Abi Quhafa, (may Allah be pleased with him). He is the *Imam* (leader) of all the people of this Path. He was free of others so much that when Prophet (peace be upon him) died and the companions got saddened and heart broken, that Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) drew his sword and threatened to decapitate anyone who asserted that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was dead, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) stepped forth cried with loud voice, "الا من عبد مُحَمَّدًا فان مُحَمَّدًا قَدَمَات و من عبد رب مُحَمَّد فانه حي لا يموت" whoever worshiped Muhammad let him know that Muhammad is dead, but whoever worships Lord of Muhammad, let him know that He is living and dieth not." Then he recited the following verse of Quran:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ

"Muhammad is no more than a Messenger: many were the messengers that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will you then turn back on your heels," (Q 3:144).

It means that who is acquainted with the mortal, he is annihilated and afflicted when the mortal is annihilated, but one who acquaints himself with the Truth (Allah) becomes immortal, even though his physical body is annihilated. Those who regarded Muhammad (peace be upon him) with the eye of mortality ceased to venerate him as soon as he departed

from this world, but to those who regarded him with the eye of reality his presence and absence were alike, because they saw both his existence in this world and his departure from here as truth and from the Truth. One at the *maqam* of بقا بالله, saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) living (*baqi*) with the Truth (Allah), and one who at the *maqam* of فنا في الله saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) *fani* (dead) with the Truth (فنا في الله). That is to say, he looked not at the particular change which came to pass, but at the Author of all changes, and venerated Muhammad (peace be upon him) only in proportion as Allah honored him. He did not attach his heart to anyone (except Allah), and did not open his eyes to gaze upon mankind, inasmuch as:

من نظرا لي الخلق هلك ومن نظرا لي الحق ملك

"One who beholds mankind waned but that who returned unto Truth (Allah) attained the place of angel."

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) showed that his heart was empty of this deceitful world, for he gave away all his wealth and dressed in a rough garment when he came to the Prophet (peace be upon him), who asked him what he had left for his family. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) replied, "Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him)." When the heart of Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was cleansed from the worldly love, automatically impurities got washed out and he sacrificed everything to please His Lord. All this is the characteristic of sincere *Sufi* and to deny them is the denial of the Truth and obstinacy.

As I have mentioned that *safa* (purity) is the opposite of *kadar* (impurity), and *kadar* is one of the qualities of man, therefore, the true *Sufi* is he who is clean from worldly impurities. When the human nature existed with the Egyptian women, they felt jealousy with Zulaikha. But when they looked upon amazing beauty of Yusuf (may blessings of Allah be on him), got fascinated and enraptured. Their human nature got annihilated and they cried "مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ" (Q 12:31). Here their human nature annihilated and they made Yusuf (may blessings of Allah be on him) their object but gave expression of their own state. Hence the Sheikhs of the Path have said:

ليس الصفاء من صفات البشر لان البشر مدرلا يخلوا من الكدر

"Purity is not the quality of man, for man is created with clay, and clay involves impurity, and man cannot escape from impurity."

Therefore, neither heart can be purified through acts and deeds, nor impurities of human *nafs* (lower soul) can be destroyed by means of efforts. The attribute of purity is isolated to acts and states, and its name is also unrelated with outward names and titles.

الصفا صفته الاحباب وهم شمس بلا سحاب

"Purity is in the nature of the lovers (of Allah), who are suns without clouds," because purity is the attribute of those who love, and the lover is he that is *fani* (dead) in his own attributes and living in the attributes of his Beloved, and their "states" resembles the clear sun in the opinion of mystics. When Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked concerning the state of Haritha⁵ (may Allah be pleased with him), he answered, "عبد نور الله قلبه بالايمان" he is a man whose heart is illuminated by Allah with the *Nur* (light) of faith, so that his face shines like the moon from its effect." An eminent *Sufi* says:

ضياء الشمس و القمر اذا اشتركا انموذج من صفاء الحب والتوحيد اذا اشئتكا

"When the *Nur* (light) of the sun and the moon is mingled together, it illustrates like the combination of purity of Love and Unification."

Surely the light of the sun and the moon is worthless beside the *Nur* (light) of Love and Unification of Allah Almighty. Although, there is no comparison between them but no light is more evident than these two luminaries in this world. Through their light eyes are enabled to see the sky, whereas the heart through the light of *Marifat* (knowledge), *Tawhid* (unification) and love sees the *Arsh* (Empyrean), and while being still in this world explores the next world. All the Sheikhs of the Path are unanimous on that when a man has escaped from the captivity of *maqamat* (stations), got rid of impurity of states, and freed from the worldly changes and decay he is endowed with all praiseworthy qualities under all circumstances. Then he is separated from his own praiseworthy qualities, i.e. no thought of any of his praiseworthy quality comes to his mind.

⁵ Abu Abdullah Haritha b. al-Nauman al-Ansari, companion of Prophet (peace be upon him).

He neither sees it nor makes any self conceit thereby. He achieves the state where his intelligence is overcome and he is free from doubtless thoughts. He finds neither any danger in their presence nor does his existence depend on any cause, for purity is the name given to everlasting presence and such existence which is free of any cause and such presence which has no absence and such attainment which is free of causes. Because such presence which is annihilated by absence is really not a presence and that existent which is due to some cause is not existent. The elders have said:

لأن الصفا حضور بلا ذهاب ووجود بلا اسباب

"Inward purity is such a presence (with Allah) which never disappears, and is such a wealth which is bestowed upon by the grace of Almighty Allah, and not achievable through acquisition."

Therefore, there is no absence from His presence and it is granted without acquisition and endeavor. And when the aspirant arrives at this *maqam* (stage), he becomes annihilated both in this and the next world, and he is attached with divine attributes while still existing in human body. The gold and mud becomes same in his eyes, and observance of the *Shariat* ordinances becomes easy to him. As when Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Haritha: كيف أصبحت يا حارثه "O Haritha what was your state in the morning?" He replied that he started his morning with full faith on Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "See O Haritha, think what are you saying, everything has some reality, what is the reality of your faith?"

He replied: "I have cut myself away from the world, my heart no more seeks it and its gold, silver and clay are all equal in my sight. I have passed my nights in wakefulness (praising Allah) and my days in fasting until I manifest to have vision of the Throne of the Lord, and the people of Paradise visiting one another, and the people of Hell cursing each other."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said thrice, "عرفت فلزم" you have been blessed with *Marifat* (knowledge of Allah), therefore persevere."

Sufi is an honorable name by which the most perfect saints and spiritual adepts are being remembered. One of the Sheikhs has said:

"He that is purified by love is pure, and he that is absorbed in the Beloved and has abandoned all else is a *Sufi*."

The word *Sufi* has no derivation answering to etymological requirements, for the derivation of one thing from another demands homogeneity but *Sufi* is such an exalted noun that there exists no homogeneous to it from which it might be derived. All that exists is the opposite of it, and things can not be derived from their opposites. The meaning of *Sufi* is clear to Saints like the sun and does not need any explanation, as it cannot be described through expressions and signs. It has been said, "*Sufi* cannot be encompassed with words or signs (indications)." So, when words and expressions are incapable to really define the word *Sufi*, and even if the whole world may try to explain it irrespective that whether they are successful or not in their effort, would not affect its dignity.

The perfect among them are called *Sufi*, and the aspirants among them are called *Mutasawif* متصوف (sufistic), for *tasawwuf* belongs to form *tafaul* تفعل , which implies "taking trouble," and is a branch of the original root. The difference both in meaning and in etymology is evident. As it is said:

الصفا ولايته ولها ايته و روايته والتصوف حكايته للصفا بلا شكايته

"Purity is saintship which has signs and marks, so Sufism is that anecdote of obtaining purity which holds no objection."

The meaning of purity is clear and manifest and *tasawwuf* تصوف is the description of the same meaning and reality. Its followers in this degree are of three kinds, the *Sufi* صوفي, the *Mutasawuf* متصوف and the *Mustaswif* مستصوف.

The *Sufi* صوفي is one who is *fani* (annihilated) to self and *baqi* (existent) by the Truth. He has escaped from the human faculties and their usage and has attained the Truth (Allah).

The *Mutasawuf* متصوف is one who is seeking to reach this rank by means of self-mortification and in his search, is following the footsteps of accomplished *Sufis*.

The *Mustaswif* مستصوف is one who pretends like *Sufis* for the lust of wealth, power and worldly gains. He has neither any acquaintance with the *Sufis* and *Mutasawuf* nor he possesses

any knowledge of the Path. It has been said about such a person:

المستصوف عند الصوفيته كالذباب و عند غيرهم كالذئاب

"In the opinion of *Sufis* the *Mustaswif* is as despicable as flies, and for others he is like a wolf."

The *Sufis* call the *Mustaswif* like flies because they animate *Sufis* for the sake of lust and they are like wolves for people because wolves are habitual of tearing, rending and eating carrion. Therefore the *Sufi* is called a man of attainment, the *Mutasawuf* a man of principles, and the *Mustaswif* a man of superfluities.

He who after attaining his object and desire has achieved the *maqam* (station) of union, he gets free from all other desires and objectives. And he, who achieves the state of mystic path, becomes firm in the "states" and steadfastly devotes himself for higher states. And that who achieves separation is left devoid of all, and satisfies himself with mere forms of Sufism, and because of this reality is never manifested on him and he remains devoid of union and righteous path.

The Sheikhs have many subtle definitions of Sufism which cannot all be enumerated, but we shall mention some of them in this book, if Allah wills, Who is the Author of success.

Dhu al-Nun says:

الصوفي اذا ناطق بان نطقه من الحقائق وان سكت نطقته عنه الجوارح بقطع العلائق

"The *Sufi* is one who when speaks, his words are the reality, and in his silence the conduct of his body parts explains his state of *faqr* (that he has cut all worldly ties)."

It means that when *Sufi* speaks, it is all truth and reality of his state and he says nothing which he does not possess. When he is silent, his conduct be an evidence of his *maqam* and *state* and he is evidently free from the worldly evils i.e. all that he says is based on sound principles and all that he does is pure detachment from the world. When he speaks his speech is entirely the truth, and his actions are wholly *faqr* (poverty).

Junaid says:

التصوف نعت اقيم العبد فيه

"Sufism is an attribute wherein is Man's subsistence."

When he was asked whether it was an attribute of Allah or mankind, he replied, "نعى الحق حقيقته ونعت والعبد رسماً" its essence is an attribute of Allah and ceremonially is an attribute of mankind;" i.e. the reality of Sufism demands annihilation of man's attributes which takes place with the existent of attributes of the Truth, for it is the attributes of Allah. The attributes being ceremonial involves that it demands self-mortification which is an attribute of Man. In other words we can say that it is incorrect to attach Man with any attribute in the Real Unification, for the attributes of mankind are not everlasting and these are just ceremonial which in themselves are nothing. Therefore, one need to accept principally the emergence of these attributes in man are in fact the acts of Allah. For example, Allah commands His servants to fast and on obedience he is named as *Saim* (one who is fasting). Apparently the *Saim* is the man and fasting is the work or attribute of him, but in reality it is the command of Allah i.e. it belongs to Him. Allah revealed to Prophet (peace be upon him), "فصوم لي وأنا اجزي به"، fasting is for Me, and I will give its reward." He is the real owner of whole creature and relationship of anything with mankind is just ceremonial.

Abu al-Hasan Nuri says:

التصوف ترك كل حظ النفس

"Sufism is the renunciation of all selfish pleasures."

And it is of two kinds i.e. formal and essential. When one is rejecting pleasure of the selfish desires, it is formal renunciation but if the pleasure itself is rejecting the man, it is the annihilation of pleasure and delight and a real contemplation. Therefore renunciation of pleasure is the act of Man, but annihilation of pleasure is the act of Allah. The act of Man is formal and metaphorical, while the act of Allah is real. This saying clarifies the saying of Junaid which is quoted above.

Abu al-Hasan Nuri also says:

الصوفيته هم الذين صفت ارواحهم فصا روافي الصف الاول بين يدي الحق

"*Sufis* are those people whose spirits have been purified, hence they attaining the front place have found rest with the proximity of Truth (Allah)." It means that those whose spirits through self-mortification have been purified from the

contamination of humanity and self desires, and having fled all save Him and after achieving the highest degree of attainment, have found rest with proximity of Allah among the first ranks.

Abu al-Hasan Nuri further says:

الصوفي الذي لا يملك ولا يملك

"The *Sufi* is not he who possesses anything nor is he possessed by anything."

Sufi should not claim ownership of anything nor should he himself be slave of anyone save Allah. This is the true *Maqam-i Fana* (annihilation), since one whose qualities are annihilated he neither owns anything nor is possessed by anyone. It is because ownership can only be applied to existent things. The *Sufi* does not own any worldly asset or any glory of the next world, for he is lost to himself. He does not desire authority over others, nor can he be subjugated by others. This saying is very subtle and refers to the sayings of those who are convinced of complete annihilation. If Allah wills, we shall mention in this work the points wherein they have fallen into error.

Ibn al-Jalla says:

التصوف حقيقته لا رسم له

"Sufism is an essence without form,"

The form belongs to mankind in respect to their conduct while the essence thereof is peculiar to Allah. Since Sufism consists in turning away from mankind, therefore it cannot be expressed and defined.

Abu Umru Damashqi says:

التصوف رويته الكون بعين النقص بل غرض الطرف عن الكون

"Sufism is to see the universe with imperfect eye, rather to shut the eyes from it."

To see the universe with imperfect eye is the attribute of those who are at state of *fanafillah* (annihilated to the Truth), because the objects of sight are phenomena, and when phenomena disappears, sight also disappears. And to close eyes to the universe is the attribute of those who are at state of *baqibillah* (living with the Truth), because shutting the eye

to the phenomenal world leaves the spiritual vision subsistent, i.e. whoever becomes blind to self sees by means of the Truth. In that state the aspirant has no self vision, rather it's the Truth through which he sees. The seeker of the world only sees the world and finds no way to come out of it. One who sees the world with imperfect eye i.e. with abhorrence, and does not desire it, is better than the former, and still the best is one who totally ignores it. One who sees the world with imperfection is veiled, for seeing of other is a veil. He who does not see is not veiled by his blindness, because he sees through the Truth.

This is the *maqam* (station) which aspirants consider an important foundation of the path, but to explain it here is unsuitable.

Sheikh Abu Bakr Shibli says:

التصوف شرك لانه صيانتة القلب عن رويته الغير ولا غير

"*Tasawwuf* in one sense is also polytheism, because it implies to guard one's heart from the vision of other, but other does not exist."

This means that in *Tawhid* (Unity of Allah) vision of other (than Allah) is polytheism, and when other has no existence and value in one's heart then from whom one need to guard his heart.

Sheikh Husri says:

التصوف صفاء السر من كدورة المخالفة

"Sufism is to purify the heart from impurity of the discord."

It means that one should refrain from discord with Allah, because love is the name of concord, which is the opposite of discord. The lover has no other duty in this world but to keep the commandment of the beloved and if the object of desire is one, how discord can arise?

Muhammad b. Ali b. Hussein b. Ali b. Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with them) says:

التصوف خلق فمن زاد عليك في الخلق زاد عليك في التصوف

"Sufism implies morality. He that has the better disposition is a better *Sufi*."

Good morality is of two kinds, goodness towards the Truth (Allah) and goodness towards humanity. The former is acquiescence in the Divine decrees, i.e. goodness to Allah is to remain contented on all matters. In later case the goodness to humanity is that one accepts all their evils and humiliations for Allah's sake. Both these aspects are beneficial for the seeker of the Path as Allah is independent of the seeker's acquiescence or resistance, and these two qualities depend on the *marifat* (knowledge) of His *Tawhid* (Unity).

And Abu Muhammad Murtaish says:

الصوفي لا يسبق همته خطوته البتة

"The Sufi is one whose inward thoughts should also not take lead to his foot steps." i.e. he is whole heartedly present: his soul is where his body is, and his body where his soul is, and has uniformity in his acts and deeds; his deed where his foot is, and his foot where his deed is.

This is the sign of presence without absence. This is contrary to the doctrine of those who say that one is absent from himself and present with Allah. Nay, it is not so. Rather the reality is that he is present with himself as well as with Allah. This is the sign of perfect union, because there can be no absence from self so long as one regards one's self. And when seeker ceases to regard self presence, he is absent from self and present with the Truth (Allah). The saying of Shibli closely resembles to it, "الصوفي لا يرى في الدارين مع الله غير الله" the *Sufi* sees nothing except Allah in both the worlds." The self existence of man is other (than Allah), and when a man does not see other, he does not see himself also and becomes totally void of self, whether he is at *Maqam* of *fana* (annihilation) or *baqa* (subsistence).

Junaid says that Sufism is founded on eight qualities, generosity, acquiescence, patience, symbolism, traveling (*strange hood*), woolen dress, pilgrimage hood and *faqr* (poverty).

- the generosity of Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him), who offered his son for sacrifice;
- the acquiescence of Ishaq (may blessings of Allah be on him), who submitted to the command of Allah to give up his life;

- the patience of Ayub (may blessings of Allah be on him), who patiently endured the affliction of worms and the jealousy of the Merciful;
- the symbolism of Zakarriya (may blessings of Allah be on him), to whom Allah said, "أَلَا تَكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمْزًا" "thou shalt speak to no man for three days but with signal." (Q 3:41) and again to the same effect, "إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ نِدَاءً خَفِيًّا" Behold! He cried to his Lord in secret." (Q 19:3):
- the traveling (strange hood) of Yahya (may blessings of Allah be on him), who was a stranger in his own country and an alien to his own kin;
- the wearing of wool by Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him), who wore woolen garment throughout;
- the pilgrimage hood of Jesus (may blessings of Allah be on him), who was so detached therein from worldly things that he kept only a cup and a comb. He threw away his cup when he saw a man drinking water through use of palms of his hands, and the comb likewise when he saw another man using his fingers to dress his hair;
- the poverty of Muhammad (peace be upon him), to whom Allah Almighty had given the keys of all the worldly treasures saying: "Lay no trouble on you, but procure every luxury by means of these treasures;" and he answered: "Lord, I desire them not, keep me one day full-fed and one day hunger."

In the way of Path this is an excellent principle.

Abu Husri says:

الصوفي لا يوجد بعد عد مه ولا يعدم بعد وجوده

"The Sufi is he whose existence is without non-existence and his non-existence without existence," i.e. he never loses that which he gets, and he never follows that which he loses.

Other meaning of this is, that his finding has no gain, and neither his no gain has any finding at any time, so that there is either an affirmation without negation or a negation without affirmation.

The object of all these expressions is that the Sufi's state of mortality should entirely lapse, and that his bodily feeling should disappear and his link with everything is cut off, in order that the mystery of his mortality may be revealed and his various parts united in his essential self, and that he may

subsist through and in himself. The effects of this can be seen in two Apostles. The one was Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him), in whose existence there was no non-existence, so that he made a plea to Allah, "رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي -- وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي" O my Lord! expand me my breast; ease my task for me." (Q 20:26-27). Secondly, the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), in whose non-existence there was no existence, so that Allah said, "أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ" have We not expanded thee thy breast? (Q 94:1). One pleaded for adornment and the other was adorned without any demand.

Ali b. Bandar al-Sarafi Nishapuri says:

التصوف اسقاط الرويه للحق ظاهراً وباطناً

"Sufism is that the *Sufi* should not regard his own outward and inward, but should regard as all belonging to Almighty Allah."

Thus, if he looks he sees only Almighty Allah because if he sees self outward, he visions an outward sign of Allah's blessing, and as he sees outward actions will not have the weight even of a gnat's wing besides the blessing of Allah. Therefore, he will immediately refrain from seeing self outward. And if he looks at the inward of the self, he should consider these achievements also blessing of Allah, and consider his personal efforts weighing less than a grain in comparison to blessing of Allah. So he sees nothing save Allah in both inward and outward states through His blessing and considers own efforts worthless.

Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Muqri says:

التصوف استقامة الاحوال مع الحق

"Sufism is maintaining state of steadiness with Allah," i.e. the conditions cannot change the inward state of *Sufi* and neither can he be diverted from path of the Truth. It is because whose heart is devoted to the Author of states is not cast down from the rank of rectitude nor hindered from attaining to the Truth.

Maxims of Conduct

Abu Hafs Haddad of Nishapur says:

التصوف كله اداب لكل وقت ادب و لكل مقام ادب و لكل حال ادب فمن لزم اداب الاوقات بلغ مبلغ الرجال و من ضيع الاداب فهو بعيد من حيث يظن القرب و مردود من حيث يظن القبول

"Sufism consists entirely of etiquettes; every time, place, and circumstance have their own etiquettes; he who observes them religiously attains the high rank of holy men; and he who neglects them is far removed from the nearness (to Allah) and is cast off from the accepted *maqam* (station) of the Truth."

The meaning of this is akin to the saying of Abu al-Hasan Nuri:

ليس التصوف رسوما ولا علوما ولكنه اخلاق

"Sufism is not composed of practices and knowledge (of religion), but it is morals (etiquettes)," i.e. if Sufism is consisted of practices, it could be gained by self-mortification and if it is consisted of knowledge, it could be gained by instruction. It is etiquettes, and it can not be acquired until one demands it from self and act on its principles. The distinction between practice (of social conduct) and etiquette (good moral conduct) is that practices are ceremonial actions devoid of sincerity and proceeds from certain motives, and are at variance with spirit. The morals are praiseworthy actions without ceremony or motive; it is in harmony with the spirit and clear of boastfulness.

Murta'ish says, "التصوف حسن الخلق" Sufism is the name of good manners." This is of three kinds:

- To follow the commands of Allah with regularity and sincerity.
- To extend respect to one's elders and superiors; be kind to younger and inferior; and show justice to his equals by seeking no recompense.
- Avoid selfish desires and devilish acts.

Whoever adorns him with these traits, he is counted amongst the good natured men.

Whatever I have narrated is according to the following Hadith that once when mother of the believers Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) was asked about the *Khulq* (manners) of the Prophet (peace be upon him), she replied to read the following verse of Quran:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

"Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant." (Q7:199).

Khawaja Muhammad Murtaish says:

هذا مذهب كله جد فلا تخلطوه بشيء من الهزل

"The Sufism is wholly earnest, keep it clear from facetious acts." It means, avoid the fake *Sufis* and do not follow them.

When the people of our time see these formalists among the aspirants to Sufism, and become aware of their *raqs* (whirling), see them deeply involved in enjoying singing, visiting the courts of sultans for the sake of meager benefits, they consider all *Sufis* to be alike. They also consider that the principles of Sufism and tenets of the ancient *Sufis* were just the same. They do not recognize that this is an era of affliction where *Sultans* are acting with tyranny and people are mostly committed to evils. Ostentation incites the ascetic to hypocrisy, and vanity incites the *Sufis* to dance and singing. You must know that the seekers who hold the doctrine can vanish but principles on which these are based cannot become extinct. The evil lies in the practitioners, not in the principles on which these are based. If some scoffers disguise their follies in the earnestness of true mystics, the earnestness of the later is not thereby turned to folly.

And Abu Ali Qarmisini says:

التصوف الخلاق الرضية

"Sufism is good morals and approved actions." The good moral is that man's conduct under all circumstances should be praiseworthy and to Allah's approval. He should be content and satisfied.

Abu al-Hasan Nuri says:

التصوف هو الحرية والفتوة وترك التكلف والسخاء وبذل الدنيا

"Sufism implies to liberty, courage, generosity and abandonment of ineffective trouble." It is that liberty and courage through which one gets free from the prison of selfish desires and overcomes evil lust. He is purged from the conceit of his guts, and does not strive after worldly appurtenances and rewards. It is that generosity through which he leaves this world to the people of this world.

And Abu al-Hasan Fushanji⁶ says:

التصوف اليوم اسم بلا حقيقة وقد كان حقيقة بلا اسم

"Nowadays Sufism is a name without a reality, but formerly it was a reality without a name." In the time of the companions (may Allah be pleased with them) of Prophet (peace be upon him) this name did not exist, but the reality thereof was in everyone's heart. Now only the name exists, but the reality is vanished. That is to say, formerly the practice was known but no one used to claim, but nowadays the pretense is known and the practice is unknown.

I have brought together and examined the sayings of the Sheikhs on Sufism, in order that Path may become clear to you (May Allah grant you felicity!) and that you may get hold skeptics and be able to say them that what do they talk about it? If they deny only the name it is no matter, but if they deny the essential ideas, this amounts to denial of the whole *Shariat* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his praised qualities. And I enjoin you may Allah grants you the felicity to hold these ideas in due regard and satisfy their just claims, so that you may refrain from idle pretensions and have an excellent belief in the *Sufis* themselves.

⁶ An eminent Imam of Khurasan, Died 348 A.H.

Chapter IV

The Dress of Sufis

Know that mostly the dress of *Sufis* has been patched frock and wearing of this dress is *Sunnah* (custom of Prophet), for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "عليكم بلباس الصوف تجدون حلاوة" wear woollen raiment, so that you may feel the sweetness of faith."

It is narrated by a companion of Prophet (peace be upon him) who says that "كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يلبس الصوف و يركب الحمار" the Prophet wore a woollen garment and rode on ass"

Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), "لا تضعي الثوب حتي ترقعيه" do not waste the garment, when torn patch it."

It is related about Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), that he used to wear *muraqqa* (patched frock) which had thirty patches i.e. he repaired the garment for thirty times. Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the best garment is that which is cheaper and give the least trouble.

It is related that Commander of the Faithful, Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), had a shirt of which the sleeves were leveled with his fingers, and if at any time he wore a longer shirt he used to tear off the ends of its sleeves (probably there was a fashion of longer sleeves at that time).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was also commanded by Allah to shorten his garments, for Allah said: "وَيَبَّابِكُمْ فَطَهِّرْ" and thy garments keep free from stain!" (Q 74:4), i.e. shorten them.

Hasan Basri says that he saw seventy companions of Prophet (they all had participated in the battle of Badr), all of them used to wear woollen garments, and the Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) used to wear woollen garment while in his detachment from the world. Hasan Basri further says that he saw Salman Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him) wearing a woollen frock which had many patches.

It is related through Umar b. Khattab, Ali b. Talib and Harim b. Hayyan (may Allah be pleased with them) that they saw Awais

Qarni clad in a woollen garment on which there were many patches. Hasan Basri, Malik b. Dinar and Sufyan Thawri used to wear such patched woollen garments.

It is stated in the book "History of the Sheikhs" composed by Muhammad b. Ali Hakim Tirmidhi that Imam Abu Hanifa at first clothed himself in wool. When he retired to seclusion and adopted solitude, he in his dream saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) who commanded him to live amidst the people, because through him his *Sunnah* would be revived. Then Abu Hanifa refrained from solitude, but he never put on a costly garment. He enjoined Dawud Tai, who was one of the most accomplished adepts in the path of Sufism, to wear woollen garment.

Once Ibrahim b. Adham clad in woollen garment came to visit Imam Abu Hanifa. The latter's disciples looked at him with contempt and belittling eyes, until Abu Hanifa spoke that our leader Ibrahim b Adham had come. The disciples pointed out to these remarks that the Imam never utters jests, how Ibrahim Adham had gained that leadership? Abu Hanifa replied that by continual devotion. He had been occupied in serving Allah while we remain engaged in serving our own bodies; hence, he became our leader.

Nowadays, if some persons for the sake of public honor and reputation have started wearing patched frocks to pose *Sufis'* habits or their hearts belie their external appearance, it might be that all people are not of similar nature. Know, there is only one General in the army, similarly there are very few genuine adepts in every sect. However, all who might be just possessing one odd characteristic, are referred to Sufism. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "من تشبه يقوم فهو منهم" one who adopts similarity of some people, he is amongst them," i.e. one who makes himself akin to a group either in conduct or in belief, is one of that group.

Some see only outward condition of the *Sufis*, and others direct attention to their inward purity. Those who aspire to join the Path of Sufism remain bound to following four conditions:

- Those who get aspiration from such *Sufis* who are accomplished in their inward state, purity of heart, the subtlety, enlightenment, moderate in their outlook, and possess soundness of character. Such aspirant perceiving loftiness of these eminent occupying high states, develops

liking for them and he joins to them in hope of attaining the same degree, and the beginning of his novitiate is marked by state of *kashf* (unveiling), purgation from desire, and renunciation of self.

- The second class of aspirants is attracted by those, who perform decent deeds, pure at heart and God fearing, and their adherence to of *Shariat* (religious law), knowledge of the different sorts of discipline, and excellence of conduct. The aspirants try to follow them and consequently they seek their association and follow the practice of piety. The beginning of their novitiate is marked by *mujahida* (self-mortification) and good conduct.
- The persons of third group like saints because of their humility, goodness of disposition and good deeds. Seeing their respectable conduct with superiors and kindness to inferior, and their contended way of life, they by denouncing the world and freeing themselves from its laborious activities join the pious with peace.
- The fourth group who themselves are lazy, proud, and lusty of power, because of their ignorance, considering just the outward actions of the *Sufis*, join them. When such persons join the company of *Sufis*, they knowing their weaknesses of the Path, treat them kindly and indulgently. But since they lack in their desire to seek the Truth, therefore, they are not much concerned to devote themselves to self-mortification and cleansing. They only desire that people should respect and be scared of them as they respect the saints and scared of them. They try to veil their ills in saints' piety. Although, they dress like the saints, but that cladding speaks out itself about their pretended deeds. Such people are referred in Quran as, "

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْجِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ

"The similitude of those who are charged with the (obligations of the) Mosaic Law, but who subsequently failed in those (obligations), is that of a donkey which carries huge tomes (but understands not). Evil is the similitude of people who falsify the signs of Allah:" (Q 62:5).

Know that the last class is in majority in the prevailing era. It is imperative upon you not to even think of that which you

cannot do. Your efforts of thousands of years to be in the folds of the Path can not be similar to that moment in which Truth Itself may take you in Its folds. This does not happen by adopting religious habits but through righteous deeds. When a person follows the Path of Sufism, his royal dress also becomes *muraqqa* and if he is reluctant to follow the Path, even wearing of *muraqqa* will not save him from the torments of Hell.

An eminent Sheikh when was asked why he did not wear a patched frock, he replied that it was hypocrisy to wear the garb of the *Sufis*. Is it not hypocrisy to dress up like a brave without possessing attributes of chivalry? So, if you wear this garb with a wish to be known by Allah as one of His elects, He knows that already. And if you wish to show to the people that you are an elect of Allah, should your claim be true, you are guilty of ostentation; and should it be false, of hypocrisy. Hence, this Path is very laborious. The *Sufis* are far high to need a special garment for this purpose. Someone very rightly has said, "الصفاء من الله تعالى انعام واكرام الصوف من لباس الانعام" purity of inward is a gift from Allah, whereas wool is the clothing of animals."

Dress up like *Sufis* is a pretension on part of those who clad like *Sufis*, so people might consider them also *Sufis*. Although the Sheikhs of this Path enjoined their disciples to wear patched frocks, and also did the same themselves, so that they are known by the people and they be watchmen on them, so that if they find them committing transgression, they might rebuke them; and also while clad in this garment, if they wish to sin, they would be held back by shame.

In short, the wearing of *muraqqa* is the beauty and elegance of Allah's saints. The common people are honored by wearing it while the elite feels debased. When a common person wears such dress he is respected and honored by the people and debased for the elite is that they are looked upon very commonly when so dressed up. Hence it is said, "لباس النعم للعوام و جوشن البلاء للخواص" the *muraqqa* is a garb of happiness for the common, but a shield of affliction for the elects."

Mostly the commons are already afflicted and they possess no way to accumulate wealth and honor, whereas if the elite adopt this Path they have to forego their wealth and honor. So which is affliction for the elite that is blessing for the

commons? Therefore, the elders have said, " المرقعة قميص الوفاء لاهل " *muraqqa* is enduring attire for the Pious and enjoying dress for the arrogant." The pious after wearing it refrains from worldly desires, and the arrogant are veiled from the Truth and denied blessings.

In short, wearing of *Muraqqa* is a cause of attaining something by all. If the Pious gets purity of the heart, the other is rewarded with bounty. It is a veil for some and conformity for other. I hope all they would be saved from the torments because of their love for each other. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, " من احب قومًا فهو معهم " one will be with them whom he loves."

It is mandatory to desire the Truth wholeheartedly and to refrain from forms because who stick to outward he never achieves the reality. The self existence of human is a veil between him and the Truth and it is annihilated only by passing through the "states" and "stages" of mystic path. Purity is the name given to such annihilation. How can he who has gained it choose one garment rather than another, or take pains to adorn himself at all? And one who has attained the state of *fana* (annihilation) from humanity, how should he care whether people call him a *Sufi* or by some other name?

The condition of wearing a *Muraqqa* is that it should be worn informally with simplicity. The original *Muraqqa* should be mended whenever need arises. The Sheikhs have two opinions in this regard. Some hold that it is not must to do patchwork neatly, rather only torn part of cloth which needs repair should be mended. The others have opposite view and they prefer that patchwork should be done neatly and with symmetry because it is part of the practice of the dervishes to do each act with accuracy and neatness.

I while in Tus asked Sheikh, Abu al-Qasim Gurgani that what was the least thing necessary for a dervish in order that he might become worthy of poverty. He replied that a dervish at least must act for the following:

- He must know how to do the patch work rightly on his *muraqqa*;
- He must have the capability to know the truth;
- He must know how to set his foot rightly.

A number of dervishes were present with me when he said this. As soon as we came out each one began to apply this saying to his ease. Some of them because of ignorance took it as that *faqr* (poverty) is only that one should be able to mend his *muraqqa* rightly and know how to step on ground. Every one of them thought that he had understood the Sheikh rightly. Since my heart was devoted to the Sheikh, and I was unwilling that his words should fall so lowly, therefore, I invited them to share our opinion on this subject. So everyone stated his view, and when my turn came I said:

- A right patch is one that is stitched for poverty, not for show. If it is stitched for poverty, it is right, even though it be stitched wrongly.
- And a right word is one that is heard in relation to the occasion not willfully, and is applied earnestly not frivolously, and is apprehended through spirituality not by reason.
- And a right foot is one that is put on the ground with true rapture, not playfully and formally.

Some of my remarks were reported to the Sheikh, who said that Ali had spoken the reality, may Allah reward him! Hence, the intention behind wearing patched frocks is to alleviate the burden of this world and to be sincere in poverty towards Allah.

It is related that when Jesus was raised to heaven he was wearing a *muraqqa*. Some Sheikh saw him in his dream clad in a *muraqqa*, and each patch of that was emitting splendor of light (*Nur*). On his quest to know Jesus told him that it was reward of that labor and tribulation which he used to exert and bear while mending his *muraqqa*. Allah Almighty had turned into *Nur* every tribulation which He inflicted on his heart.

In Transoxania I saw an old man who belonged to the sect of *Malamatis* (who is blamed). He had restrained himself to eat and wear all that which human beings had the habit. His food consisted of things thrown away by them, such as wasted vegetables, sour gourds, rotten carrots, and the like. His clothes were made of rags collected from rubbish and sewed into a *muraqqa*. And among the mystics of recent times, I have heard of an elder of Merv Alrud, who had flourishing condition and of an excellent character, that he had sewn so many patches on his seating rug and cap that scorpions

brought forth their young in them. My Sheikh wore a single cloak for fifty six years, on which he used to sew pieces of cloth without taking any pain.

There were two dervishes from Iraq, one a votary of the contemplative life and the other a votary of purgative life. The former clothed himself from the pieces of cloth which were torn off by dervishes in a state of ecstasy from their own garments, while the other used for the same purpose only the pieces torn off by dervishes who were asking forgiveness. Thus the outward garb of each was in harmony with his inward disposition. This is the observance and watchfulness of the state.

Sheikh Muhammad b. Khafif wore a coarse frock for twenty years, and every year he used to undergo four *chilla* (seclusion for mystic commune) of forty days duration of each, and during every *chilla* he would compose a book on the mysteries of Sciences of Divine Verities. One of his contemporary, namely Muhammad b. Zakarriya, resident of Faris, who was well learned in the mystic way of life, never wore *muraqqa*. Someone asked Sheikh Khafif what was involved in wearing a *muraqqa*, and who was permitted to do so?" He replied that it involved those obligations which were fulfilled by Muhammad b. Zakarriya in his white clothing, and the wearing of *muraqqa* fits on him.

It is not must in the Mystic Path to follow each and every act of *Sufis* because due to two reasons some Sheikhs have abandoned *muraqqa*. The procurement of wool from authenticated sources has become doubtful because of regular theft and plundering of wool producing animals and that a sect of heretics has also adopted the *muraqqa* (patched frock) as an insignia and it is praiseworthy to depart from such heretics, may it be departures from *Sunnah*. Sufis have started taking pain while sewing patches. It has increased their respect and honor in the eyes of people and everyone now try to copy them. Apparently they clad themselves in *muraqqa* but their acts are blameworthy. Their acts annoyed *Sufis* so much that they have adopted unique methods to sew their garments and have made them as mark of mutual identification. They observe it so religiously that once a dervish came to one of the Sheikhs wearing a *muraqqa*, on which the improper patch work was done, the Sheikh expelled him from his presence.

The reality of purity of heart lies in the delicacy of nature and temperament. In the purity of heart, no relaxation is tolerable. It is but natural to disapprove incorrect actions, just as it is natural to derive no pleasure from improper poetry.

Some saints do not trouble themselves about clothes at all. They wear what ever Allah provides to them, may it be a costly attire or normal religious habit and if Allah keeps them unclothed, they remain in that state. I approve this habit and practice it in my journeys.

It is related that Ahmad b. Khadruya when he visited Abu Yazid was wearing a *quba* (costly attire), and Shah b. Shuja also wore a *quba* when he visited Abu Hafs. This was not their usual dress, for sometimes they wore a *muraqqa* and sometimes a woolen garment or white dress to ensure that they did not adopt some regular habit. The human soul is habituated to things and fond of customs, and when anything becomes habitual to the soul it soon grows natural, and when it has grown natural it becomes a veil. Hence the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "خير الصيام صوم اخي داود عليه السلام" the best of the fasts is that of my brother David (may blessings of Allah be on him)." David used to keep his fast on alternate days. He used to fast on one day and have break on the following day in order that his soul should not become accustomed either to keeping the fast or to leaving it, for fear of that he might be veiled thereby. The most pleasing act in this regard was of Abu Hamid Dustan Mervasi. He would happily accept the garment which his disciples used to put on him, but when some desired its need and he unclothed him when he was at leisure and alone, he would not refuse to that person also. Nowadays, there is a dervish Mavid in Ghazna who has no choice or discrimination with respect to his clothes and he follows is religiously.

Mostly Sheiks have liked to wear blue garments. One of the reasons is that the foundation of their mystic path is based on wandering and traveling and white dress is prone to get dirty quickly in such environments and is liable to frequent washing. Besides white dress is commonly worn and liked. The blue dress symbolizes the bereaved and afflicted, and is the apparel of mourners. Since this world is the abode of trouble, the pavilion of affliction, the den of sorrow, the house of parting and the cradle of tribulation, therefore, aspirants of Truth remain in mourn condition and clad themselves in blue

garments. The aspirants who realizing imperfection in their acts and failing in achieving their desired aims clad themselves in blue garments. One wears blue dress for the death of a dear friend, another for the loss of a cherished hope.

A dervish was asked why he wore blue dress. He replied that the Prophet (peace be upon him) left three things, poverty, knowledge, and the sword. The sword was taken by monarch, who misused it, knowledge was chosen by savants who were satisfied merely teaching it and poverty was chosen by dervishes who made it a means of enriching themselves. I wear blue as a sign of mourning for the calamity of these three classes of men.

Once, Murtaish was walking through some habitat of Baghdad. Being thirsty, he went to a door and asked for water. The daughter of the householder brought some water in a jug. Murtaish was obsessed by her beauty and would not leave the spot until the master of the house came. Murtaish cried before him that the girl gave him a drink of water and robbed him of his heart. The householder replied that the girl was his daughter and offered her daughter's hand to Murtaish and solemnized their wedding immediately. The bride's father, who was a wealthy man, sent Murtaish to the bath house, where they took off his patched frock and clothed him in a fine dress. At night when he got engaged in his prayer and solitary devotion, suddenly he called for his *muraqqa* to be brought back. On asking he answered, that he had heard a voice within, whispering:

"On account of one disobedient look We have removed your *muraqqa*, the garb of piety, from thy body, if you look again We shall remove the raiment of intimacy from your heart."

The dress which is worn to gain proximity of the Truth and following in obedience of the friends of Allah is always blessed. It should only be worn if one is confident to fulfill its due rights; otherwise it is better to remain contented with the normal ordinances of the religion. It is unlawful to play dishonestly with the dress of the saints because it is better to remain a true Muslim than falsely pretending like *Sufis*.

Only two kinds of men qualify to wear the *muraqqa*:

- those who are cut off from the world, and
- those who feel a longing for the Lord.

It is the tradition of the *Sufi* Sheikhs that when a novice joins them, with the purpose of renouncing the world, they subject him to spiritual discipline for three continuous years. If he fulfills the requirements of this discipline, well and good, otherwise they declare him unfit for the Path. The discipline requires to be followed is as:

- The first year is devoted to the service of the people.
- The novice should spend second year in obedience to Allah.
- In the third year should watch over and guard his heart.

It is possible to serve the people only when he places himself in the rank of servants and all other people in the rank of masters, i.e. he must regard all, without any discrimination, as being better than himself and must consider it his duty to serve all alike. He should never demand any credit for this service and neither should he ever possess such thought that because of this act he has become superior to them, for this is manifest perdition, an evident fraud, and is one of the infectious cankers of the age.

And he can serve Allah Almighty only when he cuts off all his selfish interests relating either to this world or to the next, and worships Allah purely for Him and not for anything else even for the fear of Hell or desire of Heaven, because one who worships for the lust of Heaven, then Heaven is his lord not Allah.

And he can guard his heart only when his thoughts are collected and worries are dismissed from his heart, so that in the state of intimacy (with Allah) he preserves his heart from the ambushes of heedlessness.

When novice achieves these qualifications, he is entitled to wear the *muraqqa* as a true mystic, not merely as an imitator of others. And the person who invests the novice with the *muraqqa*, must be a man of rectitude, who has traversed ups and downs of the Path and have tasted the rapture of states of the Path, perceived the nature of actions and experienced the severity of the Divine Majesty and the clemency of the Divine Beauty. Furthermore, he must be capable to examine the state of his disciple and judge what *maqam* (station) he will ultimately reach, and whether he is among the retiring one or who habitates at one *maqam*, or attain their destination. If he considers that someday he will abandon the Path, he must

forbid him to enter upon it. If the novice is of the type who may abandon the path halfway, he must be looked upon and treated according to the rules of the Path, and who is capable of achieving the goal, he must be spiritually nourished. The *Sufi* Sheikhs are physicians of men's souls. When the physician is ignorant of the patient's malady he kills him by his art, because neither he knows how to treat him nor capable to recognize the symptoms of danger, and is unable to prescribe suitable doze. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, " الشيخ في أمته قومه كالنبي في أمته the Sheikh in his community is like the Prophet in his *Ummah*." The prophets showed insight in their call to the people, and used to entertain everyone according to the requirements of the call. They kept each individual at his proper place and degree. So the Sheikh likewise should show insight in his call, and should give to everyone his proper spiritual nourishment, in order that the object of his call may be secured. So, when the accomplished Sheikh after three years training of the novice, perceiving his state through spiritual eye, and on finding perfection in novice, his act to invest the novice with the *muraqqa* will be a right step.

Investing *muraqqa* is, comparable to dressing one in a coffin (winding-sheet). The wearer must resign all his hopes of the pleasures of life, and purges his heart from all sensual delights, devote his life entirely to the service of Allah and completely renounces self-centered desires. The disciple then fulfills all the obligations invested on him through this honor, and strives with all his might to perform them, as deems it unlawful to satisfy his own wishes.

Sheikhs have uttered many allegories concerning the dress of the *Sufis*. Sheikh Abu Maumar Isfahani has written a book on the subject, which contains extravagance uttering of general natured aspirants to Sufism. My aim, however, in this work is not to repeat the book, but to elucidate the difficulties of the Path.

The one of the allegories concerning *muraqqa* is that:

- its upper indicates patience,
- its two sleeves points to fear and hope,
- its two gussets point to contraction and dilation,
- its waist refers to self-denial,
- its collar indicates soundness in faith, and
- its fringe points to sincerity.

Better still is the following:

- Its upper is annihilation of intercourse with creation,
- its two sleeves are poverty and purity,
- its two gussets are observance and continence,
- its waist is persistence in contemplation,
- its collar is tranquility in (Allah's) presence, and
- its fringe is settlement in the abode of union.

When you have worn a *muraqqa* like this for your exterior, it behooves you to adopt such practices for your spiritual self also. I have composed a book on this subject, entitled "اسرار الخرق و المعونات (The mysteries of Patched Frocks and Means of Livelihood)," of which the novice should keep a copy.

If the novice, having put on the *muraqqa*, should be forced to tear it under compulsion of the temporal authority or being in the state of rapture, this is permissible and excusable. But if he tears it of his free will and deliberately then he has no right to wear it again. If he still wears it, he stands on the same footing as those who are content to wear *muraqqa* for outward show, with no achievable spiritual gain.

The real sense in tearing or rending of dress is that aspirant has to move from one *maqam* (station) to another higher *maqam*. When *Sufis* pass from one stage to another, they immediately change their dress in thankfulness for having gained a higher stage. Whereas every other garment is the dress of a single stage, the *muraqqa* is a dress which comprises all the stages of the Path, therefore to discard it is equivalent to renouncing the whole Path. I have made a slight reference to this question, although this is not the proper place for it. I will give a detailed explanation of the principle in the chapter on rending *muraqqa* and revelation of the mystery of audition.

Furthermore, it has been said that one who invests a novice with the *muraqqa* should possess such sovereign mystical powers that any stranger on whom he looks kindly should become a friend, and any sinner whom he clothes in this garment should become a saint.

Once I was traveling with my Sheikh in Azerbaijan, we saw some persons wearing *muraqqa*, who were standing beside a wheat barn and holding up their skirts in the hope that the

farmer would oblige them with some wheat. Observing their ill state Sheikh exclaimed:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبَحَتِ تِجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ

"These are they, who have bartered guidance for error, but their traffic is profitless, and they have lost true direction." (Q 2:16).

I asked him that how had they fallen into that calamity and disgrace. He said that their Sheikhs were greedy to gather disciples, and they are greedy to collect worldly goods. No greed is better than other and pretended claim is also a greed.

It is related of Junaid that he saw a beautiful Christian youth and prayed to Allah, "O Lord, pardon him for my sake, for Thou hast created him exceptionally fair." After a while the youth came to Junaid and made profession of Islam and was enrolled among the saints.

Abu Ali Siyah was asked that who were permitted to invest *muraqqa* on novices. He replied that one who oversees the whole kingdom of Allah, so that nothing happens in the world without his knowledge.

So *muraqqa* is the symbol of saints and badge of Sheikhs and dress of poor and *Sufis*. If someone deviate and use it for earning worldly benefits, for that *Sufis* may not be criticized.

Chapter V

Poverty (الفقر) and Purity (الصفوة)

The practitioners of the Mystic Path differ on the merits of *faqr* فقر (poverty) and *safwat* صفوت (purity). Some opine that poverty is better accomplished in each respect as compare to purity, whereas some prefer purity over poverty. Those who prefer poverty, say that poverty is complete annihilation in which every thing (save Allah) extinct, and purity is one of the *maqam* (stations) of poverty. When aspirant gains annihilation, all stations fade away, as has been discussed in the preceding chapter on Poverty and Wealth. Those who set purity above poverty say that poverty is an existing thing and is capable of being named; whereas purity is getting bare hand from all existing things. Purity is complete annihilation and poverty is the essence of subsistence, therefore, poverty is one of the names of *maqamat* (stations), but purity is the name of perfection.

The matter has been disputed at great length in the present age and people have resorted to fanciful and surprising verbal subtleties. There is a lot of difference among poverty and purity on excellence and superiority. They all agree that display of beautiful expressions is neither poverty nor purity. The people have established their own sects just by following outward expressions and have not taken pain to go into their roots and lost the reality. It is just a war of words between them which denies them the Truth. Self denial they call negation of essence, and affirmation of self desire they regard as affirmation of essence. They in the presence of the evils of their *nafs* (lower soul) and wishful desires, existent and non-existent, have and have not, are all themselves. The path of Sufism is free and clean of their nonsense.

The flight of the Saints of Allah is so high where *maqamat* and degrees become extinct and where outward expressions fall from the underlying realities, so that neither spiritual delight is left nor taste, and neither sobriety nor effacement. After acquiring such a state when they try to seek names to express the reality, they do not find words because the Truth is far above to be given names. At this stage, in dealing with the ideas themselves, the question of superiority does not arise,

and no one can claim the superiority of either. So after realizing it there is no need of further lucidity that it is useless to discuss superiority of either because to call either of the two superior effects on the priority of other. So to some people poverty seem to be superior and they prefer it because it speaks of renunciation and humility. And some prefer purity, and hold it the more honorable because it is related to denying and annihilating all the worldly and soul's contaminations. They try to explain their own ideas through adopting these two names. Since it is difficult to get proper words to fully explain the reality, therefore they talk to each other in symbolism. So, when name is non-existent, from where the question of superiority arises. But when people through efforts produce names and words i.e. poverty and purity, then they start giving preference one to other. Amongst the *Sufis* it is the meanings which are discussed, whereas the ignorant linguistics is trapped in the gimmick of words and prefer one over the other. But who is manifested with the Truth, he makes it *Qibla* of his heart and then you may call him *Faqir* (poor) or *Sufi*, it is immaterial for him because reality is far above than the words.

This controversy dates back from the time of Abu al-Hasan Sumnun. He when in a state of revelation akin to subsistence, used to set poverty above purity and when in a state akin to annihilation, used to set purity above poverty. When the spiritualists of that time inquired why he did so, he replied:

"As my nature has attained the magnificence in the *maqamat* (stations) of annihilation and abasement, it has similar position at the *maqam* of subsistence, therefore, I prefer purity to poverty when I am in a state akin to annihilation, and I prefer poverty to purity when I am in a state akin to subsistence, for poverty is the name of subsistence and purity that of annihilation. In the later state I annihilate from myself the sight (consciousness) of subsistence, and in the former state I annihilate from myself the sight of annihilation, so that my nature becomes dead both to annihilation and to subsistence."

These are just good explanations but in reality neither annihilation has subsistence nor subsistence can be annihilated because one who attains state of annihilation, is annihilated to himself and from here when he achieves the *maqam-i billah* (state of subsistent with the Truth), he is

subsistent to himself i.e. he is back to his normal self. Annihilation is a term of which it is impossible to speak hyperbolically. For example it is wrong to say that annihilation will annihilate, because so long as any vestige of existence remains, annihilation is not complete and when it has been attained, the "annihilation" thereof is nothing but self-conceit flattered by meaningless phrases. In the vanity and rashness of youth I composed a discourse of this kind, entitled the "Book of Annihilation and Subsistence," but in the present work I will set forth the whole matter with caution.

In spiritual sense this was the difference between Purity and Poverty, but when these terms are considered in their practical aspect, they denote removing one's self from worldly things and casting away of all one's possessions, and then the discussion matter falls in the category of poverty (*faqir*) and lowliness.

Some Sheikhs assert that the *faqir* (poor) are superior to the *miskin* (lowly), because Allah has said:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

(Charity is) for those in need, who, in Allah's cause are restricted (from travel), (Q 2:273).

The Lowly is that who possesses means of livelihood, but *faqir* (poor) is he who has nothing. Therefore, poverty is honor and Lowliness abasement, hence, on the Mystic Path, he who possesses the means of livelihood is considered worthless. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

تعس عبد الدار هم و تعس عبد الدينار و تعس عبد الخميصة و القطيعة

"Woe befall those who worship the *dinar* and the *dirham*, woe befall those who worship bag and purse!"

He who renounces the means of livelihood is honored and is better than who possesses worldly means, because, who has means depends on them whereas who has nothing depend on Allah.

But some declare *miskin* (lowly) as superior to *faqir* (poor), because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

اللهم احيني مسكينا امتني مسكينا واحشرنني في زمرة المساكين

"Let me live lowly, and let me die lowly, and raise me from the dead among the lowly!"

Whereas, speaking of Poverty, he said,

كاد الفقر ان يكون كفرًا

"Poverty is near to being unbelief." According to this Hadith the poor are dependent on a means, but the lowly are independent.

Some Religious Scholars hold that the poor are those who have sufficiency whereas lowly are free from worldly cares. But some others hold the converse of this view.

The accomplisners of the *maqamat* have given name of *Sufi* to the *miskin* (lowly), and they are in agreement with the formers. And those consider the later view, for them purity is more honored than poverty.

Chapter VI

Blame (*malamat* ملامت)

Some of the *Sufi* Sheikhs have trodden the path of *malamat* ملامت (blame). Blame creates great effect in making love sincere. The followers of the Truth and especially eminent scholars of religious law have always been targeted by the people. Even the Prophet (peace be upon him), who is the exemplar and *Imam* (leader) of the adherents of the Truth, and head of the lovers of Allah, was honored and held in good repute by all until Divine inspiration was revealed to him and then the people loosened their tongues to blame him. Some called him soothsayer, some named him a poet, and others crossing limits called him a madman and a liar. And Allah describing the true believers says:

وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةً لَّأَنَّهُمْ ذَلِكَ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

"And never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault, that is the Grace of Allah, which he will bestow on whom he pleaseth. And Allah encompasseth all, and He knoweth all things. (Q 5:54).

Such is the ordinance of Allah, that He causes those who talk of Him to be blamed by the whole world, but preserves them from misdeeds of people. This He does in His jealousy. He guards His lovers by keeping them away from the eyes of people, lest the eye of any stranger should behold the beauty of their state, and He guards their own beauty also, so they may not fall into self-conceit and arrogance. Therefore, He sets vulgar over them so they loose their tongue against them, and He activates lovers' *nafs lawama* (inner soul) also to keep a check on them for any misdeeds. So when they do some blameworthy act, they are checked through their own inner soul, which even on their good deeds also blame them for doing less while they could do more.

There is no other veil or taint more serious in the Path than that one through his good deeds is preoccupied by self-conceit, and it is caused due to either on securing public honor and appreciation from the people, i.e. when they like some of his acts, they appreciate him which creates self vanity in his heart, or when one does not like the acts of others and feels

pleased and pride with his own acts. Allah with His kindness to save His friends, make public against them, so that if their actions are bad, they do not spare them and even if their deeds are good, these are not approved by people because of their ignorance to reality, and they reproach them. Though the aspirants do a lot of self-mortification and abstinence but they do not regard them as proceeding from their own strength and power. Consequently they do not feel pleased with themselves and remain protected from self-conceit. In short people do not approve elects of Allah and similarly one who is slave of his self is not approved by Allah.

As *Iblis* (Satan) was approved by Genii and angels, but he was pleased with himself, therefore, he got disapproval of Allah. Their approval only brought a curse upon him. Adam, on the other hand, was disapproved by the angels, who said, "أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَن يُقْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?" (Q 2:30). Adam was not pleased with himself, therefore, he said, "رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا our Lord! We have wronged our own souls" (Q 7:23), therefore, he was approved by Allah Who further said, "فَقَسَىٰ وَلَمْ تَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا" but he forgot: and We found on his part no firm resolve." (Q 20:115).

So, disapproval of the creation and Adam's self displeasure bore the fruit of mercy from Lord and He made it evident to all that His approved one is not approved by the creation and His disapproved is approved of creation. Hence the blame of mankind is the feed of the friends of Allah, because it is a token of Divine approval. It is the delight of the saints of Allah, because it is a sign of nearness to Him, and they rejoice in it even as other men rejoice in popularity. There is in the Hadith *Qudsi* (tradition of Prophet which revealed to him through Gabriel, may blessings of Allah be on him) that Allah said, "اوليائي تحت قبائي لا يعرفهم غيري الا اوليائي" My friends (saints) are under My cloak: save Me and My friends, none knows them."

The blame (*malamat*) is of three kinds: it may result from following the right way, or from an intentional act, or from abandonment of the *Shariat* (Religious Law).

In the first case, one performs his acts and devotion according to *Shariat* and is not worried on people's reaction, but still people continue blaming him.

In the second case a man who is greatly honored by the people which causes vanity in his heart, he cures it through doing some act although which is not against the *Shariat*, but people might consider so. People seeing such acts develop hatred against him and openly blame him, but this gives satisfaction to his heart and he gets the proximity of Allah.

In the third case, a man is driven by his natural infidelity and erroneous belief to abandon the *Shariat* and abjure its observances, and claim that he has chosen path of blame.

The first type of people who maintains the right way and they do not need the hypocrisy of the second type of people. They pay no heed to the blame of the vulgar but invariably take their own course, and it is all the same to them by what name they are called.

One day Sheikh Abu Tahir Iraqi riding a donkey which was being managed by one of his disciples was passing through a bazaar. Some person cried out on him and shouted see here goes the nonbeliever Sheikh? This annoyed the disciple and he tried to rush at the speaker. The people around them also could not hide their resentment. The Sheikh calmed them down. When they returned home, he asked the disciple to bring a certain box which contained letters. The Sheikh showed him letters addressed to him by various people who had honored him with titles such like "the Sheikh of Islam", "the pure Sheikh", "the ascetic Sheikh", "the Sheikh of the two sanctuaries", and so on. The Sheikh said that these were all titles but there was no mention of his name. He was not worthy of any of those, but each had honored him with the title in accords with his belief concerning him. If that poor fellow did the same, why should you quarrel with him?

The second type of people who incurs blame intentionally and resigns honor and withdraws from authority is like the Caliph Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) who, although had four hundred slaves, one day came forth from his date plantation carrying a bundle of firewood on his head. On being asked why he did so, he answered that he wished to make trial of his *nafs* to know whether dignity which he enjoyed hinder him from any work. This clearly establishes the reality of blame. A similar tale related of the Imam Abu Hanifa will be found elsewhere in this book.

Another story is told about Abu Yazid, that when people of Rayy came to know about his arrival from the *Hijaz*, they rushed out of the city to honor him. Sheikh knew that they would welcome him and their attention would distract him from *dikr* (remembrance of Allah). When he entered the bazaar, he took a loaf from his sleeve and began to eat. Seeing that people deserted him for it was the month of Ramadan. Although being traveler, fasting was not mandatory for him. He said to a disciple who was traveling with him, "You saw how I got rid of them just by parting from a single rule of the *Shariat*."

I, Ali b. Uthman al-Jullabi says that during those days it was necessary to do some incorrect act for incurring blame, but in our time, if anyone desires blame, he need only to lengthen his voluntary prayers or fully adhere to prescribed religious practices, at once everybody will call him a hypocrite and imposter.

And now the third group who abandons the *Shariat* and says that he is doing it for *malamat* (blame), is guilty of manifest wrong and wickedness and self-indulgence. There are many in these days who seclude themselves from public to seek popularity and their acceptance. To occupy isolation suits to him who is already popular but one who is not popular his act of secluding himself is a mere pretext for winning popularity.

Once, I was in the company of one of these vain pretenders. He committed a wicked act and excused himself by saying that he did it for the sake of blame. One person present there, reproached him for that act which he did not like and got annoyed. I said to him why he was showing annoyance to that person. If he had blamed you, it was confirmation of your doctrine. You should have felt happy instead of getting angry with him. And since you are committed to the propagation of religion which demands proof and most valid argument in this case is the respect for the *Shariat* (religious law). When your act is in contradiction to *Shariat*, it is anti religion.

The doctrine of Blame was introduced by the Sheikh Hamdun Qassar. He has many subtle sayings on the subject. He said, "الملامة ترك السلامة" blame is the abandonment of wellbeing." If anyone purposely abandons his own welfare and invites misfortunes, he has to lose his comfort, prosperity and honor, and abandon expectations from creature of Allah. The more

one is alienated from mankind the more he is united to Allah. Accordingly, the votaries of Blame turn their backs on their welfare activities, to which the people have the greed. They have different kind of abject desires than the rest of the creature, for their aspirations is Unitarian. Hussein b. Mansur, in reply to the question that who was the *Sufi*, said, "واحداني في الذات he who is single in essence"

When Sheikh Hamdun was asked that what *malamat* (Blame) was, he said that it was a hard way to follow but tell you one part of it: He said, "رجاء المرجيه وخوف القدرية" it is hope of the *Murjites* and the fear of the *Qadarites*".

This saying has a hidden meaning which demands explanation. The followers of the Path do not hate anything more than to have even a little honor in the eyes of people. When someone admires him he may whole heartedly inclined to that praise and that may causes him farness from Allah. The aspirant who fears this danger is always striving to avoid it, and in his effort he is confronted with perils, that is to say, veil from Allah and fear of *blame* from creature. Accordingly, *one* who is blamed must, in the first instance, takes care to have no quarrel with the people for what they say of him and then for the sake of his own salvation he must commit some act which, legally, neither a great sin nor a trivial offence, in order that the people may reject him. Hence his fear in matters of conduct is like the fear of the *Qadarites*, and his hope in dealing with those who blame him is like the hope of the *Murjites*. There is no love surpasses the love of Blame, because blame of the Beloved makes no impression on the lover's heart. He heeds not what the strangers say, for his heart is ever faithful to the beloved. How highly someone has spoken:

اجد ملامته في هواك لذينة لان الملامته روضته العاشقين ونزته المحبين وراحته المشتاقين
وسرور المريدين

"O lover, in your love I have not seen anything more delicious than *malamat* (blame), because it is the garden of lovers, aroma of beloved, delight of the aspirants and merriment of the seekers heart."

This is the only sect of lovers distinguished above all creatures in the universe by choosing to be blamed in the body on account of the cleansing of their souls. No other creation such like angels, Genii and the saints have attained this high degree, nor has it been reached by the ascetics, devotees,

and seekers of Allah of the olden age, but it is reserved for those of this *Ummah* (Muslim Nation) who journey on the path of entire severance from the things of the world.

But to me blame is ostentation, and ostentation is hypocrisy because the effort of a pretender is always that to gain popularity and *malamati* (who is blamed) tries for people's rejection. Both have their thoughts fixed on mankind and do not see beyond that. The dervish, on the contrary, never even thinks of mankind, and when his heart has no desire for them, their presence as well as their absence is meaningless for him and he feels no restrictions of anything on him.

I once asked from a *malamati* (who is blamed) of Transoxania with whom I had long association that what was his object in those perverse actions? His reply was that to make the people non-existent in regard to himself. I said to him that people were many, and during your life time you would not be able to make them non-existent in regard to yourself rather in this struggle you would make yourself non-existent in regard to the people, therefore, the best option for you would be not to give them any importance and make your thoughts free of them, so that you may be saved from all this trouble.

And the reality is also this that those who are occupied with the people imagine that the people are occupied with them. So, if you do not see yourself, no one will see you. This whole trouble is self created, as you have no business with others? If a sick whose remedy lies in abstinence seeks to indulge his appetite, he is fool. Some practice the method of Blame from an ascetic motive. They wish to be despised by the people in order to achieve higher degree of spirituality, therefore, they feel delighted by making their soul wretched and abased.

Ibrahim b, Adham was asked about that when he had attained his goal. He answered, twice his heart achieved its desire. Once I was aboard a ship, clad in common clothes and my hair was long and my appearance was such that all the people in the ship mocked and laughed at me. Among them was a clown also, who on his frequent appearance to me, teased me a lot through pulling my hair and such other mockeries towards me. At that time I felt entirely satisfied, and I rejoiced in my garb. My joy touched its highest pitch when one day the clown rose from his place and urinated on me.

On another occasion, during winter night I was traveling in heavy rain due to which my *muraqqa* (patched frock) was soaked with rain water and I was shivering with cold. Under such condition I approached a mosque to avail shelter there but was refused admittance. The same thing happened at two other mosques where I tried to seek shelter. In despair, as the cold had overpowered me, I ran towards a bathhouse and threw myself near the stove. The smoke enveloped me and blackened my face and clothes. On that occasion also I felt entirely satisfied.

Once I found myself in a difficulty. I tried to solve it but all my efforts went in vain. I spent three months at the tomb of Abu Yazid as a devotee of the tomb. There, I daily used to take three baths and thirty ablutions in the hope that I might get the solution of my difficulty but failed to achieve any desire. Then I left that place for Khurasan. On my way, one night I arrived at a village where there was a monastery inhabited by a number of aspirants to Sufism. Although I was clad in *Muraqqa* but had nothing with me of the *Sufi's* regular equipment except a staff and a leathern water carrier. I appeared very contemptible in the eyes of those *Sufis*, as I had no previous acquaintance with them. They regarded only my external habit and pointed out to one another, that I was not one of them, and so was the truth. I was not one of them, but I had to pass the night at that place. They asked me to stay on a floor, while they themselves went up to a roof above that. They gave me dry bread which had turned green, while I could smell the savor of the delicious food with which they were entertaining themselves. All the time they were mocking at me. After the food, when they were enjoying with sweet melon, they began to throw skins of the melons on me, posing how low they thought of me. I said in my heart:

"O Lord, it might not have happened with me, if I was not clad in dress of Thy friends."

And the more they scoffed at me the gladder became my heart. Through endurance of this insult, my problem got solved and I perceived why the Sheikhs have always given fools leave to remain associated with them and for what reason they submit to their follies.

Chapter VII

Imams amongst the Companions

Now we will talk about those who after Prophet (peace be upon him) are the Imams of *Sufis* on Sufism, Spiritual States and *Maqamat* (Stations), so that proof may be provided from the life sketches of the companions (may Allah be pleased with them) on Sufism and its methods.

1. Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him)

The first amongst the companions is the successor of Prophet (peace be upon him), guide and Imam of the followers of celibacy and solitude, free of calamities of *nafs* (lower soul) Abu Bakr b. Abdullah b. Uthman al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him). His *Karamat* (miracles) are well known and signs and proofs about realities and dealings are manifest. A little has also been mentioned about him under Sufism. On account of the fewness of traditions which he related he is placed by the *Sufi* Sheikhs as the *Imam* (head) of those who have adopted the contemplative life while Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) is placed as the Imam of those who have adopted the purgative life, because of his rigor and assiduity in devotion.

Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) during his night prayers used to recite the Quran in a low voice, whereas Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) used to recite Quran in a loud voice. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Abu Bakr Siddiq why did he recite Quran in a low voice? Abu Bakr replied: "He to whom I call, hear." The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Umar b. Khattab why did he recite Quran in a high voice? He replied: "To wake the drowsy and drive away the Devil."

It is evident that reply of Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was based on contemplation, and of Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) on purgation. Purgation, compared with contemplation, is like a drop of water in a sea, and for this reason the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that, "هل انت الا حسنته من حسنات ابوبكر" the good deeds of Umar was only (equivalent to) a single one of the good deeds

of Abu Bakr.” The glory of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) is so high that the repute of Islam is existing because of him, and from this one can imagine the state of others.

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

دارنا فانية واحوالنا عارية وانفاسنا معدودة وكسلنا موجود

“Our abode is transitory, our life therein is but a loan, our breaths are numbered, and our indolence is manifest.”

This world is a mortal place and it is worthless to occupy ourselves with it; and to depend upon loaned life is useless and to trust upon few counted breaths is heedlessness. Because, what has been lend to us is soon will be retrieved and that which is mortal, lose its existence. And what is countable finishes and heedlessness has no remedy. By this Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) suggested that the world is too worthless to engage our thoughts with it, for whenever one occupies himself with what is perishable, he is veiled from the Truth. Since this world and *nafs* (lower soul) are veils for the aspirant, therefore, the friends of Allah turn their backs from both. When they understand that whatever one gets as a loan, is the property of others, they abandon to intervene in other’s property.

In his prayers he used to say:

اللهم ابسط لي الدنيا وزهني فيها

“O Allah, give me plenty of the world and save me from its calamities!”

First he prayed for the abundance of worldly goods and then asked for shield from its calamities. There is a hidden sense in it. First he asked for to bestow on him worldly goods that he might thanks for them, and then sought His help to abstain from them for His sake, so that he might have the treble merit of thanks giving and liberality and abstinence, and that his poverty may be voluntary, not compulsory.

This refutes the saying of a Sheikh of Mystical Path, who preferred compulsory poverty over voluntary poverty, for forced poverty comes at its own whereas voluntary poverty is created and better poverty is that which is achieved without any effort. But to my thinking, *faqr* (poverty) would be preferable when while in possession of wealth one desires for

poverty and renounces the love of world from his heart, not that when one is already in the state of poverty and lust of wealth forces him to visit to the houses of rich and the courts of governors. Therefore, better *faqr* (poverty) is that which is attained by denying *ghana* (wealth) and not seeking *ghana* while in poverty. Since Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) is the foremost of all mankind after the prophets, and it is not permissible that anyone should take precedence over him, for he set voluntary poverty above compulsory poverty. This doctrine is held by all the *Sufi* Sheikhs except the one whom we have mentioned.

Imam Zuhri relates that, Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) after taking oath of allegiance as Caliph, mounted the pulpit and pronounced an oration, in the course of which he said:

"By God, I never coveted for to be a Caliph nor did I desire it even for a day or a night, neither had I any liking for it, nor I ever asked Allah for it openly or in secret, nor do I take any pleasure in having it."

Now, when Allah causes anyone to attain perfect sincerity and exalt him to the rank of steadfastness, he waits for Divine inspiration that commands him for poverty or prosperity. He acts whatever way he is commanded, without exercising his own choice and will. Thus Abu Bakr, the Veracious, resigned himself to the will of Allah from beginning to the end.

Hence the whole sect of *Sufis* has made him their Imam and pattern in stripping off themselves of worldly things, in fixity, in eager desire for poverty, and in longing to renounce authority. He is the *Imam* of the Muslims in general and of the *Sufis* in particular.

2. Umar b. al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him)

The commander of the faithful, leader of the *beneficent*, Imam of the *Scholastics*, ocean of the adorable love, Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) is famous for his *karamat* (miracles), *intellect*, and sagacity. He was specially distinguished by sagacity and resolution, and is the author of many subtle sayings on Sufism. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الحق ينطق علي لسان عمر

“the Truth speaks by the tongue of Umar;”

and he also said,

قد كان في الاعمم محدثون فان بك منهم في امتي فعمر

There have been inspired relaters in the *Ummah* of antiquity, and if there be any such in my *Ummah*, it is Umar.”

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

العزلة راحة من خلطاء السوء

“Seclusion is better than to be part of a bad company.”

Seclusion is of two kinds, firstly turning back on mankind, and secondly, entire severance from them.

Turning one’s back on mankind means choosing a solitary retreat, and in renouncing the society of one’s fellow creatures externally. And instead of observing others faults, should contemplate of the faults in one’s own conduct, so he is saved from the evils of others and they from his. But severance from mankind is related to heart and attribute of the heart has no relationship with the outward. Hence, when one cuts off his heart from mankind and worldly affairs, then nothing worldly attracts him and he is always attached to the thoughts of the Truth, i.e. it is a spiritual state, which is not connected with anything external. When a person is under such a state, he knows nothing of created beings. Such a person, although he is living among the people, but his heart is actually isolated from them. This is very exalted *maqam* (station) and difficult to attain. This was the *maqam* of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), for externally he lived among the people and performed his duties as their Commander and Caliph and internally he was completely attached to Allah. It is the specialties of the spiritualists who may outwardly are mixed with mankind, but their hearts always adhere to Allah and return to Him in all circumstances. They regard any intercourse they may have with mankind as an affliction, and pray to Allah for their safety from such afflictions because the world is never pure in the eyes of those whom Allah loves. So, this intercourse with fellows does not divert them from Allah. Thus Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said,

دار اسست علي البلوي بلابلوي محال

"the house which is founded on affliction, can never be free of afflictions."

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was amongst the closest associates of Prophet (peace be upon him) and his all acts were admitted in the Court of Allah. At the time of his conversion to Islam, Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and told him that creature of the Heaven was celebrating on Umar's conversion. He is the *Imam* of all creature of Allah and a model of *Sufis* in wearing *muraqqa* (patched frock) and rigorously performing the duties of religion.

3. Uthman b. Affan (may Allah be pleased with him)

Amongst the companion, the jewel of the treasury of modesty, the guide of pious, established on *maqam* (station) of *rida* (resignation), follower of the Prophet (peace be upon him), is Abu Umru Uthman b. Affan (may Allah be pleased with him). His virtues and wisdom on all matters is manifest.

Abdullah b. Rabah and Abu Qatada (may Allah be pleased with them) have related that we were with the Commander of the Faithful, Uthman on the day when his house was cordoned by the rebels. When the rebels reached at the door, his slaves also took up their arms but Uthman said to them that whoever of them did not take up arms on that day would be a free man. We went forth from the house in fear of our lives. On the way Hasan b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) met us, and we returned with him to Uthman, that we might know on what business he was going to Uthman. After he had saluted Uthman and condoled with him he said: "O Commander of the Faithful, I dare not to draw sword against Muslims without your command. You are the *Emir* of the Muslims, give me the order so I repulse the rebels from you. In reply Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "O my nephew, go back and rest at your house until Allah shall bring His decree to pass because I do not wish to shed blood of Muslims." And this is the sign of total resignation in the hour of calamity, and this is degree of *khullat* (rank of friendship with Allah).

Similarly, when Nimrod lit fire and put Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him) in the sling of catapult, Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) came to Abraham and asked if he wanted anything?

Abraham answered, "From you, no,"

Gabriel said then you may ask Allah.

Abraham answered, "من سوالي علمه بحالي" since He knows in what plight I am, I need not ask Him."

Here Uthman also acted similarly as Abraham acted before the fire of Nimrod. He was in the position of *Khalil* (Friend) in the catapult, and the seditious mob was in the place of the fire, and Hasan was in the place of Gabriel; but Abraham was saved, while Uthman got martyred. Salvation is connected with subsistence and destruction with annihilation. Some subtle sayings on this topic we have already mentioned. The *Sufis* take Uthman as their *Imam* in sacrificing life and property, in resigning their affairs to Allah, and in sincere devotion. He was the true Imam of *Shariat* and his rank of friendship with Allah is manifest.

4. Ali al-Murtada (may Allah be pleased with him)

The cousin of the Prophet (peace be upon him), drowned in the ocean of calamity, Imam of *Aulya* (saints), is Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him). His prominence and rank in the Path (of Sufism) is very high. He explained the principles of Divine Truth with exceeding subtlety, so that Junaid said:

شيخنا في الاصول والبلاء علي المرتضي كرم الله وجهه

"Ali is our Sheikh as regards to the principles (of Sufism) and endurance of affliction,"

Sufis call the theory of this Path Principles, and its practice is entirely self-mortification and endurance of affliction.

Some one requested Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) for guidance on which he replied:

"Do not much care of your wife and children, for if they are the friends of Allah, He does not waste His friends, and if they are His enemies, why should you take care of Allah's enemies?"

This refers to severance of the heart from all, save Allah, because Allah keeps His servants in whatever state He wills. As Moses left his wife in a most miserable plight and committed her to Allah, and as Abraham took Hagar and Ismail and brought them to a barren valley and committed

them to Allah. Both did not make their families as their chief care instead fixed their hearts on Allah. Their trust on Allah in their afflictions caused them to gain His mercy both in this as well next world.

Someone asked Ali that what was the most praiseworthy act? Ali replied: "Prosperity of heart with Allah."

The heart that is so enriched is not made poor by having no worldly goods nor glad by having them. This saying is relevant to the theory of poverty and purity, which has already been discussed.

Hence, *Sufis* are follower of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) in respect to the truths of outward expressions and the subtleties of inward meanings, the stripping one's self of all property either of this world or of the next, and consideration of the Divine providence. He has subtle sayings and signs in abundance and it is not possible to make them part of this work.

Chapter VIII

Imams from the House of the Prophet (*Ahl-i Bayt*)

Ahl-i-Bayt (family of Prophet) are those sacred souls who are eternally pious. Every one of them is the Imam of the Path. This whole family common or elite is the leader and Imam of the *Sufis*. I take honor to mention here few amongst them.

1. Imam Hasan (may Allah be pleased with him)

Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was the heart of Prophet (peace be upon him), odor of the heart of Murtada, *Nur* (light) of the eyes of Fatima (may Allah be pleased with them). He was profoundly versed in Sufism and he has many subtle sayings. He by way of precept said:

عليكم بحفظ السرا عرفان الله مطلع علي الضمائر

"See that you guard your hearts, for Allah knows your secret thoughts."

This means that as man is entrusted to watch over his heart, similarly he is duty bound to preserve its exhibition. "Guarding the heart" refers not turning to others (than Allah) and in keeping one's secret thoughts from disobedience to the Almighty.

When the *Qadarites* got the upper hand, and *Mutazilites* doctrine became widely spread, Hasan Basri wrote to Hasan b. Ali seeking his guidance, and asked him to state his opinion on the perplexing subject of predestination and on the dispute whether men have any power to act.

Imam Hasan replied that in his opinion he who did not believe in the determination of men's good and evil action by Allah was infidel, and that those who imputed his sins to Allah was wrongdoer. Allah does not force any one for good or evil deeds, but nothing happens in His kingdom without His will. Where He has made the mankind owner of something that something belongs to Him and He is the actual owner. Similarly, where He has given free hand to mankind to act

freely, there too He is the actual Causer. Therefore, He does no stop anyone from performing good or evil, but by His grace He can stop someone from his evil actions and if He does not stop him, it won't mean that He forced him to perform wrong. Allah has kept the argument by extending the force to mankind to act good or wrong and made him responsible for his act and it is not on Allah and His argument stands firm.

A Bedouin came to Imam Hasan while he was sitting at the door of his house in Kufa, and started abusing him and his parents. Hasan rose up and said:

"O Bedouin, what ails you, perhaps you are hungry or thirsty?"

The Bedouin took no heed, but continued to abuse him and his family. Hasan ordered his slave to bring a purse of silver, and gave it to the fellow, saying:

"O brother excuse me, for there is nothing else in the house, had there been more, I should not have grudged it to you."

On hearing this, the Bedouin exclaimed: "I bear witness that you are the grandson of the Prophet of Allah. I came here to make trial of your mildness."

Such is the characteristics of true saints and Sheikhs who care not whether they are praised or blamed, and listen calmly to abuse.

2. Imam Hussein (may Allah be pleased with him)

The candle of *Ahl-i-Bayt* (family of the Prophet), and Imam of the world is Abu Abdullah al-Hussein b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). He is the martyr of Karbala and *Qibla* for the afflictors. All *Sufis* are agreed that he was in the right. So long as the Truth was apparent, he followed it, but when it was denied, he drew the sword and never rested until he sacrificed his dear life for Allah's sake. The Prophet (peace be upon him) distinguished him by many tokens of favors.

Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) relates that one day he saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) crawling on his knees, while Hussein rode on his back holding a string, of which the other end was in the Prophet mouth. Seeing all this I said: "What an excellent ride you have, O Abu Abdullah!"

The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: "What an excellent rider is he, O Umar!"

Imam Hussein (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

اشفق الاخوان عليك دينك

"Your kindest brother is your religion,"

The salvation of man is in following the religion and his perdition in disobeying it, therefore wise person only follow the commands of loving brother and does not do any act without his consent. The real brother is that who advises you and does not deny his affection.

Once, a man came to him and told that he was a poor family man and asked for the food. Hussein told him that his food was coming, so he should wait a little. After a short while the Messenger of Caliph Amir Muawiya (may Allah be pleased with him) came and placed five purses before Hussein. Each purse contained thousand Dinars. The messenger told Hussein that the Amir was apologetic and had said that for the time being spent this money, and he would send more soon. Hussein gave that money to the poor man and made an apology to him that he kept him awaiting for such a meager favor. We are men of affliction and we have forsaken the world and prefer others needs over ours. His sayings and wisdom is well known by whole *Ummah*.

3. Imam Zain ul-Abidin (may Allah have mercy on him)

From *Ahl-i-Bayt*, successor of Prophethood, candle of the *Ummah* and *Autad*, the afflicted, Imam of the deprived is Abu al-Hasan Ali b. al-Hussein b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with them). He was the most honored and ascetic personality of his time and is famous for unveiling and narrating the truth and subtleties. In reply to a question about who was the most blessed, he said:

من اذا رضي لم يحمله رضاء علي اللبائل و اذا سخط لم يخرجه سخطه من الحق

"The man when he is pleased, it is not on wrong, and when he is angry, is not carried by his anger beyond the bounds of right." This is the character of those who have attained perfect rectitude, because to get satisfied with fictitious is also wrong

and to quit the truth in anger is also immoral and pious does not like incorrect.

Hussein (may Allah be pleased with him) used to call him Ali *Asghar* (the younger). When Hussein and his children were martyred at Karbala, there were none left alive except Ali who was sick. The women were brought unveiled on camels to Yazid (may Allah curse him), at Damascus. Someone asked Ali that how was he and members of the house? Ali replied:

"We have been treated in the same way as Pharaoh did with people of Moses who slaughtered their sons and took their women alive. We are under so many afflictions that we do not know when day has arisen and when night has fallen. We are still thankful to Allah for His bounties and praise Him for the trial in which He has put us."

Once, Caliph Hisham b. Abd al-Malik during Hajj while performing circumambulation of Kaba tried to kiss the Black Stone (*Hajr-i Aswad*) but due to rush of pilgrims was unable to reach to it. At that time Ali was also circumambulating. When he approached *Hajr-i Aswad* to kiss it, all pilgrims withdrew from his way and he peacefully kissed it. One of the Syrian courtiers tauntingly pointed out to Hisham that he was not offered the chance to reach to *the sacred stone*, are you the King or that beautiful youth, for whom everybody made the way. Hisham said that he did not know the youth. At that time famous poet Farzoaq was also present there. He got up and said in a loud voice that he knew the youth. People asked him to tell them who was he? The poet Farzoaq stepped forward and recited the splendid encomium:

This is he whose footprint is known to the valley of Mecca,
Whom the Kaba knows, the unhallowed territory, the holy ground.

He is the son of the best of the entire creature,
He is the pious, the elect, the pure, and the eminent.

Know that he is the darling child of Fatima,
He is on whose ancestor Prophethood is sealed.

Whenever Quraish have a look on him, everyone exclaim,
No one can surpass him in commendable qualities.

He occupies such an exalted position that
Arabs and non Arabs are incapable to reach there.

His ancestor was the possessor of qualities of all the prophets,
And whose *Ummah* possesses the virtues of all the *Ummah*

The Nur (light) of their forehead lightened the hearts,
As with the rise of sun darkness perishes.

Hajr-i Aswad recognizes him from his odor, so that, when
he comes to touch *Hajr-i Aswad*, it kisses his hands.

Modesty keeps his gaze low, but people low their gaze because of
his awe,
No one dare to talk with him except when he has a smiley face.

His hands hold stick of musk willow which spreads pleasant odor,
His palm is emitting fragrance; he is a leader of high repute.

His qualities are blessed from the qualities of the Prophet,
His conscious, habits and virtues are all praiseworthy

The heavy shower of his graciousness is common to all,
He is ever generous, material paucity never stops him.

His beneficence is open to the creature, who because of him,
Got deliverance from immorality, poverty and tyranny.

No one can match him in generosity, and neither
Any nation can show equality, may their men be very generous.

He is like rain of mercy in famine, and
Lion of the jungle at the time of fear and calamity.

It is that family whose love is faith, and enmity is infidelity, and
Nearness to them is the shelter for peace and deliverance.

When Farzoaq read these lyrics, Hisham got enraged and
ordered for him to be imprisoned.

When Ali came to know about it, he sent to him 12,000 dirham
with a message that we only possessed that much which was
too less to your affliction. Farzoaq returned it, with the
message that he had uttered many lies in the panegyrics on
princes and governors which he was accustomed to compose
for money, and that he had addressed verses to Ali as a partial
expiation for his sins in that respect, and as a proof of his
affection towards *Ahl-i-Bayt*. Ali, once again sent the money
back with the message that if Farzoaq loved him, he must
retained the money however, he begged to be excused from
taking back what he had already given away; Farzoaq at last
consented to receive the money.

There are so many virtues and merits of this eminent Imam
that these cannot be encompassed in writing.

4. Abu Jafar Muhammad b. Ali b. Hussein (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was known both as Abu Abdullah and Baqir. He was distinguished for his knowledge of the abstruse sciences and for his subtle indications as to the meanings of Quran. There are many *Karamat* (miracles) associated to him.

It is related that on one occasion the king with the aim to kill him, summoned him to his presence. When Baqir came to him, the king begged his pardon, bestowed gifts upon him, and allowed him to leave courteously. When courtiers asked why he had acted in that manner. The king replied that when he entered he saw two lions, one on his right side and one on his left, who threatened to kill him if he had attempted to do him any harm.

In his commentary of the Quran verse, "فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنِ بِاللَّهِ" (Q 2:256), Baqir said:

"Anything that diverts one from contemplation of Allah is his *taghut* طَّاغُوت (idol), so one has to see what veils him from contemplation of Allah and needs to get rid of it to make union with the Truth and get free from the veil. And one who is veiled has no right to be claimant of the proximity of the Truth.

Baqir after completing his litanies at night used to have loud *Manajat* (secret talk with Allah):

"O my Allah and my Lord! night has fallen, and the power of monarch has ceased, and the stars are shining in the sky, and mankind are asleep and silent, there is no crowd at the doors of the rich and the Umayyad have shut their doors and are being guarded by the watchmen, and all the needy have left for their homes.

But Thou, O Allah, art the Living, the Lasting, the Seeing, the Knowing. Sleep and slumber cannot overtake Thee. He who does not acknowledge Thy Essence is unworthy of Thy bounty.

O Allah nothing can withhold Thy Essence, neither eternity is impaired by Day and Night, Thy doors of Mercy are open to all who call upon Thee, and Thy is the owner of all; Thou dost never turn away the beggar, and no creature in earth or

heaven can prevent the true believer who implores Thee gaining access to Thy Court.

O Lord, when I remember death and the grave and the reckoning, how can I take joy in this world? Therefore, since I acknowledge Thee to be One, I love Thee; I beseech Thee to give me peace in the hour of death, without torment, and pleasure in the hour of reckoning, without punishment."

He used to do this *Manajat* weeping. On asking that why did he cry so much, he replied:

Jacob lost only one son for whom he wept so much that he lost his eye sight. I have lost my eighteen family members, is it not sufficient argument for me to cry.

5. Abu Muhammad Jafar (may Allah be pleased with him)

Imam Abu Muhammad Jafar b. Muhammad al-Sadiq b. Ali b. Hussein b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) is the most celebrated among the *Sufi* Sheikhs for the subtlety of his discourse and his acquaintance with spiritual truths. He has written famous books in explanation of Sufism. He said:

من عرف الله اعرض عما سواه

"Whoever attains *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) turns his face from all other".

The Gnostic (*arif*) does not see other worldly things because his *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) is total denial of others. The denial of all other than Allah is *marifat* and *marifat* of others is the denial of the Truth (Allah). Therefore, the Gnostic is free from the creature and in union with the Truth. He does not have that much heed for others that it might keep him away from the Truth nor it is of so extreme value that it might attract him toward itself.

He said:

لا تصح العبادة الا بالتوبة فقدم التوبة علي العبادة

"There is no right worship without repentance, because Allah hath put repentance before worship, and hath said, " *التَّائِبُونَ* *الْعَائِدُونَ* those that turn (to Allah) in repentance" (Q 9:112). I put repentance before divine service, because repentance is the start point in way of Path and worship is the last. When Allah

mentioned of the evildoers He made repentance mandatory and said:

وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

"And O ye Believers! Turn ye all together towards Allah," (Q 24:31);

But when Allah mentioned the Prophet (peace be upon him) He referred him to His "servant ship" and said,

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ

"So did (Allah) convey the inspiration to His Servant - (Conveyed) what He (meant) to convey." (Q 53:10).

Once Dawud Tai came to Jafar Sadiq and said, "O son of the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah, advise me, for my heart is blackened."

Jafar replied: "O Abu Suleman, you are the accomplished ascetic of your time, what for you need advise from me?"

Tai pleaded: "O son of the Prophet (peace be upon him), thy family is superior to all mankind, and it is incumbent on thee to give counsel to all."

Jafar said: "O Abu Suleman, I am afraid that tomorrow on Resurrection Day my grandsire will lay hold on me, saying, 'Why did not you fulfill the obligation to follow in my steps?' because before Allah the best is ones conduct not his ancestry."

Dawud Tai began to weep and exclaimed:

"O Lord Allah, if one whose lineage is of Prophetic family, whose grandsire is the Prophet, and whose mother is Fatima (may Allah be pleased with her) – if such as one is distracted by doubts about his end, who am I that I should be pleased with my dealings (towards Allah)?"

One day Jafar talked to his associates, let us take a pledge that whoever amongst us should gain deliverance on the Day of Resurrection would intercede for the rest. They said, O son of the prophet, how could you have need of our intercession since your grandsire intercedes for all mankind? Jafar replied: "My actions are such that I shall be ashamed to face him on the Last Day."

All of his sayings are the result of self account which is a quality of perfection, and is a characteristic of Prophets and Saints. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

إذا اراد الله يعبد خيرا بصره يعيوب نفسه

“When Allah wishes a man well, He gives him insight into his faults.”

Whoever bows his head with humility, like a servant, Allah exalt his state in both worlds.

Now I shall mention briefly *Ahl-i Suffa* (the People of Veranda). In a book entitled “The Highway of Religion” (*Minhaj al-Din*), which I composed before the present work, I have given detailed account of each of them, but here it will suffice to mention their names and “names of honor” so it may meet your need.

Chapter IX

The People of the Veranda (*Ahl-i Suffa*)

Know that whole *Ummah* is agreed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had a number of companions, who abode in his Mosque and engaged in devotion, renouncing the world and refusing to seek a livelihood. Allah reproached the Prophet (peace be upon him) on their account and said,

وَلَا تُطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ

"send not away those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His face," (Q 6:52).

Their merits and virtues are proclaimed by the Quran, and in many traditions.

It is related by Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by the people of Veranda, and seeing their poverty and self mortification, he said:

ابشرو يا اصحاب الصفته فمن ابقي من امتي علي النعت الذي انتم عليه راضياً بما فيه فانهم من رفقاءي في الجنته

"Rejoice! for whoever of my *Ummah* preserves in the state in which you are, and is satisfied with his condition, he shall be one of my comrades in Paradise."

Among the *Ahl-i Suffa* (may Allah be pleased with them) were:

- The Muadhhdhin (caller for the prayer) Bilal b. Rabah,
- Abu Abdullah Salman al-Farisi,
- Abu Obadiah Aamar b. Abdullah al-Jarrah,
- Abu al-Yaqtan, Umaar b. Yasir,
- Abu Masud Abdullah b. Masud al-Hudhali,
- Utba b. Masud
- Al-Miqdad b. al-Aswad,
- Khubab b. al-Alarath,
- Suhaib b. Sinan Rumi,
- Utbah b. Gazwan,
- Zaid b. al-Khattab, brother of the Caliph Umar,
- Abu Kabisha,
- Abu I-Marthad Kinas b. al-Hussein al-Aganwi,
- Ukkasha b. al-Musin,

- Masud b. Rabi al-Qari,
- Abdullah b. Umar,
- Abu Dhar Jundab b. Junada al-Ghaffari,
- Safwan b. Bayda,
- Abu Darda Uwaymr b. Aamar,
- Abdullah b. Zaid al-Juhni,
- Abu Lubabah b. Abd al-Mundhir.

Abu Abdul Rehman Muhammad b. Hussein al-Sulmi has written a separate history of *Ahl-i Suffa*, in which he has recorded their virtues and merits and names. He has included among them Mistah b. Thabit b. Ebad, whom I do not love from my heart because he began the slanders about Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), the mother of the believers. Besides, the following also belonged to *Ahl-i Suffa*, but now and then they had recourse to some means of livelihood. May Allah be pleased with them.

- Abu Huraira,
- Thawban,
- Maud b. al-Harith,
- Sa'ib b. al-Khallad,
- Thabit b. Wadiat,
- Abu Ibees Uwaym b. Saaid,
- Salim b. Umair b. Thabit,
- Abu Alsar Ka`b b. Umar,
- Wahb b. Maghfal,
- Abdullah b. Unis,
- Hajjaj b. Umaru al-Aslami

All *Ahl-i Suffa* were in one and the same degree (of dignity). Verily, the generation of the Companions was the best of all generations; and they were the best and most excellent of mankind, since Allah bestowed on them companionship with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and preserved their hearts from blemish. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that his era was the best and then next to it and then which was next to it. Allah said, "وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ" the vanguard (of Islam) – the first of those who forsook (their homes) and those who gave them aid, and (also) those who follow them in (all) good deeds –" (Q 9:100).

Chapter X

Mystics among the Followers of Companions (*Tabieen*)

1. Awais al-Qarni (may Allah have mercy on him)

He lived in the time of Prophet, but due to two reasons could never see him. Firstly by the ecstasy which overmastered him, and secondly by duty to his mother. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the Companions that there was a man namely Awais, living at Qarn, who at the Resurrection will intercede for a multitude of my *Ummah*, as many as the sheep of the Clans of Rabia and Mudar. Then turning to Umar and Ali, (may Allah be pleased with them), he said:

"You will see him. He is a lowly man, of middle height, and hairy. There is a white spot on his left, as large as dirham, which is not due to leprosy, and he has a similar spot on the palm of his hand. When you see him, give him my greeting, and bid him to pray for my *Ummah*."

After the prophet's (peace be upon him) death, Umar and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) came to Mecca, and during the course of a sermon, Umar asked if there was anybody from Najad. People from Najad got up. Then he inquired if anyone of them belonged to Qarn. Some of them belonging to Qarn stepped forward. He inquired from them about Qarn and after getting positive answer, asked if they knew someone with the name of Awais. They affirmed the presence of Awais and said:

"He is a madman who dwells in solitude and associates with no one. He does not eat what men eat, and he feels no joy or sorrow. When others smile he weeps, and when others weep he smiles."

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) wished to see him. They told that he might be found near their camels in a desert. Umar and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) set out in quest of him. They found him praying and waited until he had finished with his prayer. He saluted them and showed them the marks on his side and palm of his hand. They conveyed him the Prophet's (peace be upon him) greeting and

enjoined him to pray for the Muslim *Ummah*. After they had stayed with him for a while, he said:

"You have taken trouble to come here, now return, for the Resurrection is near, there we will have an unending meeting. At present I am engaged in preparing for the Resurrection."

After the departure of Companions, people exhibited great respect for Awais. Once people of Qarn came to know about him, he left his native place and came to Kufa where only once he was seen by Harim b. Hayyan. He reappeared during the battle of Suffain and fought for Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and got martyred.

He said that safety is laid in solitude, because the heart of the solitary is free from thoughts of others, and in no circumstances he hopes for anything from mankind. By turning away from others, he becomes one with the One.

Let not imagine, that solitude merely consists in living alone. So long as the *Satan* associates with a man's heart, and sensual passion holds sway in his breast, and any thought of this world or the next occurs to him in such a way as to make him conscious of mankind, he is not truly in solitude. It is one and the same whether he takes pleasure in the thing itself or in the thought of it. Thus solitude is that in spite of his association with the people, he is not disturbed in his association with the Truth, but he who is preoccupied with people, may he attain solitude, he remains absent from the Truth. Once love of Allah is inscribed in ones heart, thought of peoples vanishes. Allah said:

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ

"Is not Allah enough for His servants?" (Q 39:36).

2. Harim b. Hayyan (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was among the Sheikhs of the Path of Truth and is an eminent *Sufi*. He had the association of many companions; therefore, he is counted amongst the *Tabieen*. He went to Qarn to meet Awais Qarni, but on arriving at Qarn he found him no longer there. He was guided to Kufa but to his deep disappoint, he could not find him there also and he came back to Mecca. After some time he learned that Awais was living at Kufa. He went there but could not discover him for a long

time. At last he set out for Basra and on the way he found him, clad in a patched frock, performing ablution on the bank of the Euphrates. As soon as he came up from the bank of the river and combed his beard, Harim advanced to meet him and saluted him. Awais said:

"Peace be with thee, O Harim b. Hayyan!"

Harim asked that how did he know that he was Harim? Awais answered: "My spirit knew thy spirit."

He stayed with Awais for some time, during which Awais mostly talked of Umar and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them). He narrated following Hadith also which he had heard from them:

انما الاعمال بالنيات ولكل امرئ ما نوي

"The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he intended.

Awais said to Harim, "عليك بقلبك" keep watch over thy heart," i.e. guard thy heart from thoughts of others. This saying has two meanings:

- Make your heart obedient to Allah by self mortification,
- Through contemplation make yourself obedient to your heart.

These are golden principles, therefore, it is the work of novices to make their hearts obedient to Allah in order to purge themselves from familiarity with vain desires and passions, and sever them from unseemly thoughts, and fix them on the method of gaining spiritual health, on the keeping of the commandments, and on contemplation of the signs of Allah, so that their hearts may become the shrine of Love.

To make one's self obedient to one's heart is the work of accomplished adepts, whose hearts Allah illuminates with the light of His Beauty, and delivered them from all worldly causes and means, and invests them with the robe of proximity, and thereby reveals to them his bounties. Those whom He has chosen to contemplate of Him and to be near to Him, He makes their bodies accordant with their hearts. The former class is master of their hearts, the latter are under the dominion of their hearts. The former retrain their attributes,

and the latter have lost their attributes. Quran in this verse says about the truth of this matter:

إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمْ الْمُخْلِصِينَ

"Except Thy servants among them, sincere and purified (by Thy grace)." (Q 15:40).

Here some read *mukhlisina* instead of *mukhlasina*. The *mukhlis* (purifying one's self) is active, and retains his attributes, but the *mukhlas* (purified) is passive, and has lost his attributes. I will explain this question more in detail elsewhere.

The latter class who makes their bodies accordant with their hearts, and whose hearts abide in contemplation of Allah, are of higher rank than those who by their own efforts make their hearts comply with the Divine commandments. This subject has its foundation in the principles of sobriety (*Sahw*) and intoxication (*sukr*), and in those of contemplation (*mushahida*) and self-mortification (*mujahida*).

3. Abu Ali al-Hasan Basri (may Allah have mercy on him)

His name was Abu Ali and according to some, Abu Muhammad or Abu Said. He is held in high regard and esteem by the *Sufis*. He gave subtle directions relating to the science of practical religion. Once a Bedouin visited him and asked about patience. Hasan replied:

"Patience is of two sorts:

- firstly, patience in misfortune and affliction; and
- secondly, patience to refrain from the things which Allah has commanded us to renounce and has forbidden us to pursue."

The Bedouin said that he was an ascetic and he had never seen anyone more ascetic than he was. Hasan said:

"O Bedouin my asceticism is nothing but desire, and my patience is nothing but lack of resilience."

The Bedouin begged him to explain this saying, otherwise he might lose his belief. Hasan replied:

"My patience in misfortune and in my submission (prayer) declares my fear of Hell-fire, and this is lack of strength; and

my asceticism in this world is desire for the next world, and this is the quintessence of desire. How lucky is he who takes no thought of his own interest and his patience and his asceticism are for the sake of Allah and not for fear of Hell or desire of Paradise and this is the sign of intimacy."

He said,

ان صحبته الاشرار تورث سوء الظن في الاخيار

"One who associates himself to the wicked, gets suspicious of the pious."

It is a very fine saying and fully elaborates the condition of the people of this era. They got suspicious and disbelieved the honored friends of Allah by adopting company of bad people. The reason of their disbelief is that they associate with pretenders to Sufism, who have only its external forms, and they perceive true *Sufis* also deceitful and talk all nonsense against them. They consider every *Sufi* like the pretender one who possess all bad of the world such like, their actions to be treacherous, their tongues false, their ears listening to idle quatrains, their eyes following pleasure and lust, and their hearts set on amassing unlawful or dubious lucre. They fancy that aspirants to Sufism behave in the same manner, or that this is the doctrine of the *Sufis* themselves.

The true *Sufis* wholly act in obedience to Allah, and their each talk is truth, and devoted to love of Allah and their ear do not respond to anything other than truth and their eyes do not see anything but the beauty of Divine. If evildoers have appeared among them and have adopted their practices, the evil must be referred to those who commit it. What concern they have with these friends of Allah? Anyone who associates with the wicked does so through his own wickedness, for he would associate with the good if there were any good in him. Since *Sufis* are not in accord to their desire, therefore, either they deny them or they follow those who have denied them. When these hypocrites die their followers also perish.

Alas! Had they come in the courts of the friends of Allah, seen them with the eyes of love, adopted their path and whole heartedly associated with them, then they might have fulfilled their desires of both the worlds and had broken their ties with the mortal things.

4. **Said b. al-Mussaib** (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was head of *Ulama*, and Imam of theologians and *Sufis* and a great saint. He was very well verse on the various branches of religious sciences. Outwardly he looked to be fast but internally he was very pious which is approved in Sufism. He said:

"Be content with a little of this world while thy religion is safe, even as some are content with much thereof while their religion is lost,"

The poverty without harm to religion is better than richness which leads to heedlessness because when poor have an eye on heart he does not find any high handedness of the world and when he sees his hand he finds contentment there. When rich sees his heart he finds high handedness of the world and when he sees his hand he sees doubtful world. That satisfaction of the friends of Allah in His kingdom is better which is free of any heedlessness. When some affliction falls, heedless thanks that they remained safe but the friends of Allah say praise to Allah that affliction did not fall on their faith.

It is related that when he was at Mecca a man came to him and said: "Tell me a lawful thing in which there is nothing unlawful." He replied:

"*dikr* (Praise of Allah) is lawful thing in which there is nothing unlawful, and praise of aught else is an unlawful thing in which there is nothing lawful," because your salvation lies in the former and your perdition in latter.

Chapter XI

Mystics of Ancient Period

1. Habib al-Ajmi (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu Muhammad Habib al-Farsi was man of boldness, true follower of *Shariat*, holder of lofty state and enjoyed excellent position amongst the *Sufis*. At first he was a usurer and committed to all sorts of wickedness, but Allah blessed him with sincere repentance, and he took the path of devotion to Allah. His conversion took place before Hasan Basri, who guided him to religious knowledge and practice. He was non Arab and was unable to speak Arabic correctly. Allah blessed him with many *Karamat* (miracles).

One evening Hasan Basri came to his devotional place and found Habib engaged in his prayer. Hasan came in, but did not pray under his leadership, as Habib was unable to recite Quran correctly. The same night, Hasan had vision of the Truth in his dream and he asked Allah, "O Lord, wherein does Thy good pleasure consist?"

Allah answered: "O Hasan, you found My good pleasure, but did not know its value:"

Hasan asked: "O my Lord, how?"

Allah answered: "Had you said your prayer in Habib's leadership and if his true intention had restrained you from taking offence at his Arabic pronunciation, I should have been well pleased with you."

It is well known among *Sufis* that when Hasan Basri fled from the troops of Hajjaj⁷ and entered the cell of Habib, immediately they also reached there. They asked Habib if he had seen Hasan. Habib answered affirmatively. They asked that where was he? "He is in my cell," answered Habib. They went into the cell, but saw no one there. Thinking that Habib was making fun of them, they got angry, abused him and called him a liar. He swore before them that he had spoken the truth and Hasan was in his worship cell. They again searched for Hasan couple of times, but found no one there

⁷ Abu Muhammad al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf al-Saqfi, Governor of Iraq, died 95 A.H.

and at last departed. Hasan immediately came out and said to Habib that Allah had saved him from the hands of those tyrants because of his benedictions. But let me know that why did you tell them that I was here? Habib replied:

"O Master, it was not on account of my benediction that they failed to see you, but was of my speaking the truth. Had I told a lie, we both should have been shamed."

Someone asked Habib that what pleases Allah? He answered:

في قلبك ليس فيه غبار النفاق

"With a heart which is not desecrated by hypocrisy,"

Because hypocrisy is the opposite of concord, and the state of *rida* (acquiescence) is the essence of concord. There is no link between hypocrisy and love. Love subsists in the state of being well pleased (with whatever is decreed by Allah). Therefore acquiescence is a characteristic of friends of Allah, while hypocrisy is the characteristic of His enemies. This is a very important matter and will be explained at another place.

2. Malik b. Dinar (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was a companion of Hasan Basri and amongst the Sheikhs of the Sufism. He is famous for his *Karamat* (miracles) and was well known for his renunciation and devotion. His father was a slave, and Malik was born before his father's emancipation. His conversion took place, as on one evening he along with his friends was enjoying a musical concert. Tired, when they were all asleep, a voice came from the musical instrument which they had been playing:

"O Malik! Why don't you repent?"

As soon as he heard the voice, Malik abandoned his evil ways and went to Hasan Basri, and made an earnest repentance before him. He reached to such a high degree that once when he was aboard on a ship, by chance somebody lost his costly gem stone. Since he was an unknown figure among the passengers, therefore, they pointed their fingers on him for stealing the jewel. He raised his gaze towards the heaven, fishes in abundance each carrying jewel in their mouths appeared on the surface of water. Malik took one of the jewels, and gave it to the man whose jewel had lost. Then he

set his foot on the sea and waded through until he reached the shore.

Malik said:

أحب الأعمال علي الإخلاص في الأعمال

"The deed that I love best is which is done with sincerity,"

Act only becomes an action in virtue of its sincerity. Sincerity bears the same relation with action as the spirit to the body, as the body without spirit is a lifeless thing, so an act without sincerity is useless. Sincerity is an inward of all the actions, whereas acts of devotion belong to the class of external actions. The latter are completed by the former, while the former derive their value from the latter. Although a man should keep his heart sincere for a thousand years, it is not sincerity until his sincerity is combined with action; and although he should perform external actions for a thousand years, his actions do not become acts of devotion until they are combined with sincerity.

3. Habib b. Salim al-Rai (may Allah have mercy on him)

An unparalleled among the poor and leader of the saints Abu Halim Habib b. Salim al-Rai is regarded by the Sheikhs of Sufism at a very high place. His proofs and evidences on all states are manifest. He was a companion of Salman Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him). He related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

نيت المومن خير من عمله

"The believer's intention is better than his act."

He had flocks of sheep, and resided on the bank of Euphrates. He followed the path of solitude. A certain Sheikh relates that once he saw him praying, while a wolf looked after his sheep. He resolved to meet him as he appeared to him some great saint. So he approached him, and after exchanging greeting he asked him: "O Sheikh: I see the wolf in accord with the sheep."

He replied: "That is because the shepherd is in accord with Allah."

With those words he held a wooden bowl and put it under a rock. Two fountains, one of milk and other of honey, gushed from the rock. He bade me to drink. I asked him that how he had attained that degree? He answered:

"By obedience to Muhammad (peace be upon him) the Prophet of Allah. O my son, the rock gave water to the *Ummah* of Moses although they disobeyed him and while Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him) is not equal in rank to Muhammad (peace be upon him). Why should the rock not give milk and honey to me, while I am obedient to Muhammad (peace be upon him), who is superior to Moses?"

On my request for some counseling he said:

لا تجعل قلبك صندوق الحرص و بطنك و عاء الحرام

"Do not make your heart a chest of greed and your belly a vessel of unlawful things." It is because both these evils are the cause of human disaster and safety lies in refraining from them.

My Sheikh had many traditions concerning him, but for me narration of more is not possible as my books have been left at Ghazna while I myself have become a captive in the district of Lahore, which is located in the suburbs of Multan. Allah be praised both in joy and sorrow!

4. Abu Hazim al-Madni (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was steadfast in poverty, and thoroughly versed in different kinds of self mortification. He was Sheikh of many *Sufis*. Umru b. Uthman al-Makki, one of his disciples showed great zeal on his behalf. His sayings are popular among the *Sufis* and also quoted in many books. Umru relates that in reply to what he possessed Hazim said that his wealth is laid in, "الرضا عن الله والغناء عن الناس" acquiescence (*rida*) with Allah and independence from mankind."

It is a big blessing for who is satisfied with his Lord and is independent of mankind. *Ghina* غناء, here refers to Allah, i.e. one who is *Ghani* (rich) with Allah, he will not look towards others. He won't be knowing any way other than leading to Allah, both in solitude and in presence his eye do not witness anyone other than Him. He does not expect from others because he knows that honor and humiliation are from Him.

Some Sheikh went to see him and found him asleep. When he awoke he said, "I dreamt just now that Prophet (peace be upon him) gave me a message for you, and bade me to inform you that it is better to fulfill the obligation you owed to your mother than to make the Pilgrimage. Return, therefore, and try to please her." The Sheikh turned back to his native place and did not go for Pilgrimage.

This is what little knowledge we have about Abu Hazim.

5. Muhammad b. Wasi (may Allah be pleased with him)

He was a man of contemplation, spokesman of the followers of the path of mortification and a unique personality of his time. He was associated with many Companions, *Tabieen* and also met some of the ancient Sheikhs. He had a perfect knowledge of Sufism. He said:

ما رأيت شيئا إلا ورأيت الله فيه

"I never saw anything without seeing splendor of Allah therein".

This is an advanced stage of contemplation. When a man is overcome by the friendship of actual Causer, he attains to such a point that in looking at His act he does not see the act but the Agent only and exclusively, just as one looks at a photo and sees only the artist.

The true meaning of these words is the same as in the saying of Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him), the Friend of Allah who when saw the sun and moon and stars, said, "هَذَا رَبِّي" this is my Lord" (Q 6:76-8), for he was then in that state of longing that what ever he saw, he found the qualities of his Beloved appeared therein. The friends of Allah when see they perceive the same that the universe is subject to His Might and is captive to His Dominion, and that the existence of all created things is nothing in comparison with His command of "كُنْ" (Be), the power of the Agent thereof. When they look thereon with longing, they do not see the conquered but the absolute Conqueror, the Omnipotent, instead of cause they see the Agent and instead of creature the Creator. I shall treat this in the chapter on contemplation (*mushahida*).

Some persons have fallen into error here, and have alleged that the words of Muhammad b. Wasi, "I saw splendor of Allah

therein," involve a status of division and transmigration, which is sheer infidelity. Because place is homogeneous with that which is enclosed in it, and if one supposes that place is created the occupant must also be created; or if the latter be eternal the former also must be eternal. Hence, both these assertions are wrong because one need to accept created as eternal or to creator as non-eternal, and both of which are infidelity. Accordingly, when Muhammad b. Wasi said that he saw splendor of Allah in things, he meant, to have seen in those things the signs, evidences and proofs of Allah. There are some subtle points connected with this question which I shall discuss at the proper place.

6. Imam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu Hanifa Nuaman b. Thabit al-Khazaz is the Imam of Imams and who's *Fiqah* (Religious doctrine) is being followed by the *Sunnis*. He was wholeheartedly committed to mortification and devotion, and is a great authority on the principles of Sufism. At first he went into seclusion and abandoned the society of mankind, for he had made his heart free from every thought of human authority and pomp and started on with pure devotion to Allah. One night, however, he dreamed that he was collecting the bones of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from his grave, and selecting some and discarding others. He awoke in fear and terror and asked one of the companions of Muhammad b. Sirin to interpret the dream. He after hearing interpreted his dream as:

"You will attain a high rank in safeguarding the *Sunnah* (ordinances of the Prophet, peace be upon him), so that you will sift what is genuine from what is unauthentic."

At another time Abu Hanifa dreamed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him:

"You have been created for the purpose of reviving my *Sunnah*, therefore, refrain yourself from solitude"

He was the master of many Sheikhs. Ibrahim b. Adham, Fudayl b. Iyad, Dawud Tai and Bashr Hafi, received religious guidance from him. Besides, there are many others also amongst his disciples.

At the time of Caliph Mansur, a plan was suggested to appoint a *Qadi* (Justice) and Abu Hanifa, Sufyan Thawri, Masar b.

Kadam, and Abu Abdullah Shuraik who all were known and accomplished *Ulama* (Religious Scholars) of their time were summoned to the presence of Caliph. On their way to court Abu Hanifa said to his companions that he appreciated what all of you would do in the Caliph's court. Then he said that he would save himself from the office of *Qadi* by some pretension. Masar would feign to be a madman, Sufyan would run away, and Shuraik would be made *Qadi*."

Hence, Sufyan while on their way fled away and embarked in a ship, imploring the passengers of the ship to save him from enemy who wanted to slain him. This was reference to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying in which he said:

"One who is appointed as *Qadi*, is slain without knife?"

The others were ushered into the presence of Caliph who first of all asked Abu Hanifa to act as *Qadi*. Abu Hanifa replied:

"O Commander of the Faithful, I am not an Arab, and belong from the family of their slaves; and the chiefs of the Arabs will not be satisfied with my decisions."

Mansur said that this matter had nothing to do with lineage, it demanded learning, and you were the most eminent knowledgeable *Ulama* of the day. Abu Hanifa persisted that he was not worthy of the appointment, for if he had spoken the truth he was disqualified, and if he had told a lie it was not right that a liar should be a judge over Muslims, and that you should entrust him with the lives, property, and honor of your subjects. He escaped in that way.

Then Masar came forward and seized the Caliph's hand and asked him how was he and his children, and his domestic animals? The Caliph shouted that he was a madman and ordered for his removal. Finally, Shuraik was asked to accept the post of *Qadi* who also argued that he was melancholic and light-witted, but Caliph ignored his contention and advised him to take suitable medicated feed until his intellect was fully restored. So Shuraik was made *Qadi*, and Abu Hanifa never spoke to him again.

This illustrates not only the sagacity of Abu Hanifa, but also his adherence to the path of righteousness and salvation, and his determination not to let himself be deluded by seeking popularity and worldly renown. It shows, moreover, the soundness of blame, since these three venerable men resorted

to some trick in order to avoid popularity. The *Ulama* of today deny this sort of conduct because they are the followers of their desires and are afar from the path of Truth. They have made palaces of princes their *Qibla* and the houses of evildoers their temple, and refute what ever go against their wishes.

Once in Ghazna, a self adopted *Ulama* who claimed to be learned in divine and religious matters, declared wearing of *Muraqqa* (patched frock) as heresy. I said to him, "you have made wearing of brocade robe lawful, although it is made of silk and wearing of silk is unlawful for men, and then you beg with importunity these unlawful dresses from the tyrants which is again illegal. Why, then, is it heretical to wear a lawful garment, procured from a lawful place, and purchased with lawful money? Had you not been ruled by inborn conceit and by the error of your soul, you would have expressed a better opinion. The wearing of silk dress is only lawful for women and permissible for lunatics. If you are amongst them, then you are excused (for condemning the patched frock). We seek Allah's shelter from being unfair."

Abu Hanifa relates:

After the death of Naufal b. Hayyan, I saw in my dream that it was Day of Resurrection and whole the creature was going through questioning and answering of their worldly deeds. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), surrounded by many eminent was standing on *Kauthar* fountain. There was an eminent with lighting face and grey hair, which had placed his eyes on the eyes of Prophet (peace be upon him). I also saw Naufal b. Hayyan standing nearby to them. When he saw me, he came towards me and we exchanged saluting. I asked him to give me some water. He said that let him take permission from the Prophet (peace be upon him) who assented permission by pointing his finger. Naufal gave me water in a cup which I drank and made my friends also to drink but the quantity of water in the cup remained unchanged. I asked Naufal that who was standing next to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He told that they were Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him), Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) and this way I counted seventeen eminent. When I got up I found the signs of this counting on my fingers.

Yahya b. Maud al-Razi relates that he in his dream saw Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked him: "O prophet of Allah, where shall I seek you?" He answered: "in the knowledge of Abu Hanifa."

Once, when I was in Syria, I fell asleep at the tomb of Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him), the *Muadhdhin*, and dreamed that I was at Mecca, and saw that the prophet (peace be upon him) was entering through the gate of Banu Shaiba, tenderly clasping an old man to his bosom in the same fashion as people are wont to carry children. I ran to him and kissed his hand, and stood wondering who the old man might be? The Prophet (peace be upon him) was miraculously aware of my secret thought and said to me that he was your Imam and the Imam of your countrymen. In consequence of this dream I and my countrymen have great hopes for ourselves. And it also appeared from the dream that Abu Hanifa was one of those who, having annihilated their natural qualities, continue to perform the law of *Shariat*, as appeared from the fact that he was carried by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Had he walked by himself, his attributes should have been subsistent, and such achievers sometimes reach to their destination and sometimes do not. But since he was carried by the Prophet (peace be upon him), his attributes must have been non-existent while he was sustained by the living attributes of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet cannot err, and it is equally impossible that one who is sustained by the Prophet should fall into error.

When Dawud Tai had acquired knowledge and had become a famous authority, he came to Abu Hanifa and sought his counseling for his future activities. Abu Hanifa replied, "Practice what you have learned, for theory without practice is like a body without a spirit."

Until there is practice with the knowledge, it remains void of sincerity and purity. He who contents to learning alone is not learned, and the truly learned man is not content with learning alone, as Divine guidance involves self-mortification, without which contemplation is unattainable. There is no knowledge without action, since knowledge is the product of action, and is brought forth and developed and made profitable by the blessings of action. The two things cannot be divorced in anyway, just as the light of the sun cannot be separated from the sun itself.

7. Abdullah b. Mubarak al-Mervasi (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was well versed on law of *Shariat* and principles of Sufism and was Imam of his time. He saw time of many Sheikhs with most of them consorted also. He is the author of celebrated works and is famous for his *Karamat* (miracles). He was amongst the favorite pupils and associates of Abu Hanifa and had full grasp in each branch of religious knowledge.

The story of his conversion to the Path is very interesting. He was in love with a girl. One night he went to see her. She came on the roof of her house and Abdullah stationed himself at the foot of the wall of her house. They both involved so much in gazing each other that did not realize how much time had passed until they heard the call for the Morning Prayer. Abdullah thought it was time for evening prayer; and only when the dawn started appearing did he discover that he had spent the whole night in rapturous contemplation of his beloved. He got cautioned by this, and thought that he had spent whole night standing on his feet just for own selfish pleasure but always got furious on *Imam* if he read a long *Sura* (chapter) of the Quran during the prayer. He felt ashamed of himself and repented wholeheartedly. He devoted himself to the study of knowledge, and entered upon life of asceticism, in which he attained such a high degree that once his mother found him asleep in the garden, while a big snake was driving the flies away from him with a branch of basil which it held in its mouth.

From Baghdad he moved to Merv and lived there for a long time in the company of Sufi Sheikhs. From there he went to Mecca and spent some time there also.

When he returned to Merv, the people of the town gathered around him and asked him to educate them on religious matters. There were two religious sects in Merv at that time, half of the population was follower of *Hadith* and *Sunnah* and rest of the half followed *Fiqah* (adherent of Opinion). Abdullah was popular amongst both the sects, and they called him *Radi al-Fariqayn* as he always treated both with respect and equality and each party claimed him as one of themselves. He got built two institutions there, one for each sect. Both these

institutions are working to the present day. Afterwards he went back to the Hijaz and settled at Mecca.

On being asked that what wondrous thing he had seen, he replied:

I saw a Christian monk, who was emaciated by self-mortification and his body had hunched by fear of Allah. I asked him about the way leading to Allah. He answered, "Had you known Allah, you would have known the way to him."

Then he said, "I worship Him although I do not know Him, whereas you disobey Him although you know Him, (i.e. knowledge entails fear), yet I see you fearless which entails infidelity and ignorance. I feel fear within myself."

Abdullah took his counsel to his heart, and that restrained him from many ill deeds.

Abdullah b. Mubarak said:

السكون حرام علي قلوب اولياء

"Tranquility is unlawful to the hearts of the Saints of Allah,"

For they are agitated in this world by seeking Allah and in the next by witnessing the presence of their Beloved, that is to say, their heart is agitated being away from the presence of the Truth and in the next world being in the presence of the Truth. Hence, for them this world is like the next world and next world is like this world, because tranquility of heart demands two things, either the object is attained or the desire is not fulfilled, since He is not to be attained in this world or the next, the heart can never have rest from the palpitation of love; and since indifference is unlawful to those who love Him, the heart can never have rest from the agitations of seeking Him. This is a firm principle among the adepts of the path.

8. Abu Ali al-Fudayl b. Iyad (may Allah have mercy on him)

He is one of the most celebrated Sheikhs who excelled in the Path of Sufism and is recognized as the eminent *Sufi* Sheikh by whole *Ummah*. He spent a life of truth and sincerity. His sayings are very subtle. He was a bandit initially and used to loot the caravans between Merv and Baward, but he was always inclined to piety, and never lacked courage and generosity which he invariably displayed. He never attacked a

caravan in which there was any woman, or took the property of one who possessed little stock and used to allow them to keep some portion of their property, according to the need for further travel.

One day a merchant set out from Merv. His friends advised him to take an escort with him as he might on his way come across with Fudayl. But he refuted them and said that he had heard of Fudayl as God fearing man, therefore, there was no need of getting scared of him. He left on his journey without an escort but he took along a *Qari* (one who recites Quran) and asked him to keep on reciting the Quran aloud throughout during the journey. When they reached the place where Fudayl was laying ambush, the reader happened to be reciting the following verse of Quran:

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

“Has not the time arrived for the Believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah?” (Q 57:16)

Hearing admonition from the words of Quran, the heart of Fudayl softened and he was engulfed by sobbing. He repented on his engaged profession and set to satisfy all those to whom he had looted.

He went to Mecca and resided there for some time and got acquainted with many *Sufis*. Afterwards he returned to Kufa, and got associated with Abu Hanifa. He remained there for quite some time and acquired knowledge from him. He got mastery over commentary of *Hadith*, and on matters relating to the knowledge of Sufism. He is the author of lofty sayings concerning the verities of Sufism and Divine knowledge. His recounts are held in high esteem by the Traditionalists. He said:

من عرف الله حق معرفته عبده بكل طاقته

“One who knows Allah as He ought to be known, worships Him with all his might,” i.e. one who gets to know Allah, he acknowledges His bounty, His beneficence and mercy and once he knows this, he loves Him which makes easy for him to obey Him with all might he possesses, for it is not tedious on oneself to obey those whom he loves. Therefore, the more one loves, the more one is obedient, and love is increased by true

marifat (knowledge of Allah). The mother of faithful, Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) relates:

One night Prophet (peace be upon him) went out, and I followed him. I found him saying prayer in the mosque and he was sobbing. The whole night passed, when Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him) called for Morning Prayer he was still in the same condition. After the prayer when he came back to his room, I saw his feet were swollen and fingers were oozing yellow water. I wept and said to him: "O Prophet of Allah, all of your mistakes have been excused, then why do you still pain yourself so much? Those who are fearful of their life of the next world might bear such hardship." The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied:

"Aisha! How much Allah's bounty, beneficence and mercy are upon me, should I not be His thankful slave. When He has bestowed upon me so much of His beneficence and mercy, should I not be thankful to Him by devoting myself to His Lordship."

At the time of Ascension the Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted command of fifty prayers which he did not feel a burden but on Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him) plea he went back and ultimately these were reduced to five. The acceptance of fifty prayers was nothing but bowing down before the command of the Beloved. Love is the name of obedience of beloved.

It is related that Fudayl said:

الدنيا دار المرضي و الناس فيها كاليجانين و للمجانين في دار المرضي الفل و القيد

"The world is a mad house, and the people therein are madmen, wearing shackles and chains." Lust is our shackle and sin is our chain.

Fadl b. Rabi⁸ related that he accompanied Haroon al-Rashid⁹ to Mecca for pilgrimage. After the Pilgrimage, he asked me if there was any saint who might be visited. I took him to Abd al-Razzaq.¹⁰ We talked with him for some time. When we were about to leave, Haroon asked me to check up if he had any debts. On his affirmative reply Haroon gave orders for the

⁸ Abu al-Abbas Al Fadl b. Rabi, d. 208 A.H.

⁹ Abu Jafar Haroon Rashid, the Caliph, d. 193 A.H.

¹⁰ Abu Bakr Abd al-Razzaq b. Hamam Saqat, d. 211 A.H.

clearance of his debts. Once we came out from his house, Haroon desired to see a saint of higher stature than Razzaq. I conducted him to Sufyan b. Uyayna¹¹. With him also our visit ended in the same way and Haroon ordered to pay his debts. At the time of departure Haroon said that he had not found the desired person. Then I recollected that Fudayl b. Iyad was also in Mecca. We went to him and founded him reciting Quran in the upper floor of his house. We knocked at the door. He enquired who was at the door. I replied him that it was the Commander of the Faithful. He said what he had to do with the Commander of the Faithful. I said was there not Prophet's (peace be upon him) tradition that no one should seek to abase himself while in devotion to Allah. He replied:

"My acquiescence in Allah's will is everlasting glory. You see only my abasement, but I see my exaltation."

Then he came down, opened the door, extinguished the lamp and stood in a corner. Haroon in his attempt to locate him, his hand fell upon on the hands of Fudayl who exclaimed, "Alas! I have never seen softer hand than this, I wonder if it escapes from the Hell-fire." Haroon began to weep, and wept so violently that he fainted. When he came to himself, he requested Fudayl to give him a word of counsel. Fudayl said, O Commander of the Faithful, your ancestor (Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him)) was the uncle of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He had asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to give him dominion over men. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him,

"O my uncle, guard your *nafs* (lower soul), I for one moment give you dominion over yourself." i.e. one moment of your obedience to Allah is better than a thousand years of men's obedience to you, since dominion brings repentance on the Day of Resurrection.

Haroon pleaded for more counseling. Fudayl continued. When Umar b. Abd al-Aziz¹² (may Allah be pleased with him) was appointed Caliph, he summoned Salim b. Abdullah¹³, Rajaa b. Hyat¹⁴, Muhammad b. Kaab al-Qurzi¹⁵ (may Allah be pleased

¹¹ Abu Muhammad Sufyan b. Uyayna, d. 198 A.H.

¹² died 101 A.H.

¹³ died 106 A.H.

¹⁴ died 112 A.H.

¹⁵ died 117 A.H.

with them), and said to them, "What am I to do in this affliction? For I count it an affliction, although people in general consider it to be blessing." One of them replied:

"If you desire to be saved tomorrow from the Divine punishment, regard the elders as your fathers, and their young men as your brothers, and their children as your children. The whole territory of Islam is your house, and its people are your family. Visit the father, and honor your brothers, and deal kindly with your children." Then Fudayl said:

"O Commander of the Faithful, I fear lest that your handsome face fall into Hell-fire. Fear Allah, and perform your obligations to Him better than this."

Haroon asked Fudayl whether he had any debts. He answered, "Yes, the debt which I owe to Allah, namely, obedience to Him; woe to me, if He calls me to account for it!" Haroon interrupted and said, O Fudayl, I was speaking of debts to men. He replied, "Allah be praised! His bounty towards me is great, and I have no reason to complain of Him to His servants." Haroon offered him a purse of a thousand diners, saying that he might use the money for some of his purposes. Fudayl said, "O Commander of the Faithful, my counseling has done you no good. Here again you are behaving wrongly and unjustly." Haroon inquired how that was. Fudayl said, "I wish thee to be saved, but thou wouldst cast me into predicament: is not this unjust?" Haroon again started crying and in the same condition we took leave of him, and Haroon said to me, "Fudayl is the king indeed."

All this shows his hatred of the world and its people, and his contempt for its gauds, and his refusal to abase himself before worldlings for the sake of worldly gain. He has countless sayings and recounts.

9. Dhu al-Nun b. Ibrahim (may Allah have mercy on him)

The treasure of nobility and *Walayat* (sainthood) Abu al-Fayd Dhu al-Nun b. Ibrahim al-Misri belonged to village Naub and his name was Thwban. He was the son of a Nubian. He is one of the most eminent of the hidden spiritualists, for he adopted the path of affliction and blame. The people of Egypt remained in doubt as to his true spiritual state, and did not believe in

him until he was dead. On the night when he died seventy persons dreamed that they saw Prophet (peace be upon him), who said to all of them that Dhu al-Nun, the friend of Allah was coming and he had come to welcome him. And after his death following words were found inscribed on his forehead:

هذا حبيب الله مات في حب الله قتل الله

"He is beloved of Allah, who died in love of Allah, slain for Allah."

At his funeral the birds gathered above his bier, and shadowed it with their wings. On seeing this, the Egyptians felt guilt and repented of the injustice which they had done to him during his life time.

He has many fine and admirable sayings on the varieties of mystical knowledge. He said:

العارف كل يوم اخشع لانه في كل ساعته من الرب اقرب

"The Gnostic's fear is increased every day, because he is approaching nearer to his Lord every moment,"

The nearer one gets to Allah, the more he becomes flabbergasted and his sincerity in devotion increases because he gets aware of His Omnipotence and Majesty, and his heart is subdued by the majesty of the Truth. He does not consider himself separate and away from Him and at that time abandons his desire of unity with Him, hence his lowliness is increased. Thus Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him) asked Allah: "O Lord, where shall I seek Thee?"

Allah answered: "among those whose hearts are shattered."

Moses said: "O Lord, no heart is more shattered and despairing than mine."

Allah answered: "Then I am where thou art."

One who pretends to know Allah without lowliness and fear is not a Gnostic but an ignorant fool. The sign of *Marifat* (knowledge of Allah) lies in a true desire, and a sincere desire removes all secondary causes and severs all ties of relationship, so that nothing remains except Allah. Dhu al-Nun said, "الصدق سيف الله في ارضه ما وضع علي شيء الا قطعه" truth (sincerity) is the sword of Allah on the earth: it cuts everything that it touches." Now sincerity regards the Causer, and does not

consist in affirmation of secondary causes. To affirm the latter is to destroy the principle of sincerity.

One day Dhu al-Nun along with his disciples was sailing in a boat on the River Nile. In the mean time another boat filled with merry-makers approached them. They were busy in singing and making noise. The disciples were so disgusted by their unseemly behaviors that they begged Dhu al-Nun to implore Allah to sink the boat, so the people might remain save from their misdeeds. Dhu al-Nun raised his hands and prayed:

"O Lord, as Thou hast given these peoples a pleasurable life in this world, bestow them a pleasant life in the next world also!"

The disciples were astonished by this prayer. When the boat came nearer and those in it saw Dhu al-Nun, they began to weep and asked pardon. They broke their musical instruments, repented and turned unto Allah. Dhu al-Nun said to his disciples:

"A pleasant life in the next world is repentance in this world. Both of you are satisfied without making harm to anyone."

He acted thus from his extreme affection towards the Muslims, following the example of Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), who notwithstanding the ill-treatment which he received from the infidels, never ceased to say:

اللهم اهد قومي فانهم لا يعلمون

"O Allah! Direct my people, for they know not."

Dhu al-Nun related that once on his way from Jerusalem to Egypt, he noticed in the far distance as some one was advancing towards him. His awful appearance encouraged him to have chat with him. When the person came nearer he found that it was an old woman carrying a staff and dressed up in a woolen tunic. He asked her from where she had come. She answered: "from Allah."

He asked her that where she intended to go then.

She answered: "To Allah."

He drew a dinar and offered it to her, but she shook his hand and slapped on his face and said:

"O Dhu al-Nun, the notion which you have formed of me arises from the feebleness of your intelligence. I work for sake of

Allah, and accept nothing unless it is from Him. I worship Him alone and take from Him alone.”

With these words she went on her way.

The old woman’s saying that she worked for the sake of Allah is a proof of her sincerity in love. Men in their dealings with Allah fall into two categories.

The first category when perform some act they think it is for the sake of Allah but in reality they work for themselves, and though it might not have been done with any sensual motive, but they do keep a desire of recompense in the next world. Others take no thought of reward or punishment in the next world and of ostentation and reputation in this world, but act solely from reverence for the commandments of Allah and their love of Allah bid them to do some act and in obedience to His command they forget every selfish interest.

The former category of people fancy that what they do for the sake of the next world, actually it is for Allah's sake and fail to recognize that the devout have a greater self-interest in devotion than the wicked have in sin, because the sinner’s pleasure lasts only for a moment, whereas delight of devout is for ever. Besides, Allah neither gains from the devotion of mankind, nor does He lose anything if they do not perform devotion to Him. If the whole world acts with the veracity of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), the gain would be wholly theirs, and if with the falsehood of Pharaoh, the loss would be wholly theirs, as Allah hath said:

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِنَفْسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا

“If ye did well, ye did well for yourself; if you did evil, (ye did it) against yourself. (Q 17:7); and also:

وَمَنْ جَاهَدْ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

“And if any strive (with might and main), they do so for their own souls: For Allah is free of all needs from all creation.” (Q 29:6).

The people seek for themselves an everlasting kingdom and claim to be working for Allah’s sake, but to tread the path of love is a different thing. Lovers, in fulfilling the Divine commandment, regard only the accomplishment of the Beloved’s will, and have no eye for anything else. A similar topic will be discussed in the chapter on sincerity.

10. Ibrahim b. Adham (may Allah have mercy on him)

The chief of his contemporaries, unique in the Path of Sufism Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Adham b. Mansur was disciple of Prophet Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him). He met a large number of ancient *Sufi* Sheikhs and got benefited from their experiences. He was associated with Imam Abu Hanifa, from whom he learned divinity.

In the earlier part of his life he was Governor of Balkh but the will of Allah was to make him emperor of the spiritual world. One day he went for the game, and while pursuing a deer, he got separated from his suite. Allah caused the deer to address him in mankind language who said:

"Were you created for this, or were you commanded to do this?"

He repented, abandoned worldly governance, and entered on the path of asceticism and abstinence. He made the acquaintance of Fudayl b. Iyad and Sufyan Thawri, and consorted with them. After his conversion he never ate anything except what he had earned with his own hands. He had excellent deeds and is famous for his *karamat* (miracles). His sayings on verities of Sufism are original and beautiful. Junaid referred him as the key of the knowledge of Sufism.

Ibrahim Adham said:

اتخذ الله صاحبا وذر الناس جانبا

"Seek friendship of Allah and leave mankind alone."

When one has rightly turned towards Allah and is sincere in his relation with Him, then his turning towards Allah requires that he should turn his back on mankind, because the society of mankind stands nowhere near the love of Allah. Companionship with Allah is sincerity in fulfilling His commands, and sincerity in devotion springs from purity of love, which proceeds from hatred of passions and lust. One, who is slave of his sensual affections, is separated from Allah, and one who is parted away from sensual affections, is dwelling with Allah. Therefore you are all mankind in regard to yourself; if you turn away from yourself, and you have turned away from all mankind. One who turns away from the mankind but remains concerned to himself, is like one keeping

relations with whole mankind, whereas the actions of all mankind are determined by the providence and predestination of Allah but you talk of yourself because you are responsible for yourself.

The outward and inward rectitude of the seeker is based on two things. There are some things to be known, should recognize them and there are others to be acted upon, should be performed. The former consists in regarding all good and evil and predestined by Allah, so that nothing in the universe passes into a state of rest or motion until Allah has created rest or motion in that thing. The latter consists in performing the command of Allah, in rightness of action towards Him, and in keeping the obligations which He has imposed. Predestination can never become an argument for neglecting His commands. True renunciation of mankind is impossible until one renounces himself. As soon as one has renounced himself, he will know that all mankind is committed to fulfillment of the will of Allah; and as soon as he has turned to Allah, he will also be accomplishing the decree of Allah. Hence it is not permissible to be satisfied with mankind. If one is satisfied with anything save Allah, it should be another, for satisfaction with another is to regard unification, whereas satisfaction with own self nullify the Creator. For this reason Sheikh Abu al-Hasan Saliba used to say that it is better for novice to be under the authority of act than under his own authority. Because companionship with another is for Allah's sake, while companionship with one's self is to cultivate the sensual affections. This topic will be discussed at proper place.

Ibrahim b. Adham tells that once an old man met him in the jungle. He came to him and said, "O Ibrahim, do you know what place this is, and you are journeying without provisions and ride?" I knew that he was Satan. At that time I had four silver coins which I had obtained by selling a basket at Kufa. I cast them away and made a vow that I would pray four hundred *Nuafil* (obligatory prayer) for every stage that I traveled.

I remained four years in the desert, and Allah was giving me my daily bread without any effort on my part. During that time Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him) consorted with me and taught me the Great Name of Allah by blessing of which my heart became wholly empty of others.

11. Bashr b. al-Harith Hafi (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu Nasr Bashr b. al-Harith al-Hafi was possessed with very high dignity in self-mortification and had excellent conduct. He was the disciple of his maternal uncle, Ali b. Khashram¹⁶ and had the association of Fudayl b. Iyad. He was well versed in the principal as well as derivative sciences.

One day, when he was drunk, he saw a piece of paper lying on the road. He picked it up and saw following inscription on it:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

"In the name of Allah, the most Compassionate, the most Merciful."

He picked it up with reverence, perfumed it, and put it at a clean place. The same night he dreamed that Allah said to him:

"O Bashr, as thou hast made My name scented, I swear by My Glory that I will make thy name scented both in this and the next world. Whosoever would hear your name, his heart would feel pleasure."

Thereupon he repented and beheld asceticism. So intensely was he absorbed in contemplation of Allah that he never put anything on his feet. When he was asked the reason of that act, he said:

"The earth is His carpet; I feel it wrong to walk on His carpet while there is something between my foot and His carpet."

This was one of the peculiar practices in the concentration of his mind on Allah that a shoe seemed to him a veil (between him and Allah). He said:

"Whoever desires to be honored in this world and exalted in the next world, he must avoid three things:

- Should not ask anything from the mankind,
- speak not ill of anyone,
- Should not accept an invitation to eat with anyone."

No man who knows the way to Allah will ask a boon from mankind, since to do so is a proof of his ignorance of Allah.

¹⁶ Hafiz Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Khashram b. Abd al-Rehman al-Mervasi died 257 A.H.

One who comes to know the Giver of all boons, he would not ask a boon from a fellow creature. To get a favor from creature is like prisoner getting a favor from fellow prisoner.

Similarly, the one who speaks ill of anyone is criticizing the decree of Allah, because both the individual himself and his actions are created by Allah. How one can criticize the creation of Allah? In reality to criticize some act is to criticize the causer. This does not apply, however, to the blame which Allah has commanded us to bestow upon the infidels.

As to his saying, 'not to accept an invitation to eat with anyone,' the reason is that Allah is the only Provider. If He makes a creature the means of giving you daily feed, do not regard that creature, but consider that the daily bread which Allah has caused to come to you does not belong to him but Allah. But if the invitee thinks that it is his, and that he is thereby conferring a favor on you, do not accept it. In the matter of daily bread no one confers on another any favor, because, according to the opinion of the *Sunnis*, daily bread is food, whereas the *Mutazilites* hold it to be property. Allah is nourishing his creature with food not the creature is nourishing creature. This saying may be explained otherwise, if it be taken in a profane sense.

12. Abu Yazid al-Bastami (may Allah have mercy on him)

The firmament of *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) and king of love Abu Yazid Tayfur b. Isa al-Bastami is one of the greatest saints of all times. The *Sufi* Sheikhs considers him of so high stature in state and dignity that Junaid had to say that Abu Yazid held the same rank among them as Gabriel among the angels. His grandfather was a Magian, but his father was one of the notables of Bastam. He is the author of many trustworthy recounts concerning the Traditions of the prophet (peace be upon him). He is one of the ten celebrated Imams of Sufism. No one before him penetrated so deeply into the mysteries of this knowledge. In all circumstances he was a lover of theology and venerator of the *Shariat*, in spite of the fact that some persons with the object of supporting their own interests imposed false doctrine on him. From the beginning, his life was based on self-mortification, abstinence and the practice of devotion. He said:

"For thirty years I engaged in self-mortification, and found nothing harder than to learn divinity and follow its precepts. But, had the *Ulama* not on disagreement I should have utterly failed in my endeavor. The disagreement of *Ulama* is a mercy but save on the point of Unification."

This is true indeed, for human nature is more prone to ignorance than to knowledge. While many things can be done easily and fearlessly with ignorance, but not a single step can be made easily with knowledge. The path of the *Shariat* is much narrower and more dangerous than the *Bridge Sirat*. Therefore it behooves on you to act in all circumstances that, if you do not attain a high degree and an eminent station, and gets drop, you must fall within the field of the *Shariat*. So, even if you lose all states and stations, your practices of devotion will remain with you. Neglect of *Shariat* is the worst mischief that can happen to a novice.

Yazid said:

الجنة لا خطر لها عند اهل المحبة و اهل المحبة محجوبون بمحبتهم

"Paradise has no value in the eyes of lovers, and lovers are veiled (from Allah) by their love."

Paradise though is of great magnitude but is a creation, whereas love is an uncreated and attribute of Allah. Whoever is got involved by a created thing from that which is uncreated, is a loser. Created things are worthless in the eyes of lovers. Lovers are veiled by love, because the existence of love involves duality, which is incompatible with Unification. The way of lovers is from oneness to Oneness, but friendship is tested by the friendship and there is a desirer and an object of desire, therefore, either Allah must be the desirer and Man the desired, or vice versa. If Man is the desirer and Allah the object of desire, the creature's search and desire can find no way unto Him, in either case the evil of being remains in the lover. Accordingly, the annihilation of the lover in the everlastingness of love is more perfect than his subsistence through the everlastingness of love. Yazid said:

Once I went to Mecca and saw a house standing apart. I thought that my pilgrimage was not accepted, for I had seen many stones of this sort. Second time I went there, and saw the house and also the Lord of the house. I thought that this was not yet real unification. When I went there third time, I

saw only the Lord of the house. A voice in my heart whispered,

"O Bayazid, if you had not seen yourself, you would not have been involved in polytheism though you had seen the whole universe; but if you have closed your eyes to whole universe but see to yourself, it is polytheism."

Thereupon I repented, and once more I repented of my repentance, and yet once more I repented of seeing my own existence."

This is a subtle tale concerning the soundness of his state, and an excellent indication to spiritualists.

13. Harith b. Asad al-Muhasibi (may Allah have mercy on him)

Imam of crafts, knower of the inward Abu Abdullah al-Harith b. Asad al-Muhasibi was well learned in the principal and derivative sciences, and his authority was recognized by all the theologians of his day. He was author of many works but his book, entitled "*Ridyat li-huquq Allah*, (The observance of what is due to Allah) and on the principles of Sufism is very famous. In every branch of learning he was a man of lofty sentiments and noble mind. He was the chief Sheikh of Baghdad in his time. He said:

العلم بحركات القلوب في مطالعة الغيوب اشرف من العمل بحركات الجوارح

"Who is aware with the secret motions of the heart is better than he who merely acts with the motions of limbs."

It means that knowledge is the palace of perfection, whereas ignorance is the palace of exploration, and knowledge in the Court of the Truth is better than ignorance. Knowledge raises one to the degrees of excellence but ignorance hinders him to enter to the proximity of the Truth. In reality knowledge is better than action, because it makes possible to know Allah. It is not possible to attain Him by only means of action. Had it been possible that only by actions one could reach to Him, then the Christians and their monks with their self-mortification would have attained to His presence and sinful believers would have remained in the degree of veil (to Allah). Knowledge is an attribute of Divine and action is an attribute of human. Some relaters of this saying have fallen into error

by reading *العمل بحركات القلوب* which is bizarre, since human actions have nothing to do with the motions of the heart. However, if the author uses this expression to denote meditation and contemplation of the inward feelings then it is not impossible. The prophet (peace be upon him) said, "تفكرساهاات خير من عبادۃ ستين سنة" a moment's meditation is better than sixty years of devotion."

In fact the spiritual actions are more excellent than body actions, and the effects produced by inward feelings and actions are better than the effects produced by outward actions. Hence it is said, "نوم العالم عبادۃ و سهر الجاهل معصية" the sleep of the sage is an act of devotion and the wakefulness of the fool is a sin," because under both the conditions (sleep and wakefulness) the inward of the ignorant is overpowered and when inward is subdued, the outward is also overpowered. Accordingly, the heart that is controlled by the sway of Allah is better than the sensual part of man which controls his outward motions and acts of self-mortification.

Once he said to a dervish that *كن لله و الا فلا تكن* (be of Allah or parish) i.e. either be subsistence through Allah or perish to your own existence; either be united with the Purity or get separated by Poverty; either try for the state described by the Quran *اسجدوا لآدم* (Bow down to Adam, (Q 2:34) or create that attribute in yourself as described in Quran:

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا

"Has there not been over Man a long period of Time, when he was nothing – (not even) mentioned?" (Q 76:1).

If you will be of your own free choice, your resurrection will be through yourself, and if you are not with your free choice then your resurrection will be through Allah. It is very subtle point.

14. Dawud al-Tai (may Allah have mercy on him)

Independent from the desire of states, status and retired and reluctant from creature Abu Suleiman Dawud b. Nusair al-Tai was amongst the eminent Sheikhs and Imams. He was a unique personality of his time. He was pupil of Abu Hanifa and a contemporary of Fudayl b. Iyad and Ibrahim b. Adham. In Sufism he was disciple of Habib Rai. He was deeply versed in all the sciences and unrivalled in jurisprudence. He had

adopted solitude and had forsaken the authority and the world. He took the path of asceticism and piety. He has many virtues and literary attainments. He was knowledgeable on matters dealing with community and was accomplished on reality of *marifat*.

He said to one of his disciples:

ان اردت السلامة سلم علي الدنيا و ان اردت الكرامة كبر علي الاخرة

"If you desire peace, bid farewell to this world and if you desire grace, pronounce the *Takbir* over the next world,"

Both these are the palaces of veils (places which prevent you from the vision of the Truth). Every kind of tranquility depends on them. Who wants tranquility of the body should ignore the world and one who desires tranquility of heart, should clear his heart of all the desires of the next world.

Dawud used to have frequent associations with Muhammad b. al-Hasan¹⁷, but would never receive *Qadi* Abu Yusaf¹⁸. On being asked why he honored one of these equally eminent divines but refused to admit the other to his presence, he replied that Muhammad b. al-Hasan had become a theologian after being rich and wealthy, and theology was the cause of his religious advancement and worldly abasement, whereas Abu Yusaf had become a theologian after being poor and despised, and had made theology the means of gaining wealth and power. How both can be equal?

Maruf Karkhi said that he had never seen anyone who held worldly goods in less account than Dawud Tai. The world and its occupants had no value, not even equal to the weight of the wings of a gnat. He used to regard dervishes although he might himself be in affliction.

15. Sari Saqati (may Allah have mercy on him)

Sheikh of the aspirants of Sufism Abu al-Hasan Sari b. al-Mufhlis al-Saqati was the maternal uncle of Junaid. He was well versed in all the sciences and an eminent *Sufi*. He was the first who devoted his attention to arrange the *maqamat* (stations) and explanations of spiritual states (احوال ahwal).

¹⁷ Died 189 A.H.

¹⁸ Died 182 A.H.

Most of the Sheikhs of Iraq were his disciples. He had seen Habib Rai and benefited from his association but was disciple of Maruf Karkhi. He had huckster's shop in the bazaar of Baghdad. Once the bazaar caught fire, and he was told that his shop was also burnt. His instant reply was, "then I am freed from the care of it." Later on it was discovered that his shop had not been burnt, although all the shops surrounding it were destroyed. On seeing this, Sari gave all that he possessed to the poor and took the path of Sufism. On asking that how the change in him began, he replied:

"One day Habib Rai passed my shop, and I gave him a piece of bread, so he might give that to the dervish. He said to me, 'May Allah reward thee!' Since I heard this prayer, the love of the world vanished from my heart."

Sari said:

اللهم مهما عذبتني بشيء فلا تعذبني بذل الحجاب

"O Allah, whatever punishment Thou may inflict upon me but do not punish me with the humiliation of being veiled from Thee," because, if I am not veiled from Thee, my suffering and affliction will be lightened by the remembrance and contemplation of Thee. But if I am veiled from Thee, even Thy bounty will be deadly to me.

Whatever affliction one faces during contemplation is not suffering rather the bounty, but what one attains in veiled condition is an affliction. There is no punishment in Hell more painful and hard to bear than that of being veiled. If Allah were revealed in Hell to the people of Hell, sinful believers would never think of Paradise, since the vision of Allah would so fill them with joy that they would not feel any affliction or pain. And in Paradise there is no pleasure more perfect than the unveiling of the Beloved. If the people there enjoyed all the pleasures of that place and other pleasures a hundred fold, but were veiled from Allah, their hearts would be utterly broken. Therefore it is the *Sunnah* (custom) of Allah to let the hearts of those who love Him have vision of Him always, in order that the delight thereof may enable them to endure every tribulation. And their prayer is always:

"We deem all torments more desirable than to be veiled from Thee. When Thy Beauty is revealed to our hearts, we take no thought of affliction."

16. Shaqiq b. Ibrahim (may Allah have mercy on him)

The leader of the afflicted Abu Ali Shaqiq b. Ibrahim al-Balkhi has been leader and Imam of *Sufis*. He was well versed in all the branches of religious sciences and composed many works on various subjects. He consorted with Ibrahim b. Adham and many other Sheikhs. He said:

جعل الله اهل طاعته احياء في مماتهم واهل المعاصي امواتا في حياتهم

"Allah keeps pious living in their death, and the immoral dead during their lives," i.e. the pious, though they be dead, yet alive, since the angels utter blessings on their piety, therefore, their reward keeps on increasing. Hence, in the annihilation wrought by death they subsist through the everlastingness of retribution.

Once an old man came to Shaqiq and said to him, "O Sheikh, I have sinned much and now wish to repent."

Shaqiq said: "You have come late."

The old man answered: "No, I have come early. Whoever makes repentance before he dies has come soon."

Once there was famine at Balkh, and the people had started eating flesh of each others. While all the Muslims were bitterly distressed, Shaqiq saw a youth laughing and making merry in the bazaar. The people asked him why he was laughing. Were you not ashamed to rejoice when everyone else was mourning? The youth said that he had no sorrow as he was the servant of a man who owned big property and he had relieved him of all care for his livelihood. Shaqiq exclaimed:

"O Lord Allah, this youth rejoices so much in having a master who owns minor property, but Thou are the King of kings, and Thou hast promised to give us our daily bread; and nevertheless we have filled our hearts with all this sorrow because we are engrossed with worldly things."

He turned to Allah and adopted the Path of the Truth, and never troubled himself again about his daily bread. Afterwards he used to say that he was the pupil of a youth; all that he had learned was from him.

His humility led him to say this.

17. Abu Suleiman al-Durani (may Allah have mercy on him)

Sheikh of his time, unique on the path of Sufism Sheikh Abu Suleiman Abd al-Rahman b. Atiyya al-Durani was held in honor by the *Sufis* as he was (called) the sweet basil of hearts. He was distinguished by his severe austerities and act of self-mortification. He was versed in the science of "*waqt* وقت" (time) and a specialist in the knowledge of the cankers of the soul and had a keen eye for its hidden snares. He spoke in subtle terms concerning the practice of devotion and the guard that should be kept over the heart and the limbs. He said:

إذا غلب الرجا علي الخوف ففسد الوقت

"When hope predominates over fear, one's *waqt* وقت (time) is spoilt," because *waqt* (time) is the guard of one's state, and one only guards it so long as one is possessed by fear. And when fear is vanquished, he stops guarding his state and his time is spoilt. And if fear predominates over hope, belief in *tawhid* توحيد (Unity of Allah) is lost; because fear springs from despair, and despair from Allah is *shirk* شرك (polytheism). Therefore, safety of *tawhid* is only possible by keeping right hope and *waqt* (time) can only be guarded by developing right fear and when both fear and hope are equal, the *waqt* and *tawhid* would also be safe. Maintenance of belief in *tawhid* makes one a believer while maintenance of *waqt* makes one pious.

Hope is connected entirely with contemplation which is the basic root of belief and fear is connected with purgation, which involves an anxious uncertainty. Contemplation is the fruit of purgation. This means that all hopes get life from despair. Whenever a man, on account of his actions, despairs of his future salvation, that despair shows him the way to salvation and welfare and Divine mercy, and opens to him the doors of gladness, and clears away sensual corruptions from his heart, and reveals to him the Divine mysteries.

Ahmad b. Abi al-Hawari relates that one night, he said prayer in privacy, and felt great pleasure therein. Next day I told this to Abu Suleiman, who replied:

"You are weak in the way of Path, for you still have mankind in your mind, so that you have one attitude in private and another in public. There is nothing in the two worlds that is sufficiently important to hold man back from Allah. Have you

not seen that when a bride is unveiled to the people, the reason is that everyone may see her that she may be honored the more through being seen, but it is not proper that she should see anyone except the bridegroom, because it will be disgraceful act on her part to see others. If all mankind should see the glory of a pious man's piety, he would suffer no harm, but if he sees the excellence of his own piety he is lost."

18. Maruf Karkhi (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu Mahfuz Maruf b. Firuz al-Karkhi was brought up by Ali b Musa al-Raza (may Allah have mercy on him) and was counted amongst the Imams of ancient *Sufis*. He was famed for his humility, generosity and devoutness.

The mention of him should have come earlier in the book, but I have placed it here in accordance with two venerable persons who wrote before me, one of them a relater of traditions and the other an independent authority. Sheikh Abd al-Rahman al-Salami, who in his work adopted the arrangement which I have followed, and the other is Imam Abu al-Qasim Qushayri, who has put the mention of Maruf in the same order in the introductory portion of his book.

Maruf was the master of Sari Saqati and the disciple of Dawud Tai. At his early age Maruf was a non-Muslim, Ali b. Musa al-Raza, converted him to Islam. He held him in the highest esteem. He has many virtues and literary attainments and is recognized as a guide and leader in many branches of the knowledge of the *Shariat*. He said:

للفتیان ثلاث علامات وفا بلا خلاف و مدح بلا جود و عطا بلا سوال

"There are three signs of generosity;

- to keep faith without resistance,
- to praise without being incited thereto by liberality, and
- to give without being asked."

To keep faith without resistance is that one in devotion should deny all evil acts and anything which astray him from the path of Truth.

And to praise without being incited thereto by liberality is one must extend the kindest attitude even towards him also who never have done any good to him.

And to give without being asked is that if resources permit one should not make any discrimination in giving charity and if he comes to know about a needy, he must fulfill his need without bringing him to begging state.

These are the ethics set by mankind, and all these qualities are temporarily given to them, whereas in reality these belong to Allah, Who acts thus towards His servants. Allah keeps unresisting faith with those who love Him, and although they show resistance in keeping faith with Him, He continues with His kindness towards them. The sign of Allah's keeping faith is that in eternity past He called His servants to His presence without any good action on their part, and that today He does not banish His servants on account of evil actions. He alone praises without the incitement of liberality, for He has no need of His servant's actions, and nevertheless extols him for a minor act that he has performed. And similarly He alone gives without being asked, for He is generous and knows the state of everyone and fulfils his desire unasked.

Accordingly, when Allah graces a man with honor, makes him noble, and distinguishes him by His favor, and acts towards him in the three ways mentioned above, and when that man, as far as lies in his power, acts in the same way towards his fellow creatures, then he is called generous and gets a reputation for generosity. Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him) possessed these three qualities in very truth, as I shall explain it at the proper place.

19. Hatim al-Asam (may Allah have mercy on him)

The beauty of servants, elegance of nobles Abu Abd al-Rahman Hatim b. Unwan al-Asam was the noblest man of Balkh and one of the ancient Sheikhs of Khurasan. He was a disciple of Shaiq and Sheikh of Ahmad Khadruya. In all his circumstances, from beginning to end, he never once acted untruthfully, so that Junaid said, "Hatim is the *Siddiq* (veracious) of our time." He has lofty sayings on the subtleties of discerning the cankers of the soul and the weaknesses of human nature, and is the author of famous works on ethics.

He said:

الشهوات ثلاث شهوة في الاكل و شهوة في الكلام و شهوة في النظر فاحفظ الاكل في التقته و
اللسان بالصدق و النظر بالعبرة

"Lust is of three kinds,

- lust in eating,
- lust in speaking and
- lust in looking.

Therefore guard

- your food by trust in gnosis,
- your tongue by speaking the truth, and
- thine eye by taking reprimand (*ibrat*)."

One who adheres to *tawakul* توكل (trust in Allah) for his food, he is saved from the lust of eating. One who speaks the truth, he is saved from the lust of speaking, and one who keeps his eyes under control he gets rid of from the lust of looking.

Real *tawakul* (trust in Allah) proceeds from right knowledge that Allah is the real provider of subsistence. One should straighten his intellect and should know Him aright and should speak and look with right knowledge, so that his food and drink is only love, and his speech is only ecstasy, and his looking is only contemplation. Accordingly, when he knows aright he eats what is lawful, and when he speaks aright he utter praises (of Allah), and when he look aright he beholds Him, because no food is lawful except what He has given and permits to be eaten, and no praise is rightly offered to anyone in the eighteen thousand worlds except to Him, and it is not allowable to look on anything in the universe except His Beauty and Majesty. It is not lust when you receive food from Him and eat by His leave, or when you speak of Him by His leave, or when you see His actions by His leave. On the other hand, it is lust when you eat with your own desire, may it be lawful food or you speak with your own will, even may it be praise of Him, or of your own will you look even for the purpose of seeking guidance.

20. Imam Shafii (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Idris al-Shafii was an eminent Imam of his time and was well versed in all the branches of religious knowledge. He was famed for his high mindedness and abstinence. He has many virtues and literary attainments and his sayings are highly appreciated.

During his stay in Medina he acquired knowledge from Imam Malik and when he came to Iraq he was associated with Muhammad b. al-Hasan. He from the very beginning had a natural desire for seclusion, and used to seek an intimate comprehension of the Sufism. Slowly and steadily people gathered around him and followed his authority. Ahmad b. Hanbal was one of them. When Shafii became Imam, he got occupied by his position and started exercising his authority. At first he was not favorably disposed towards aspirants to Sufism, but after seeing Habib b. Salim Rai and obtaining his association, he continued to seek the truth wherever he went. He said:

إذا رأيت العالم يشتغل بالرخص فليس يجيء منه شيء

"When you see a Religious Scholar indulging to bring ease in *Shariat*, no good thing will come from him,"

Ulama (Religious Scholars) are the leaders of all classes of men, and no one may take priority over them in any matter, and the way of Truth cannot be traversed without precaution and the utmost self-mortification. To seek indulgences in divinity is the act of those who flee from self-mortification and prefer easing for themselves. To seek indulgences is the work of ordinary people and that too preserving themselves within the bounds of *Shariat*, but the elects practice self-mortification to feel the fruit thereof in their hearts. *Ulama* are among the elects, and if they are satisfied to behave like ordinary people, nothing good will come from them. Moreover, to seek indulgences is to think lightly of Allah's commandment, and *Ulama* are the friends of Allah, and a friend does not think lightly and try to seek easiness in the command of a friend neither he under estimates the command of a friend and show any relaxation in executing it.

One of the *Sufi* Sheikh related that one night he dreamed of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked him: "O Apostle of Allah, a tradition has come down to me from thee that Allah hath upon the earth saints of diverse rank."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that the relater of the tradition had transmitted it correctly, and in response to the Sheikh's request that he might see one of these holy men, he said: "Muhammad b. Idris is one of them."

21. Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (may Allah have mercy on him)

Sheikh of *Sunnah*, vanquisher of the religious innovations Abu Abdullah Ahmad b. Hanbal was distinguished by devoutness and piety, and was the guardian of the Traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Both *Ulama* and *Sufis* of all sects regard him as blessed. He was associated with great Sheikhs, such as Dhu al-Nun, Bashr Hafi, Sari Saqati, Maruf Karkhi, and others. His *karamat* (miracles) were manifest and his intelligence sound. The doctrines attributed to him today by certain anthropomorphist are inventions and forgeries. He was above from all such distortions. He had a firm belief in the principles of religion, and his faith was approved by all the religious scholars.

When the *Mutazilites* came into power at Baghdad, they wished to obtain (under duress) from him a confession that the Quran was a creation. He was a feeble old man at that time, but they tightened his hands on the back, put him to the rack and flogged him one thousand lashes. In spite of all that he did not say that the Quran was a creation. While he was undergoing punishment his *izar* (trouser string) got untied. His hands were fettered, but miraculously two hands appeared and tied his *izar*. Seeing this miraculous evidence, they let him go. He died of the wounds inflicted on that occasion. Shortly before his death people asked what he had to say about those who flogged him. He answered:

"What should I have to say? They flogged me for Allah's sake, thinking that I was wrong and that they were right. I will not claim redress from them for mere blows at the Resurrection."

He is the author of lofty sayings on ethics. When questioned on any point relating to practice he would answer the question himself, but if it was a point of mystical theory he would refer the questioner to Bashr Hafi. One day a person questioned him about *ikhlas* (sincerity). He replied:

"*Ikhlas* (sincerity) to escape from the cankers of one's actions," i.e. let your actions be free from ostentation and hypocrisy and self-interest.

The questioner then asked about *tawakul* (trust in Allah). Ahmad replied:

"To have confidence in Allah, that He will provide your daily bread."

The man then asked about *rida* (acquiescence). He replied: "*Rida* (acquiescence) is to commit your affairs to Allah."

Finally he asked about *mahabat* (love). Ahmad said that questioner might ask that from Bashr Hafi, for he would not answer while Bashr was alive.

Ahmad b. Hanbal throughout remained exposed to persecution. During his life, he faced the attacks of *Mutazilites* and after his death by the suspicion of sharing the views of the anthropomorphist. Even *Sunnis* (orthodox Muslims) were ignorant of his true state and held him suspect. But he is clear of all that is alleged against him.

22. Ahmad b. Abi Hawari (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. Abi al-Hawari was like a sun of his time and a triumphant over affliction of *nafs* (lower soul). He was one of the most eminent of the Syrian Sheikhs and was praised by all the leading *Sufis*. Junaid said that Ahmad was the sweet basil of Syria. His discourses on different topics of Sufism are of very high quality, fine and subtle. He is referrer of many Hadith. He was the resort of all and people used to seek his guidance on many issues. He was the disciple of Abu Suleiman Durani, and associate of Sufyan b. Uyayna, Marwan b. Muawiya and Abu Abdullah Binaji. He spiritually benefited from all of them. He had been a wandering devotee. He said:

الدنيا مذيلة و مجمع الكلاب و اقل من الكلاب من عكف عليها فان الكلب ياخذ منها حاجة و
ينصرف عنها و المحب لا يذول عنها ولا يتركها بحال

"This world is a heap of rubbish and a place of dogs and one who lingers there is worse than a dog, for a dog takes what he wants from it and goes, but the lover of the world never gets satisfied and neither he likes leaving it at any time."

Highly esteemed Sheikh named the world as heap of rubbish and its inhabitants worse than dogs, for dogs leave the heap once they have fulfilled their desire but lovers of the world always remain in the process of accumulating worldly gains and keep on sitting over them like a snake and remain dipped in its love. Renunciation of the world is the delight of the friends of Allah.

Initially he learned religious doctrines and achieved the highest rank of Imam, but afterwards he threw all his books

into the river and said, "نعم الدليل انت واما الاشتغال بالدليل بعد الوصول محال" you were excellent logics, but it is impossible to occupy one's self with logic after one has reached the goal."

The logic is needed only so long as the disciple is on the way to reach his goal. When he is admitted in the presence of the Truth then methods and routes are worthless. The Sheikhs have said that Ahmad did this in the state of *sukr* سكر (intoxication). In the mystic Path he who says that he has reached to his destination, has gone astray. Since reaching to destination is to refrain from reaching; occupation is (superfluous) trouble, and freedom from occupation is idleness, and in either case the principle of union is non-existence, for both occupation and its opposite are human attributes. Union depends on the Eternal Will and providence of Allah, by which Allah blesses the Man with righteousness and it is not attainable in one's occupation and idleness. Therefore, there are no principles laid down and rules to get His union and terms like nearness and neighborhood have no link with him. A man is united to Allah when He holds him in honor, and is separated from Him when He holds him in contempt.

I, Ali b. Uthman al- Jullabi, say that possibly that eminent Sheikh in using the word "وصول" *wusul* (union) might have meant "discovery of the way to Allah", for the way to Allah is not found in books and when the way is clear before one no bookish explanation is necessary. There is no need of any expression or speech when one gets obvious way. It is only needed until the desired object is hidden, but when the object is manifest then expression loses its worth. He who attains true knowledge has no use of speech, and even less of books. Sheikhs such like Abu Said b. Fadl b. Muhammad al-Mehni and some formal *Sufis* also acted in the similar manner. Some formal *Sufis* followed their suit whose only object was to gratify their insolence and ignorance, whereas, the aim of those noble Sheikhs was nothing else but the desire of severing all worldly ties and making their hearts empty of all save Allah. This however, is the initial stage of *sukr* (intoxication) and in Sufism, is just a childish fervor. Those in state of fixity are not veiled (from Allah) by the whole universe, how then few pieces of paper be veil for them. When heart has pronounced the world then what value paper carries before them? It may be said that the destruction of a book

signifies the impossibility of expressing the real meaning (of an idea). In that case the same impossibility should be predicted of the tongue, because spoken words are no better than written ones. I imagine that Ahmad b. Abi al-Hawari, finding no corroborator in his fit of ecstasy, wrote down an explanation of his feelings on pieces of paper, and having amassed a large quantity, did not regard them as suitable to be divulged and accordingly cast them into the water. It is also possible that he had collected many books, which diverted him from his devotional practices, and that he got rid of them for this reason.

23. Abu Hamid Ahmad b. Khadruya al-Balkhi (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was leader of *Sufis* and an eminent Sheikh of Khurasan. He was famed for his excellent state, nobility and honor. He adopted the path of blame and used to wear soldier's dress. His wife Fatima, daughter of the Amir of Balkh, was also of lofty standing on the path of Sufism. When she desired to repent (of her former life), she sent a message to Ahmad bidding him to ask her in marriage from her father. Ahmad did not pay any heed to the message. After some time, she sent another message admonishing him that she did not consider him that type who closes the way of the Truth; be a guide and not a creator of hurdles for those who are the seekers of the way of Truth. Ahmad asked her father for marriage with her. He married Fatima to him with a hope that marriage might be blessed one. After marriage, she totally renounced the world and along with her husband adopted seclusion.

She accompanied Ahmad when he went to visit Bayazid. When they reached to him Fatima removed her veil and talked to Bayazid without any embarrassment. It looked very odd to Ahmad and he ridiculously asked her that why she had behaved so disrespectfully before the Sheikh. She replied:

"Because you are my natural spouse, but Bayazid is my religious consort; I have worldly relations with you but with Bayazid relation is of the way to Allah and the proof is that he has no need of my society, whereas to you it is necessary."

She continued to discuss with Bayazid with same boldness, until one day Bayazid observed that her hands were stained

with henna. He asked her why she had applied henna on her hands. She replied:

"O Bayazid, so long as you did not see my hands and the henna I was at my ease with you, but now your eye has fallen on my hands therefore, our companionship has become unlawful."

Then Ahmad and Fatima came to Nishapur and abode there. The people of Nishapur were well pleased with Ahmad. When Yahya b. Maud al-Razi passed through Nishapur on his way from Rayy to Balkh, Ahmad wished to give him a banquet. He consulted with his wife Fatima as to what all would be required for the feast. She told him to procure some quantity of oxen and sheep, sweet herbs, condiments, candles, and perfumes, and added twenty donkeys. Ahmad asked the reason for including donkeys. She said when a noble comes as guest to the house of a noble the dogs of the area have also the right to the feast; therefore, these donkeys will be slaughtered for them. Bayazid said of her:

"Whoever wishes to see a man disguised in women's clothes should have a look at Fatima!"

About Ahmad Abu Hafs Haddad said, "But for Ahmad b. Khadruya generosity would not have been displayed."

He has lofty sayings and faultless utterances to his credit. He is the author of famous works in every branch of ethics and of brilliant discourses on mysticism. He said:

الطريق واضح والحق لا عُدَّ والداعي قد اسمع فيما التحير بعدها الامن العمي

"The way is manifest and the truth is clear, and the caller has uttered his call; after this astonishment and distraction is what else than blindness,"

It is wrong to seek the way, since the way to Allah is like the blazing sun; rather find thyself that where are thou, when thou have found thyself, thou have found the way. The Truth is too manifest to admit His being sought.

He said, "استر عِزَّ فقرِكَ" hide the glory of thy poverty," do not say to people that you are a dervish, lest your secret be discovered, for it is a great grace bestowed on you by Allah.

A dervish invited a rich man to a repast in the month of Ramadan. Incidentally there was nothing in his house except a

loaf of dry bread. On returning home the rich man sent to him a purse of gold coins but the dervish did not accept it and sent it back, saying, that this serves me right for revealing my secret to one like you. The genuineness of his poverty led him to act thus.

24. Abu Turab Askar b. al-Hussein al-Nasfi (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was the most eminent and chief Sheikh of Khurasan. He was celebrated for his generosity, asceticism, and devoutness. He performed many miracles, and experienced marvelous adventures in the desert and elsewhere. He was one of the most noted travelers among the *Sufis*, and used to cross the deserts in complete disengagement from worldly things. His death took place in the desert of Basra. After many years had elapsed he was found standing erect with his face towards the *Qibla*, shriveled up, with a bucket in front of him and a staff in his hand; and the wild beasts had not come near him.

It is related that he said:

الفقير قوته ما وجد ولياسه ماستر ومسكنه حيث نزل

"The food of the dervish is what he finds, and his clothing is what covers him, and his dwelling place is wherever he stops."

To have self desire for these three things is a state of distraction while the whole world is slave of these things. This is the practical aspect of the matter, but in a mystical sense the food of the dervish is ecstasy, his clothing is piety, and his dwelling place is Unseen, for Allah hath said,

وَأَلَوْ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا

"(And Allah's Message is): If they (the Pagans) had (only) remained on the (right) Way, We should certainly have bestowed on them Rain in abundance." (Q 72:16), and

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوْآتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا وَلِبَاسُ النُّقَىٰ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ

"O ye children of Adam! We have bestowed upon you to cover your shame, as well as to be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness - that is the best." (Q 7:26).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"الفقر وطن الغيب poverty is to dwell in the Unseen."

Therefore, the food of aspirant following the path of *Faqr* (poverty) is ecstasy, his clothing piety and mortification, and his dwelling is with the Unseen (Truth). *Faqr* (poverty) has a straight Path, and its devotions are clear and this is the ultimate highest degree.

25. Yahya b. Maud al-Razi (may Allah have mercy on him)

Eloquent orator of love and sincerity, elegance of Sufism Abu Zakarriya Yahya b. Maud al-Razi was man of good nature and lofty state. He was perfectly grounded in the true theory of hope in Allah (*raja*), so that Husri said:

"Allah created two Yahya, one a prophet and the other a saint. Yahya b. Zakarriya (may blessings of Allah be on him) trod the path of fear in such a way that all seekers of the Truth seeing his state of fear got despaired of their salvation, while Yahya b. Maud trod the path of *raja* (hope) so that he surpassed all the seekers of the Path of hope."

On a question that the state of Yahya b. Zakarriya (may blessings of Allah be on him) was well known, but what was the state of Yahya b. Maud. Husri said that to his knowledge, he never came across with the state of ignorance, and he never committed any greater sin. In the practice of devotion he showed an intense perseverance which was beyond the power of anyone else.

One of his disciples said to him: "O Sheikh, thy *maqam* (station) is the *maqam* of *raja* (hope), but thy practice is the practice of those who fear." Yahya answered: "Know, my son, that to abandon the service of Allah is to go astray."

Fear and hope are two pillars of Faith. It is impossible that by following either pillar of Faith, one should fall into error because the seeker of the Path of Fear carryout devotion for the fear that he might not go astray from his *maqam* (station) and the seeker of the Path of *raja* carryout devotion with an hope of attaining union (with Allah). Without devotion neither fear nor hope can be truly felt, but when degree of devotion is achieved then fear and hope would be called devotion and metaphors are useless where devotion is required.

Yahya is the author of many books, fine sayings, and original precepts. He was the first of the Sheikhs to mount the pulpit after the first four Caliphs. I am very found of his sayings,

which are delicately molded and pleasant to the ear and subtle in substance and profitable in devotion. He said:

الدنيا دار الاشغال والاخرة دار الاهوال ولا يذال العبد بين الاشغال و الاحوال حتي يستقر به القرار
اما الي الجنة و اما الي النار

"This world is an abode of occupation and activities and the next world is an abode of fear, and man always remains amidst activities and fear, until he finds rest either in Paradise or in Hell-fire." Blessed are the souls who save themselves from the worldly activities and fear of the next world by renouncing both and attain union (with Allah)!

He preferred wealth over poverty. Having laden with heavy debts at Rayy, he set out for Khurasan. When he arrived at Balkh, the people of that city detained him. For some time he entertained the people with his discourses and when he set to leave them they gave him hundred thousand dirham. On his way back to Rayy he was attacked by brigands, who seized the whole money. He came in a destitute condition to Nishapur, where he died. He was always honored and held in respect by the people.

26. Abu Hafs Umar b. Muslimat al-Nishapuri al-Hadad (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was the grand Sheikh of Khurasan, and a wonderful person of Sufism. He was guide and leader of *Sufis* and is praised by all the Sheikhs. He was associated with Abu Abdullah Bawardi and Ahmad b. Khadruya. Shah Shuja came from Kirman to visit him but he had already left for Baghdad to meet the Sheikhs there. Since he did not know Arabic, and when he reached Baghdad his disciples said to one another that it would be great awkwardness for the grand Sheikh of Khurasan to use an interpreter to exchange views with the Sheikhs of Baghdad. They came to Shuniziyya Mosque. All the Sheikhs of Baghdad including Junaid gathered there. He conversed with them in such elegant Arabic that they felt amazed of his eloquence. They questioned him about generosity. He asked that each one present there should declare what it was. Junaid said, الفتوة عندي ترك الروية واسقاط النسبة" in my opinion generosity consists in not regarding your generosity and in not referring it to yourself."

Abu Hafs replied that outwardly well Sheikh has spoken! But in my opinion generosity, "اداء الانصاف و ترك مطالبة الانصاف" consists in doing justice and in not demanding justice."

Junaid said to his disciples: "Rise! For Abu Hafs has surpassed Adam and all his descendants (in generosity)."

He had an interesting tale about his conversion. His heart was captivated by a slave girl. His friends suggested him to seek help from a Jew magician. He went to see him at his dwelling place Nishapur and sought his help in winning the heart of that girl. The Jew suggested him not to perform prayer for forty days, and refrain from praising God or do any good deed or form any good intention; he would then devise a magical mean whereby Abu Hafs would gain his desire. Abu Hafs complied with these instructions, and after forty days the Jew made a talisman as he had promised, but it proved ineffectual. He pointed out to Hafs that undoubtedly he had done some good deed during these last forty days. Abu Hafs replied that he remembered no good deed which he committed inwardly or outwardly during those past forty days except that one day he had removed a stone lying on the road lest some one might stumble on it. The Jew said to him, "do not offend that God who has not let such a small act of yours be wasted though you have neglected His commands for forty days." Abu Hafs repented, and the Jew also became a Muslim.

After repentance, Abu Hafs adopted the profession of blacksmith until he went to Baward and took the vows of discipleship to Abu Abdullah Bawardi. One day, after his return to Nishapur, when he was sitting in his shop, he saw a blind man reciting Quran in the bazaar. Hafs became so absorbed in listening recitation that he put his hand into the fire and without using the pincer, drew out a piece of molten iron from the furnace. On seeing that, the shocked apprentice shouted on him to look for his hand. When Abu Hafs got recovered to himself he left that profession and never returned to that shop. He said that he left work and when he returned to it the work left him and then he never returned to that again.

Because when anyone leaves a thing by one's own act and effort, the leaving of it is no better than the taking of it. The basis of this is that all effortful acts are cause of calamity, and the acts which flows from the Unseen without effort carries value. When one conceives that the act takes place because of

his own effort, he loses the subtlety of reality. Man has not been empowered to take or deny anything, but only rest with Allah. When man possesses something, in fact it is given by Allah and when he loses something its Allah Who gets wasted that thing from him. Therefore man only takes what Allah has given or leaves what Allah has taken away. Though a devotee should strive a thousand years to win the favor of Allah, it would not be equal to that single moment when Allah blesses His favors on him, for, everlasting prosperity is bound with the Eternity and everlasting delight is bound with felicity of the past, and man has no means of escape except by the unalloyed bounty of Allah. Blessed is the one then from whose state the Causer has removed all secondary causes.

27. Abu Saleh Hamdun b. Ahmad b. Umara al-Qassar
(may Allah have mercy on him)

He belonged to the ancient Sheikhs, and was one of those who were scrupulously devout. He attained the highest rank in jurisprudence and divinity, in which he was a follower of Thawri. In Sufism he was a disciple of Abu Turab Nakhshabi and Ali Nasrabadi. His writings on ethical practices consist of symbols and concealment and on mortification delicate phrases. When he became renowned as a theologian, the Imams and notables of Nishapur urged him to mount the pulpit and preach to the people. He said that it was not appropriate for him to preach. The people asked the reason for his refusal on which he said:

"My heart has not yet been got rid of the desire of the world and its honor, therefore, my sermon will not be beneficial to the audience and will mark no good impression on their hearts. To speak unprofitable words is to despise theology and ridicule the *Shariat* (religious law). Speech is permissible to him alone whose silence is injurious to religion, and whose speaking would remove the injury."

On being asked why the sermons of the early Muslims were more effective and appealing to men's hearts than those of his contemporaries, he replied:

"Because they discoursed for the glory of Islam and the salvation of souls and the satisfaction of the Merciful Allah, whereas we discourse for the glory of ourselves and the quest of worldly gain and the favor of mankind."

Whoever speaks in accordance with Allah's will and by Divine impulsion, his words have a force and vigor that makes an impression on the heart of the listener. And one who sermons to meet selfish desires, his words would be weak and tame and audience will get no benefit from him. To remain silent for such person is better than to deliver sermon. It is better for the man of Truth to refrain from the jugglery of the words.

To my opinion, the Sheikh uttered all this to keep the people unaware of his state and to deny worldly honor.

28. Mansur b. Ammar (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu Alsari Mansur b. Ammar al-Marori was an honored *Sufi* who was well acquainted with the hazards of heart. He was a reputed Sheikh and a leader of *Sufis*. He belonged to the school of Iraq, but was approved by the people of Khurasan. His sermons were unequalled for beauty of language and elegance of exposition. He was learned in all the branches of divinity, traditions, sciences, principles, and practices. Some aspirants to Sufism exaggerate his merits beyond measure.

He said:

سبحان من جعل قلوب العارفين اوعية الذكر و قلوب الذاهدين اوعية التوكل و قلوب المتوكلين
اوعية الرضا و قلوب الفقراء اوعية القناعة و قلوب اهل الدنيا اوعية الطمع

"Glory be to Him who have made the hearts of Gnostic vessels of *dikr* ذكّر (remembrance of Allah), and the hearts of ascetics vessels of *tawakul* توكل (trust in Allah), and the hearts of *mutawakkilin* متوكلين (who keeps trust on Allah) vessels of acquiescence, and the hearts of dervishes palace of contentment, and the hearts of worldlings vessels of covetousness!"

It is worth considering that Allah has placed in every limb of the body and in every sense, a homogeneous quality, e.g. quality of holding in hands, quality of walking in feet, in eyes quality of seeing and in ear quality of hearing, but He has placed diverse qualities and different desires in the hearts of each individual. Therefore, some hearts are the seats of knowledge, some of error, some of contentment, while some of covetousness, and so on. Hence the marvels of Divine actions are manifested in none more clearly than in human hearts.

He said:

الناس ر جلان عارف بنفسه فشغله في المجاهدة والرياضة و عارف بربه فشغله بخدمة وعبادة
ومرضاة

"All mankind is of two types; the man who knows himself, and who is occupied in self-mortification and discipline, and the man who knows his Lord, and keeps him busy to serve, worship and please Him." Accordingly, the worship of the former is abstinence, while the worship of the latter is sovereignty. The former practices devotion in order that he may attain a high degree, but the practice of latter is far above than such desires. What a vast difference between the two! One subsists in self-mortification, the other in contemplation.

He also said:

الناس ر جلان مفتقر الي الله فهو في اعلي الدرجات علي لسان الشريعة و اخر لا يري الافتقار لما
علم من فراغ الله من الخلق والرزق والاجل والحياة والسعادة والشقاوة فهو في افتقاره اليه
واستغناؤه به

"There are two classes of men:

- those who have need of Allah and they hold the highest rank from the standpoint of the *Shariat* – and
- those who has not witnessed indigence, for they know that Allah has predestined their creation, livelihood, death, life, happiness and misery: they need Allah alone, and having Him are independent of all else."

The former through seeing their own need, are veiled from seeing the Divine providence, whereas the latter, through not seeing their own need, are unveiled and independent. The former enjoys felicity, but the latter enjoys the Giver of felicity. The former are seeker of booty and they are poor although worldly they look rich. The later who are the lover of the Giver, are rich in His presence although worldly they might be poor.

29. Abu Abdullah Ahmad b. al-Asim al-Antaki (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was Imam of those following the path of acquiescence and was lauded by all the *Sufis*. He is counted among the pillars and Imams of Sufism. He was well versed on knowledge of

Shariat and an expert on principals and derivatives, and ethics. He lived to a great age and associated with the ancient Sheikhs, and was acquainted with those who belonged to the third generation after the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was a contemporary of Bashr and Sari, and a disciple of Harith Muhasibi. He had seen Fudayl and consorted with him. He was praised by all. His work on Sufism and its different branches was of immense stature and his sayings and signs are of very subtle nature. He said:

انفع الفقرا ما كنت به متجملا و به راضيا

"The most beneficial poverty is that which you regard as honorable, and with which you are well pleased."

The honor of the creature consists in the ownership of causes, but the honor of the dervish consists in denying causes and affirming the Causer, and in referring everything to Him, and in being well pleased with His decrees. Poverty is the non-existence of causes, whereas wealth is the existence of it. The one independent of causes is with Allah, and one who is attached to causes is with himself. Therefore, causes involve the state of being veiled (from Allah), while their absence involves the state of unveiledness and wealth of both the world lies in unveiledness and acquiescence and the evil of the universe lies in veiledness. This indicates superiority of poverty over wealth.

30. Abu Muhammad Abdullah b. Khubaiq (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was an ascetic and scrupulously devout. He has related trustworthy traditions. He followed the doctrine of Thawri in jurisprudence, as well as in the practice and theory of divinity. He consorted with many associates of Thawri. His discourses on Sufism were of colossal value. He said:

من اراد ان يكون حيا في حياته فلا يسكن الطمع في قلبه

"Whoever desires to live hearty life, let him not admit covetousness to dwell in his heart," because the covetous man is dead in the toils of his covetousness, which is like a seal on his heart, and the sealed heart is dead. Blessed are the hearts that are dead to all save Allah and lives through Him. The reason is that Allah created disgrace and covetousness is

disgrace and He created glory and His *dikr* (praise) is the glory of men's hearts. He said:

خلق الله تعالى القلوب مساكن الذكر فصارت مساكن الشهوات ولا يمحو الشهوات من القلوب
الاخوف مزعج اوشوق مقلق

"Allah honored the men's hearts to be the palace of His praise, but they having association of *nafs* (lower soul) became the resting place of lust. Now nothing can clear them of lust except an agitating fear or a restless passion."

Fear and passion are the two pillars of faith and when heart is the palace of *dikr*, and faith is settled there, praise and contentment accompany it, not covetousness and heedlessness. That's why, neither the pious is attracted to lust, nor does he follow the selfish desires. Lust and covetousness are the result of fear and heart is stranger from fear of Allah and faith. The faith has intimacy with the Truth and is fearful of all other than Truth. It is said, "الطماع مستوحش منه" everyone shuns away from covetous"

31. Junaid Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him)

Sheikh of Sheikhs of Sufism and Imam of Imams of Shariat Abu al-Qasim al-Junaid b. Muhammad b. al-Junaid al-Qawarari al-Baghdadi was celebrity of externalists and spiritualist *Sufis*. He was perfect in every branch of science, and spoke with authority on theology, jurisprudence, and ethics. He was a follower of Thawri. His sayings are lofty and his inwardly state perfect, so that all *Sufis* unanimously acknowledged his leadership. Junaid was disciple of Sari Saqati who was his maternal uncle.

One day Sari was asked whether the rank of a disciple is ever higher than that of his spiritual Sheikh. He replied in affirmation and said there was manifest proof of that as rank of Junaid was above him. It was the humility and insight of Sari that caused him to say that, as no one can have insight of the one who is higher in rank than him but he may have the insight of one who is lower in rank than him. Such utterance on his part clearly indicates that he saw Junaid in higher rank than him but when he saw him, he saw him at a higher rank but in reality it was a lower rank.

It is well known that when disciples requested Junaid to discourse them so their hearts were benefited and gain tranquility, but Junaid refused saying that as long as his Sheikh (Sari) was alive, he would not discourse. One night he dreamed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him,

"O Junaid, speak to the people, your discourse would be means of delight and tranquility for the people. Allah hath made your words the means of saving a multitude of mankind."

When he awoke the thought occurred to him that his rank was superior to that of Sari, since the Prophet (peace be upon him) had commanded him to discourse. At day break Sari sent a disciple to Junaid with the following message:

"You would not discourse to your disciples when they urged you to do so, and you rejected the intercession of the Sheikhs of Baghdad and my personal entreaty. Now that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has commanded you, obey his orders."

Junaid said that the fancy immediately went out of his head and he perceived that Sari was acquainted with his outwardly and inwardly thoughts in all circumstances, and his rank was higher than his, since he was familiar with his secret thoughts, whereas he was ignorant of his state. He went to Sari and repented and begged his pardon. He asked him how he knew that he had dreamed of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Sari answered that he dreamed of Allah, who told him that he had sent the Apostle to bid you to preach.

This anecdote contains a clear indication that spiritual Sheikhs are in every case acquainted with the inwardly experiences of their disciples.

Junaid said:

كلام الانبياء نباء عن الحضور و كلام الصديقين اشارة عن المشاهدات

"The speech of the prophets gives information concerning presence (حضور), while the speech of the siddiqin (saints) mentions contemplation (مشاهدات)."

The information is confirmed by sight and contemplation by meditation. Information is disseminated of actual event, whereas allusion involves reference to another thing. Hence the perfection and ultimate goal of the saints is the beginning

of the state of the prophets. The distinction between prophet and saint, and the superiority of the former to the latter, is clear, except that two heretical sects declare the saints above the prophets in excellence.

Junaid said that once he desired to see *Iblis* (Satan). One day, when he was standing in the mosque, he saw an old man came through the door and turned his face towards him. When he saw him, horror seized Junaid. When he came near Junaid asked him: "Who are you? I cannot bear to look at you, or think of you."

He answered, "I am he whom you desired to see."

Junaid exclaimed, "O accursed one! What hindered you from bowing down to Adam?"

He answered, "O Junaid, how can you imagine that I should have bowed down to other than Allah?"

I was amazed at his saying this, but a secret voice whispered: "Say to him, you are a liar. Had you considered yourself His servant you would not have transgressed His command."

Iblis heard the voice in my heart. He cried out and said, "by God, you have burnt me!" and vanished.

This narration proves of the safety and piety of Junaid as Allah preserves His saints in all circumstances from the guile of Satan.

One of Junaid's disciples got annoyed with him. He thought that he had achieved some rank and had no need of Junaid's teaching anymore. One day he came to Junaid with the intention of testing him. Junaid through insight got aware of his intention. In reply to his question Junaid said: "Do you want a formal or spiritual answer?"

The disciple said: "Both"

Junaid said: "The formal answer is that if you had tested yourself you would not have needed to test me. The spiritual answer is that I depose you from your saintship."

The disciple's face immediately turned black. He cried, "the delight of faith is gone from my heart," and got busy in repentance and abandoned his foolish self-conceit. Junaid said to him, "did not you know that Allah's saint possess mysterious powers? You cannot endure their blows."

He cast a breath at the disciple, who forthwith resumed his former rank and repented of criticizing the Sheikhs.

32. Abu al-Hasan Nuri (may Allah have mercy on him)

The king of *Sufis*, innocent of affliction of extravagance Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Nuri was excellent in his conduct, eloquent in his speech and holder of an eminent position in mortification. He is the founder of a particular doctrine in Sufism and group of Sufis known as Nuris is his followers.

The whole body of aspirants to Sufism is composed of twelve sects, of which ten are approved while the remaining two are condemned. The approved are:

Muhasibis,	Qassarais,	Tayfuris,
Junaidis,	Nuris,	Sahlis,
Hakimis,	Kharrazis,	Khafifis,
Sayyaris,		

All these assert the truth and belong to the mass of orthodox Muslims. The two condemned sects are,

- Firstly, the *Hululis*, who derive their name from the doctrine of incarnation and incorporation? The *Salami* and *Mushiah* sects are also connected with them.
- Secondly, the *Hallajis*, who have abandoned the *Shariat* and have adopted heresy. *Ibahatis* and *Farisis* are closely related to them.

I shall include in this book a chapter on the twelve sects and shall explain their different doctrines and will highlight difference among them, so that one is fully acquainted about them.

Nuri took a praiseworthy course in rejecting the flattery and indulgence and in being diligent in self-mortification. Nuri related that he went to Junaid and found him presiding the gathering. He said to him, "O Abu al-Qasim, you have concealed the truth from them and they have put you in the place of honor; but I gave them the advise and they have pelted me with stones." Because flattery is in compliance with one's desire and advice is averse to it. It is the tendency of mankind to dislike all which is against their wishes and like whatever is in accord to their desires.

Nuri was the companion of Junaid and the disciple of Sari. He had been associated with many Sheikhs, and had met Ahmad

b. Abi al-Hawari. He is the author of subtle precepts and fine sayings on various branches of the mystical knowledge. He said:

الجمع بالحق تفرقة عن غيره و التفرقة عن غيره جمع به

"Union with the Truth is separation from all else, and separation from all else is union with Him,"

One gets independent of the care and thoughts of the world by associating one's heart and mind to Allah. Once man's separation from creation is fully grounded then he attains association with the Truth and once he is fully associated with the Truth, the dependability of the creation is straightened, as two opposites can not exist side by side.

Once, Nuri stood in his house at one place for three days and nights. During this period he never moved away from his place or ceased to wail. Junaid went to see him and said, "O Abu al-Hasan, if you have seen that crying aloud to Allah is of any benefit, tell me, in order that I too might cry aloud but if you know that it benefits naught, surrender yourself to acquiescence in Allah's will, in order that your heart may rejoice." Nuri stopped his practice and wailing and said to Junaid that he was a good teacher.

Nuri said:

اعز الاشياء في زماننا شيان عالم يعمل بعلمه و عارف ينطق عن حقيقة

"The two rarest things in our time are learned man who practices what he knows and a Gnostic who speaks from the reality of his state," i.e. both learning and gnosis are appreciable, since knowledge without practice is not learning, and gnosis is not gnosis unless it has reality. Although Sheikh referred to his own age, but these things are rare at all times, and they are rare even today also. Anyone who should occupy himself in seeking for learned men and Gnostics would waste his time and would not find them. Therefore, he should get engaged to search himself in order that he might see learning everywhere, and should turn to Allah in order that he might see gnosis everywhere. The learned and Gnostics are a rare phenomena and rare is achievable only with determined efforts. It is mere wasting of time to look for that thing, which is difficult to be conceived. Learning and gnosis should be sought from ownself and similarly one should create practice and reality by ownself.

Nuri also said:

من عقل الأشياء بالله فرجوه في كل شيء الي الله

"Who regards things as determined by Allah and sees His splendor in everything, his focus remains towards Allah, for existence of ownership lies with Owner." Therefore, Gnostic finds rest in regarding the Creator, not from creation, whereas they would always be in tribulation if they considered things to be the causes of actions. To look at the created things is polytheism, for a cause is not self-subsistent, but depends on the Causer. When they turn to Him they are escaped from trouble.

33. Abu Uthman Said Hairi (may Allah have mercy on him)

The leader of the ancients and successor of his predecessors Abu Uthman Said b. Ismail al-Hairi is one of the most eminent *Sufis* of past time and possessed a unique personality and was respected by everyone. At first he was associated with Yahya b. Maud, and then he consorted for some time with Shah Shuja Kirmani, and accompanied him to Nishapur on a visit to Abu Hafs. He remained with Abu Hafs till end of his life. He related his own account as follow:

Since childhood I was seeking the Truth, and the externalists inspired me with a feeling of abhorrence. I perceived that there beside outward practice of *Shariat* which people were commonly following, it had an inward mystery concealed under its superficial forms. On reaching adult age, one day I happened to hear a discourse by Yahya b. Maud and I found out that I was right in my thoughts and have got my objective. I got associated with him. But in the mean time I heard a lot from my friends about Shah Shuja Kirmani and I felt a desire to visit him. Accordingly, I left Rayy and set out for Kirman. Shah Shuja, however, would not admit me to his associates and said:

"You have been nursed in the doctrine of hope (*raja* رجا), as you have been associated with Yahya who occupies the *Maqam* (station) of hope. No one who has imbibed this doctrine can tread the path of purgation, because belief in hope produces sluggishness."

I besought him earnestly, and lamented and stayed at his door for twenty days. At last he admitted me, and I remained

in his society until he took me with him to visit Abu Hafs at Nishapur. On this occasion Shah Shuja was wearing a *quba* (coat). When Abu Hafs saw him he rose from his feet and advanced to meet him, saying, that what he sought in the cloak (*aba*), he had found that in the *quba*.

During our stay at Nishapur I strongly desired to get associated with Abu Hafs, but Shah Shuja's dignity and pomp restrained me from devoting my self to attendance of Abu Hafs. I prayed to Allah to make it possible for me to enjoy the society of Abu Hafs without hurting the feelings of Shah Shuja. Abu Hafs was aware of my wishes. When Shah Shuja decided to leave for Kirman, I also dressed myself for the journey, although I was leaving my heart with Abu Hafs. At the time of departure Abu Hafs said intimately to Shah Shuja, that he was pleased with that youth (referring me), let him stay here. Shah Shuja turned to me and said, "Do as the Sheikh bids thee." So I stayed with Abu Hafs and experienced many wonderful things in his company.

Allah caused Abu Uthman to pass through three *maqam* (stations) by means of three Sheikhs and these stations which have been indicated were part of his self. He achieved them through:

- "station" of *raja* (hope) through association with Yahya,
- the "station" of *Ghairat* (jealousy) through association with Shah Shuja, and
- the "station" of *shafqat* (affection) through association with Abu Hafs.

At times an aspirant may need the association of five to six Sheikhs to get to his goal. This sort of association leads to revealing of different spiritual stations by each one of the Sheikhs. But it is better that he should not compare them with his own state and never should measure their station with his own. He should think of their perfection in that station and say that he gained that by having association with them, but they are superior to him. This is more in accord with good manners, for spiritual adepts have nothing to do with "stations" and "states".

Due to Abu Uthman Sufism flourished in Nishapur and Khurasan. He consorted with Junaid, Ruwaym, Yusaf b. al-Hussein, and Muhammad b. Fadl al-Balkhi. No Sheikh ever benefited as much spiritual advantage from his spiritual guides

as he did. The people of Nishapur set up a pulpit that he might discourse to them on Sufism. He is the author of sublime treatises on various branches of Sufism. He said:

حق لمن اعزه الله بالمعرفة ان لا يذله بالمعصية

"It behooves on whom Allah have honored with gnosis not to dishonor himself by disobedience to Allah."

This refers to actions acquired by man to his continual effort to keep the commandments of Allah. If we consider other meanings, it is worthy of Allah not to dishonor by disobedience anyone whom He has honored with gnosis. Gnosis is Allah's gift and disobedience is man's act. It is impossible that one who is honored with Allah's gift should be dishonored by his own act. Allah honored Adam with His *Marifat* (knowledge) and He did not dishonor him on account of his sin.

34. Abu Abdullah Ahmad b. Yahya (may Allah have mercy on him)

The star of the Path, the lord of love Abu Abdullah Ahmad b. Yahya b. al-Jalla was leader of the path and guide of his age. He had possessed excellent nature and laud conduct. He was companion of Junaid and was also associated with Abu al-Hasan Nuri and many other great Sheikhs. His sayings and signs on reality and Sufism are of very subtle nature. He said:

همة العارف الي مولاه فلم يعطف علي شيء سواه

"The mind of the Gnostic is fixed on his Lord; he does not pay attention to anything else," because the Gnostic possesses nothing except gnosis, and since gnosis is the whole capital of his heart, his thoughts are entirely bent on vision (of Allah), for distraction of thought is the cause of sorrowfulness which keeps one back from Allah.

He said that one day he saw a beautiful Magian boy. He was amazed by his beauty and stood still before him. In the mean time Junaid passed by me. He said to him, "O master, will Allah burn a face like this in Hell-fire?" Junaid answered:

"O my son, this is a trick of the *nafs* (lower soul), which has engrossed you in this thought. If you look with due consideration, the same marvel is existent in every atom of the universe. You will soon be punished for this negligence."

As soon as Junaid turned away from him, he immediately forgot the Quran. And it did not come back to his memory until for years he had implored Allah to help him and had repented of his sin. Now he dare not pay heed to any created object or waste his time by looking at things.

35. Abu Muhammad Ruwaym b. Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him)

The non-parallel of his age, Imam of his time Abu Muhammad Ruwaym b. Ahmad was Sheikh and Imam of *Sufis*. He was an intimate friend of Junaid but in Jurisprudence he followed Dawud. He was deeply versed in the interpretation and reciting of the Quran. He was famed for the loftiness of his state and the exaltedness of his station, and for his journeys in detachment from the world and for his severe austerities.

Towards the end of his life he (to hide his state) accepted the post of *Qadi*, but such was the perfection of his spiritual rank that he was not thereby veiled from Allah. Hence Junaid said, "we are claiming to be free from the world but still occupied (with the world), and Ruwaym is a man occupied (with the world) and still free of it." He wrote several books on Sufism, one of which, entitled *Ghalat al-Wajidin*, deserves particular mention. I am exceedingly fond of it.

One day he was asked that how did he do?" He replied:

كيف حال من دينك هواه وصمته دنياه ليس بصالح تقي ولا يعارف تقي

"What could be the state of that whose religion is his lust and whose thought is (fixed on) on worldly affairs, he is neither a pious man free from people, nor a Gnostic one of Allah's elect?"

He referred to the ills of his *nafs* (lower soul) that is subject to passion and regarded lust as its religion, for *nafs* gives name of faith to personal desires. Sensual people consider faith as following of desires, and for them following of *nafs* is *Shariat* and one who complies with their inclinations, even though he be a heretic, he is a religious person and one who thwarts their desires is irreligious, even though he be the most pious. This is widely spread disease of present time. May Allah save us from associating with any such person!

Ruwaym doubtlessly gave this answer in the light of prevailing conditions at that time or in reference to the inwardly state of the questioner, which he truly diagnosed, or it might be that for the purpose of diagnosing the questioner he referred the state to himself which is a good method of correcting.

36. Abu Yaqub Yusaf b. al-Hussein al-Razi (may Allah have mercy on him)

An unparallel, of high nobility Abu Yaqub Yusaf b. al-Hussein al-Razi was one of the ancient Sheikhs. He was a disciple of Dhu al-Nun, and consorted with a large number of Sheikhs and performed service to all of them.

He said:

اذل الناس الفقير الطمّوع واعزهم المحب المحبوبة

"The meanest of mankind is the covetous dervish and the most honored is he who loves his beloved."

Covetousness renders embarrassment to the dervish in both the worlds, because *faqir* (poor) are already contemptible in the eyes of worldlings, and becomes more disgraceful if they develop any hope on them. Therefore, wealth with honor is far more perfect than poverty with dishonor. Covetousness and lust causes the dervish to incur the charge of sheer falsehood. The lover in the eyes of his beloved considers himself to be the meanest of mankind, since the lover acknowledges himself to be very despicable in comparison with his beloved. This all is because of covetousness and lust and if one refrains from them, repute takes the place of contemptuousness.

So long as Zulaikha desired Yusaf, she became everyday more mean and when she cast desire away, Allah gave beauty and youth back to her. It is an established law that when the lover advances, the beloved retires. If the lover is satisfied with friendship alone, and considers it enough and gets carefree of his beloved, then the beloved would try to get his attraction. In truth, the lover has honor only while he has no desire for union. When the lover desires for union and is unable to achieve, he loses all respect. His love would remain based on mere self desire, unless his love diverts him from all thought of union or separation.

37. Abu al-Hasan Sumnun (may Allah have mercy on him)

The sun of the lovers Abu al-Hasan Sumnun b. Abdullah al-Khawwas was held in great esteem by all the Sheikhs. They called him Sumnun *al-Muhibb* (the Lover), but he called himself Sumnun *al-Kadhdhab* (the Liar). He suffered much persecution from the hands of Ghulam al-Khalil¹⁹. He provided false evidences against him, so that all the Sheikhs were annoyed with him. He was a wicked person who pretended piety and Sufism. He had made himself known to the Caliph and courtiers by his wickedness. He had sold out the religion for worldly gains. Such types of people are present today also. This hypocrite used to speak evil of the Sheikhs and dervishes, to establish his own power in the court and hoping to keep the king away from them so that he might not get blessings from them. Fortunate indeed was Sumnun and his contemporaries of having only one Ghulam Khalil against them whereas in our age there are thousands of such characters for every true spiritualist. There is nothing to worry as vultures have more rights on carrions.

When Sumnun gained eminence and popularity in Baghdad, Ghulam al-Khalil could not digest all that and started intriguing against Sumnun. Incidentally at that time one woman got fallen in love with Sumnun and made marriage proposal to him, which he refused. She went to Junaid, begging him to intervene and force Sumnun to marry her. Junaid also returned her empty handed. Then somehow she reached to Ghulam Khalil and accused Sumnun of having attempted her virtue. He listened eagerly to her slanders, and induced the Caliph to command that Sumnun should be put to death. When the Caliph was about to give the word to the executioner his tongue stuck in his throat. The same night he was told in the dream that his empire would last no longer than Sumnun's life. Next day he asked his pardon and restored him to favor.

Sumnun is the author of lofty sayings, and subtle indications concerning the real nature of love. Once while on his way back from Hijaz, the people of Fayd requested him to discourse to them about this subject. He mounted the pulpit, but while he was speaking he found that people were not much attentive to

¹⁹ Abu Abdallah Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ghalib b. Khalid al-Basri al-Bahili, generally known as Ghulam Khalil died in 275 A.H.

his discourse. Sumnun turned to the lamps and said: "I am speaking to you." Immediately all the lamps collapsed and broke into small bits. He said:

لا يعبر عن شيء إلا بما هو أرق منه و لا شيء أرق من المحبة فيما يعبر عنها

"A thing can be explained only by what is more subtle than itself: there is nothing subtler than love: by what, then, shall love be explained?" It means that love cannot be explained because explanation is an attribute of the explainer whereas love is an attribute of the Beloved, therefore no explanation of its real nature is possible.

38. Shah Shuja al-Kirmani (may Allah have mercy on him)

The king of the Sheikhs, independent from change of states Abu al-Fawaris Shah b. Shuja al-Kirmani was of royal descent and unparallel. He was among the associates of Abu Turab Nakhshabi and he also consorted with many other Sheikhs. Some mention has been made of him in the notice of Abu Uthman al-Hairi. He composed a celebrated treatise on Sufism as well as a book entitled *Mirat al-Hukama* (The mirror of Sages). His sayings are of immense value. He said:

لا هل الفضل فضل مالم يروه فإذا راوه فلا فضل لهم و لاهل الولاية ولاية مالم يروها فإذا راوها فلا ولاية لهم

"The eminent have eminence until they see it, and the saints have saintship until they see it," i.e. whoever regards his eminence loses its reality, and whoever regards his saintship loses its reality, for eminence and saintship are such attributes which cannot be seen and expressed respectively. No one can personally claim eminence or saintship.

His biographers relate that for forty years he never slept; then he fell asleep and dreamed of Allah. He asked:

"O Lord, I was seeking Thee in nightly vigils, but I have found Thee in sleep."

Allah answered:

"O Shah, you have found Me by means of those nightly vigils: if you had not sought Me there, you would not have found Me here."

39. Umru b. Uthman Makki (may Allah have mercy on him)

The pleasure of hearts, the *Nur* (light) of inward Umru b. Uthman al-Makki was one of the principal *Sufis*, and author of celebrated works on the mystical sciences. He became a disciple of Junaid after he had seen Abu Said Kharraz. For short while he was associated with Nibaji also. He was the Imam of his age in theology.

He said:

لا يقع علي كيفية الوجد عبارة لانه سر الله عند المومنين

"Ecstasy does not admit explanation, because it is a secret between Allah and the true believers." Since it is a secret of Allah with the True Believer and it will be no more a secret if he tries to explain it to others. All human power and effort is divorced from the Divine mysteries.

When Umru came to Isfahan, a young boy associated with him. His father was not happy with this union and he made strenuous efforts to stop him which resulted into sickness of young boy. One day the Sheikh along with a party of dervishes came to visit him. The boy begged the Sheikh to bid the *qawal* (singer) to chant a few verses. Sheikh asked the *qawal* who started chanting the following verse:

مالي مرضت فلم يعدني عايد منكم ويمرض عبدكم فا عود

What I care that when I fell ill none of you visited me,
Though I visit your slave when he falls ill?

On hearing this boy got up and suddenly he felt much recovery from his disease and he bid for more chant. So the singer chanted:-

واشد من مرضي علي صدوركم وصدود عبدكم علي شديد

Hindrance from you is graver to me than my sickness;
And for me this hindrance from you is very painful.

The boy felt active and sickness departed from him.

His father permitted him to get associated with the Sheikh and repented of the suspicion which he had harbored in his heart. The young boy became an eminent *Sufi*.

40. Abu Muhammad Sahl b. Abdullah al-Tustari (may Allah have mercy on him)

The owner of the hearts, Abu Muhammad Sahl b. Abdullah al-Tustari was Imam of his time and beloved of all. His austerities were great and his devotions excellent. He has fine sayings on sincerity and the defects of human actions. The formal *Ulama* say that he was whole of *Shariat* and the Truth. This statement is erroneous, for the two things have never been divided. The *Shariat* without Truth and the Truth without *Shariat* are meaningless. Their assertion is founded on the fact that the explanations of this Sheikh are more intelligible and easy to apprehend. As Allah enjoined the *Shariat* and Truth one thing, how is it possible that saints should separate them? If they be taken to separate from each other, one must inevitably be rejected and the other accepted. Rejection of the *Shariat* is heresy, and rejection of the Truth is infidelity and polytheism. When separation between them is made, it not to establish a difference of meaning, but to affirm the Truth, as when it is said: "The words لا اله الا الله there is no God but Allah," are Truth, and the words "محمد رسول الله Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah" are *Shariat*. No one can separate the one from the other without impairing his faith, and it is vain wish to do so.

In short, the *Shariat* is a branch of the Truth and knowledge of Allah is Truth, and obedience to His command is *Shariat*. These formalists deny whatever does not suit their fancy, and it is dangerous to deny one of the fundamental principles of the Way to Allah. Praise be to Allah for the faith which He has given us! Tustari said:

ما طلعت الشمس ولا غربت علي وجه الارض الا وهم جهال بالله الا من يؤثر الله علي نفسه
وروحه ودينه و اخره

"The sun does not rise or sets upon anyone on the face of the earth who is ignorant of the *marifat* (knowledge) of Allah, unless he prefers Allah to his own soul and spirit and to his present and future life,"

If anyone adheres to self-interest, that would be a proof of his ignorance of Allah, because knowledge of Allah demands abandonment of forethought. Abandonment of forethought is resignation, whereas perseverance in forethought arises from ignorance of predestination.

41. Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Fadl al-Balkhi (may Allah have mercy on him)

The light of the eyes of Sheikhs Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Fadl al-Balkhi was very popular among the people of Iraq and Khurasan. He was disciple of Ahmad b. Khadruya. Abu Uthman Hairi had a great affection for him. The religious fanatics forced him to quit Balkh. He went to Samarqand and spent rest of his life there. He said:

اعرف الناس بالله اشد هم مجاهدًا في اومراه واتبعهم لسنة نبيه

"Among the people, one who has most knowledge of Allah is the one who strive the hardest to fulfill His commandments, and follows most closely the *Sunnah* of His Prophet." The nearer is to Allah the more eager is one to fulfill His commandments. And the farther is from Allah the more reluctant one is to follow the *Sunnah* of His Prophet.

He said:

عجبت لمن يقطع البوادي والقفار والمغاور حتي يصل الي بيته و حرمة لان فيه اثار انبياءه كيف لا يقطع نفسه وهواه حتي يصل الي قلبه لان فيه اثار مولاه

"I wonder at that man who crosses deserts and wilderness to reach His House and Sanctuary, because the traces of His prophets are to be found there: but he does not cross his own passions and lusts to reach to his heart, which is the palace of the traces of Lord?"

The heart which is the seat of knowledge of Allah, is more sacred than the Kaba, to which men turn in devotion. Men are ever looking towards the Kaba, but Allah is ever looking towards the heart. Wherever the heart is, my Beloved is there; wherever His decree is, my desire is there, wherever the traces of my prophets are, the eyes of those whom I love are directed there.

42. Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Ali al-Tirmidhi (may Allah have mercy on him)

A mystic who was free of all attributes of humanity. He was perfect in divine knowledge and an Imam of his time. He enjoyed an eminent position amongst the Sheikhs of Sufism. He composed many excellent books which, by their eloquence,

declare the miracles vouchsafed to him, e.g., the *Khatm al-Wilayat*, the *Kitab al-Nahj*, the *Nawadir al-Usul*, and many more books. I adore these works and regard them of very high standard. I hold him in great veneration and am entirely devoted to him. My Sheikh used to praise that Muhammad was a unique jewel that had no like in the whole world.

He has also written many books on the formal sciences, and is a trustworthy authority for the traditions of the Prophet. He began a commentary on the Quran, but did not live long enough to finish it. The completed portion is widely circulated among the theologians. He studied jurisprudence from Muhammad Hakim who was an intimate friend of Abu Hanifa and the *Hakimis* a *Sufi* sect in that region are his followers. He is said to have been associated with the Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him). His disciple, Abu Bakr Warraq, relates that Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him) used to visit him every Sunday, and they used to converse with each other.

He said:

من جهل اوصاف العبودية فهو بنعوت الربودية اجهل

"Anyone who is ignorant of the nature of servanthship, is yet more ignorant of the nature of lordship,"

One who is not aware of the way to his own *nafs* (lower soul), how can he get aware of the *marifat* (knowledge) of Allah. Whoever is ignorant of contamination of human qualities, how could he recognize the purity of the Divine attributes, as the outward is connected with the inward, and he who wants to possess the former without the later and later without the former, makes an absurd assertion. Therefore, knowledge of the nature of lordship is coupled with the soundness and rightness of reverent servanthship and without mending them, knowledge of the nature of lordship is unattainable. This is very profound and instructive saying. It will be fully explained at the proper place.

43. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Umar al-Warraq (may Allah have mercy on him)

The leader of the follower of the path of poverty and purity Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Umar al-Warraq is counted among the great Sheikhs and ascetics. He benefited from the association of Muhammad b. Ali and also met Ahmad b.

Khadruya. He is author of many books on rules of discipline and ethics. The *Sufi* Sheikhs have called him "*Mu'addib al-awliya*" (one who educates the saints on ethical matters).

He related that once Muhammad b. Ali handed him over some of his writings with the instructions that those were to be thrown in river Oxus. Since he had not the heart to do so, therefore, he kept them at his house and lied to Sheikh that he had obeyed his instructions. Sheikh inquired if he had observed anything at the time of obeying his instruction. He had no answer except to say that he had observed nothing. Then the Sheikh said that he had not obeyed him and commanded him to go back and throw them into the river. Overwhelmed with Sheikh's insight, he went back and threw the papers into the river. Suddenly, the water parted and a chest with it lid open appeared. As soon as the papers fell into it, the lid closed and the waters joined again and the chest vanished. He went back to him and told him what had occurred. He acknowledged and said, "Now you have thrown them in the river." On his request to unveil the mystery the Sheikh said, "I had composed a work on theology and mysticism which could hardly be comprehended by the intellect. My brother Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him) desired it of me, and Allah bade the water to take it to him."

Abu Bakr Warraq said:

الناس ثلاثة العلماء والفقراء والامراء فاذا فسد العلماء فسد الطاعة و الشريعة, واذا فسد الفقراء فسد الاخلاق, واذا فسد الامراء فسد المعاش

"There are three classes of men; *Ulama* (divines), Dervishes (poor), and rich. When the *Ulama* are corrupt, obedience and *Shariat* are vitiated; when the dervishes are corrupt, men's morals are depraved; and when the Rich are corrupt, men's means of livelihood are spoiled."

The decline of the divines consists in covetousness, that of the dervishes in hypocrisy and that of the rulers and wealthy in injustice. The Monarch do not become corrupt until they turn their backs on *Ulama*, and *Ulama* do not become corrupt until they associate with monarchy, and dervishes do not become corrupt until they seek ostentation, because the injustice by monarch is due to ignorance, covetousness of *Ulama* is due to dishonesty, and the hypocrisy of dervishes is due to lack of trust in Allah.

44. Abu Said Ahmad b. Isa (may Allah have mercy on him)

The fountain of *tawakul* (trust on Allah) and *rida* (acquiescence), aspirant of the path of annihilation Abu Said Ahmad b. Isa al-Kharraz had the insight of the disciples' *auqat* (time) and full awareness of their inwardly states. He was the first who explained the doctrine of *fana* (annihilation) and *baqa* (subsistence). He is the author of brilliant compositions and famous for sublime sayings and allegories. He had met Dhu al-Nun, and had association with Bashr Hafi and Sari.

In response to the following saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that *جبلت القلوب علي حب من احسن اليها* hearts are naturally incline to love him who acts compassionately towards them," he said:

واعجبا لمن لم يرمحنا غير الله كيف لا يميل بكليته الي الله

"One wonders at him who sees none other extending benevolence towards him except Allah, still he does not incline to Allah with his whole being."

In reality true beneficence is that which is bestowed by the Lord and it is conferred upon those who have need of it. How can he who needs beneficence from others bestow it upon anyone? All that exists belongs to Allah, and He is the Lord of all and hath need of none. The entire creation is dependent on Him. The Saints (friends of Allah) recognizing this, observe in every reward and beneficence the Giver and the Benefactor. Their hearts are wholly taken captive by love of Him and they turn away from everything else.

45. Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Muhammad Isfahani (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was a great Sheikh and is also known as Ali b. Sahl. Junaid and he exchanged exquisite letters to one another. Umru b. Uthman who had consorted with Abu Turab and Junaid, visited Isfahan to meet him. His theology on Sufism based on *rida* (acquiescence) and self-discipline is likened and considered to be safe from mischief and contamination. He spoke eloquently on the theory and practice of mysticism, and lucidly explained its difficulties and symbolical allusions. He said:

الحضور افضل من اليقين لان الحضور ووطنات و اليقين خطرات

"Presence (حضور) with the Truth is better than faith, because presence is an abiding state in the heart and forgetfulness has no access there."

The faith is a transitory state that comes and goes. The present are in attendance whereas possessors of faith remain at the door. The subject of absence and presence will be discussed in a separate chapter of this book.

He also said:

من وقت ادم الي قيام الساعة الناس يقولون القلب! القلب! وانا احب ان اري رجلا يصف ايش القلب او كيف القلب فلا اري

"From the time of Adam to till the Resurrection Day people will keep on crying, my heart, my heart! I am in search of a person who may be able to describe that what the heart is, or how it is, but I find none."

People generally give the name of heart to that flesh of meat palpitating in our body, which is existent in every living human, may he be a child, a madman or an ecstatic but they can not be called "Possessor of Heart". What, then, is this heart, of which we hear only the name? If we call intellect the heart, it is wrong, and if we call spirit the heart, it is not the heart. Similarly, if we call knowledge the heart, it is also not the heart whereas all the evidences of the Truth subsist in the heart, yet we only find the name of it.

46. Abu al-Hasan Muhammad b. Ismail Khair al-Nassaj (may Allah have mercy on him)

The straight on the Path of love Abu al-Hasan Muhammad b. Ismail Khair al-Nassaj was a great Sheikh of his time, and discoursed with eloquence on ethics and preached excellent sermons. He died at an advanced age. Both Shibli and Ibrahim Khawwas repented on his hand and took the Path of Truth. He sent Shibli to Junaid, wishing to observe the respect due to the latter. He was the disciple of Sari Saqati, and was contemporary of Junaid and Abu al-Hasan Nuri. Junaid held him in high regard, and Abu Hamza Baghdadi also acknowledged his high stature. He obtained the name Khair al-Nassaj due to the following event.

Once he left his native town Samara with the intention of performing the pilgrimage. When he reached Kufa, which was

on his route, he was seized by a silk weaver who claimed that he was his slave and his name was Khair. Believing it to be an ordeal from Allah, he did not deny the weaver's claim, and remained in his service for many years. Whenever anybody called him Khair, he used to immediately respond saying, "*labbayk*" (At thy service), until one day the weaver repented of what he had done to him and said to Khair: "I made a mistake, you are not my slave." Then he continued his journey for pilgrimage and reached Mecca. He attained to such a degree that Junaid said, Khair was the best amongst them. He always felt happy when somebody called him Khair, saying that it was not right that he should alter a name which was given to him by a Muslim.

It is said, that when the hour of his death approached, it was time for evening prayer. From the senselessness of death, he opened his eyes and looked towards the door and addressed to the angel of death:

"Allah saves thee! Stop for a while! You are Allah's deputed servant, and so am I. And to what you are commanded to do (viz. to take my life) will not escape thee, but that which I am commanded to do (viz. to perform the evening prayer) will escape me, therefore, give me few moments, so I do as I am bidden, and then do as you are bidden."

He then called for water, performed ablution, said the evening prayer and gave up his life. On the same night he was seen in a dream and was asked: "What has Allah done to you?"

He answered: "Do not ask me of this, but I have gained better comfort than your world."

Once he said in his place of meeting:

شوح الله صدور المتقين بنود اليقين وكشف بصائر الموقنين بنور حقائق الايمان

"The pious can not live without faith and their breasts are expanded with the *Nur* (light) of faith. The true believers can not live without accepting the realities of faith, so their insight of intellect is shining with the *Nur* (light) of belief."

So, where there is belief, faith would also be there and where there is faith, piety would be there, for they are inseparable from each other.

47. Abu Hamza Khurasani (may Allah have mercy on him)

A unique preacher of his time Abu Hamza al-Khurasani was one of the ancient Sheikhs of Khurasan. He was associated with Abu Turab, and had seen Kharraz. He was firmly grounded in *tawakul* (trust in Allah).

Once he fell down into a dry well. He spent three days and nights in the well. Incidentally on forth day, some people from a caravan passed by. He thought of calling them for help but then he rejected the idea thinking that it was inappropriate to seek help from anyone save Allah. It would be a complaint of Allah if he told them that He had cast him in the well and they would rescue him. When they reached there and saw an open well in the middle of the path, they consulted amongst them and decided to cover the well lest anyone might fall in to that. Hearing that, Abu Hamza became deeply agitated and abandoned hope of life. The people from caravan blocked the opening of the well and departed. He had no contact with mankind anymore and being despaired of his life, he started imploring Allah. When the night fell he heard some movement near the top of the well. On looking attentively he found that some part of the mouth of the well had opened and a dragon was pushing its tail downward. He knew that Allah had sent the dragon for his help and perceived that he would be saved through him. He got hold of its tail and it raised him out. A heavenly voice came to him,

“O Abu Hamza, this is an excellent escape of thine, We have saved thee from death by means of a death.”

He was asked that who was poor (*gharib*)? He replied, “المستوحش من الالفت he who shuns intimacy.” Who shuns intimacy of all desires, is poor because the dervish has no home or society either in this world or the next, and when he is dissociated from phenomenal existence he shuns everything, and then he is poor; and this is a very lofty grade of the path of Truth.

48. Abu al-Abbas Ahmad b. Masruq (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was one of the most eminent Sheikhs of Khurasan, and the Saints of Allah are unanimous that he was one of the *Autad* (noble saints) of the land and he had association with the *Qutb*, who is the pivot of the universe. On quest of someone

that who was *Qutb*, he did not declare his name but hinted that Junaid was that personage. He served forty Sheikhs who had attained the rank of fixity (*sahib-i tamkin*) and benefited from them. He said:

من كان سروره بغير الحق فسروره يورث الهموم و من لم يكن انسه في خدمة ربه فانسه يورث الوحشة

"If anyone takes joy from others save Allah, his whole joy is actually sorrow, and one who is not found of devotion to Allah, he is ruptured by loneliness."

All save Allah is perishable, and whoever rejoices in what is perishable, when that passes away will cause him to stricken with sorrow and all else except His service is useless. When the baseness of created objects is made manifest, one's intimacy (with them) is turned to loneliness and abhorrence. Hence, the sorrow and loneliness of the entire universe consist in regarding that which is other (than Allah).

49. Abu Abdullah b. Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him)

The guide of the keepers of trust on Allah, Sheikh of the philosophers Abu Abdullah b. Ahmad b. Ismail al-Maghrabi was a popular Sheikh of his time and a watchful protector of his disciples. Both, Ibrahim Khawwas and Ibrahim Shaiban were his disciples. He has lofty sayings and shining evidences, and he had a very high rank on the path of solitude. He said:

ما رايت انصف من الدنيا ان خد متها خد منك و الا تركتها تركت

"I have never seen anything more just than the world: if you serve her she will serve you, and if you leave her she will leave you." As long as you seek her she will seek you, but when you turn away from her and seek Allah she will flee from you and worldly thoughts will no more cling to your heart. Therefore, one who renounces the world he rescues himself from her evils and ordeals.

50. Abu Ali al-Hasan b. Ali Jurjani (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was a unique personality of his time. He wrote brilliant works on the science of ethics and detection of spiritual cankers. He was a disciple of Muhammad b. Ali al-Tirmidhi,

and a contemporary of Abu Bakr Warraq. Ibrahim Samarqandi was his disciple.

He said:

الخلق كلهم في ميادين الغفلة يركضون و علي الظنون يعتمدون و عندهم انهم في الحقيقة ينقلوبون
و عن المكاشفة ينطقون

"The whole mankind is occupying the ground of heedlessness, relying upon idle fancies, while they perceive themselves to be on the path of Truth and to be speaking from Divine revelation."

This saying refers to self-conceit and pride of the soul. Men, though they are ignorant, have a firm belief in their ignorance, especially ignorant *Sufis* are more affected by this. As wise *Sufis* are the noblest creature of Allah, so are the ignorant *Sufis* vilest creatures of Allah.

The former possess the Truth and are without conceit, whereas the later possess conceit and are without the Truth. They remain entrapped in the sphere of heedlessness and perceive that they are wandering through the valleys of saintship. They rely on fancies and suppose them to be certainty. They go along with the formal practices and think it is reality. They speak from their own lust and think it is a Divine revelation. One can not get rid of conceit until and unless one is set to the Vision and Beauty of His Majesty, for in the manifestation of His Beauty one see Him alone, and their conceit is annihilated, while in the revelation of His majesty they do not see themselves, and their conceit does not intrude.

51. Abu Muhammad Ahmad b. al-Hussein al-Jurairi (may Allah have mercy on him)

The donor of the pleasure of knowledge, a mediator of the formal practices Abu Muhammad Ahmad b. al-Hussein al-Jurairi was a confidant friend of Junaid, and among the associates of Sahl b. Abdullah. He was learned in every branch of religious knowledge and was the Imam of his time in jurisprudence. He was also well acquainted in theology. His rank in Sufism was such that Junaid requested him to educate his disciples on principles of ethics and abstinence. After the death of Junaid he succeeded him.

He said:

دوام الايمان و قوام الاديان وصلاح الابدان في خصال ثلاث الاكتفاء و الاتقاء و الاحتماء, فمن اكتفى بالله صلحت سريره و من اتقى ما نهى الله عنه استقامت سريره و من احتمي مالم يوافقه ارتاضت طبيعته, فثمره الاكتفاء صفو المعرفة و عاقبة الاتقاء حسن الخلقه و غاية الاحتماء اعتدال الطبيعة

"The safety of faith, the subsistence of religions and the health of bodies depend on three qualities, i.e.

- satisfaction (*iktifa*),
- piety (*ittiqā*) and
- abstinence from illegal feed (*ihtima*).

Hence,

- If one is satisfied with Allah, his conscious become good;
- if one guards himself from what Allah has forbidden, his character becomes upright; and
- if one abstain from eating what does not agree with him, his body constitution is brought into good order.

Therefore,

- the fruit of satisfaction is pure knowledge of Allah, and
- the result of piety is excellence of moral character, and
- the abstinence from unlawful feed, brings equilibrium to the nature of the body."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

من كثر صلوته بالليل حسن وجهه بالنهار

"One who prays much by night, his face will be bright and shining by day," and the Prophet (peace be upon him) also said that the pious shall come at the Resurrection with dazzling faces on thrones of light.

One who is careful in his diet, his body would remain save from diseases and his soul from lust. This saying is delicate and complete in itself.

52. Abu al-Abbas Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Sahl al-Arimi
(may Allah have mercy on him)

He was always held in great respect by his contemporaries. He was versed in the sciences of Quranic exegesis and

commentary, and expounded the subtleties of the Quran with an eloquence and insight peculiar to himself. He was an eminent disciple of Junaid. He had associated with Ibrahim Maristani. Abu Said Kharraz regarded him with the utmost veneration and did not recognize anyone except him as established Sheikh of Sufism.

He said:

السكون الي مالوفات الطباءع يقطع صاحبه عن بلوغ درجات الحقائق

"Submission to natural habits prevents a man from attaining the exalted degrees of spirituality."

Who submits himself to self desires remains veiled from the Truth, because natural dispositions are the instruments and organs of the *nafs* (lower soul), which is the centre of veiling; whereas the spirit is the centre of revelation, and a veiled and resident desirer never becomes a man of revelation. One can only attain the Truth by restraining him from natural temperament. Natural dispositions become attached to two things:

- to this world and its accessories, or
- to the next world and its circumstances:

Therefore, one who is attached to the world is attracted to its homogeneous things and to the latter through imagination and in virtue of heterogeneousness and non-cognition. Therefore they are attached to the notion of the next world not to its idea, for if they knew its reality, they would have abandoned the mortal world. And if they would have abandoned the world, they would have trodden the path of the saintship and reality would have manifested on them that this disposition of temporary abode is nothing but perishable. There can be no harmony between the next world and human nature until the latter is annihilated, because in the next world is that which the heart of man has never conceived.

The way to the next world is full of danger. A thing that comes into one's thoughts has no worth, since imagination is incapable of knowing the reality of the next world, therefore, how can human nature become familiar with the truth thereof? It is certain that our natural faculties can be acquainted only with the notion of the next world.

53. Mansur Hallaj (may Allah have mercy on him)

Absorbed in veracity, martyr of love Abu al-Mughith al-Hussein b. Mansur al-Hallaj was an enamored and intoxicated votary of Sufism. He had a strong ecstasy and a lofty spirit. The *Sufi* Sheikhs are at variance concerning him. Some reject him, while others accept him. Among the latter class are Umru b. Uthman, Abu Yaqub Nahrajuri, Abu Yaqub Aqta, Ali b. Sahl Isfahani, and others. Those who reject him are Ibn Ata, Muhammad b. Khafif, and Abu al-Qasim Nasrabadi. But all the moderns accept his eminence and spiritual stature and include him among the *Auliya* (saint). Some such like Junaid, Shibli, Jurairi, and Husri have suspended their judgment about him. Some accuse him of magic. In our days the Grand Sheikh Abu Said, Sheikh Abu al-Qasim Gurgani and Sheikh Abu al-Abbas Shaqani looked upon him favorably, and in their eyes he was a great *Sufi*.

Abu al-Qasim Qushayri remarks that if Hallaj was a genuine spiritualist he is not to be rejected from Allah on the ground of peoples' condemnation and if he was rejected by the Truth, his popularity with the people was of no use to him. Therefore we leave him to the Judgment of Allah, and honor him according to the signs of the Truth which we have found him to possess.

But of all the Sheikhs only a few deny the perfection of his merit, the purity of his spiritual state, and abundance of his ascetic practices. It would be an act of dishonesty to omit his biography from this book because only few have pronounced his outwardly behavior to be that of an infidel, and disbelieved in him and charged him with trickery and magic. They suppose that Hussein b. Mansur Hallaj is that Hasan b. Mansur Hallaj heretic of Baghdad who was the master of the famous infidel of Baghdad, Muhammad b. Zakarriya²⁰ and the companion of Abu Said Qarmati. But the Hussein whom we are discussing here was resident of village Bayda of Faris. The reluctance or rejection shown by some Sheikhs was not due to any dispute on his religious conduct but was due to his prevailed conduct and behavior.

At first he became a disciple of Sahl b. Abdullah, whom he left without obtaining his permission. Then he attached himself to Umru b. Uthman to whom also he left without seeking his

²⁰ The famous physician Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Zakarriya al-Razi, died 320 A.H

permission. Then he sought to associate himself with Junaid, but he did not admit him. This led to his non-acceptance by other Sheikhs also and this was all because of conduct and not due to any other reason.

Shibli said about him, "انا والحلاج شيء واحد فخلصني جنوني واهلكه عقله" Hallaj and I are one; my madness saved me, while his intelligence destroyed him?" Had his religion been suspected, Shibli would not have said: "Hallaj and I are one."

And Muhammad b. Khafif said, "هو عالم رباني" he is divinely learned man.

There are many such praises uttered by Sheikhs. The annoyance and abhorrence on part of *Sufi* Sheikhs led him to solitude. He is the author of brilliant compositions and allegories and polished sayings in theology and jurisprudence.

I have seen about fifty works by him at Baghdad and its neighboring districts, and some in Khuzestan, Faris and Khurasan. I found his writings like as the novices talks at the initial stage of the path. Some of them are of high caliber, some pathetic, some easier, and some more unseemly than others.

When Allah bestows His splendor on anyone, he endeavors to describe what he has seen with the power of ecstasy and help of Divine grace, his words are obscure, especially if he expresses himself with haste and self-admiration then they are more disgusting to the imaginations, and incomprehensible to the minds of those who hear them, and they appreciate the utterance. At such stage because of ignorance some deny it and some follow it but their following is also such like denial. On the other hand, persons of true spirituality and insight visions, make no effort to describe such states and do not occupy themselves with self-admiration on that account, and are careless of praise and blame alike, and are undisturbed by denial and acceptance.

It is absurd to charge Hallaj as a magician. According to the Sunnites, magic is real just as miracles are real. The manifestation of magic in the state of perfection is infidelity, whereas the manifestation of miracles in the state of perfection is excellence of *Marifat*, because the former is the result of Allah's anger, while the later is outcome of His being pleased. I will explain this more fully in the chapter on

affirmation of miracles. By consent of all Sunnites who are gifted with wisdom, no Muslim can be a magician and no infidel can be held in honor, for contraries never meet.

Hussein, as long as he lived, remained virtuous and pious. He always showed humility in his prayers, diligence in devotion and *dikr* (praise of Allah) and continual fasting. His sayings on the subject of Unification are of excellent nature. If his actions were magic, all this could not possibly have ensued from him. Consequently, they must have been *karamat* (miracles), and *karamat* are vouchsafed only to a true saint.

Some theologians reject him on the ground that his sayings refer to transmigration and union. But the fault lies with the expression, not in the meaning. A person overcome with ecstasy has not the power of expressing himself correctly. Besides, the meaning of the expression may be difficult to apprehend, so that people mistake the writer's intention, and repudiate not his real meaning but a notion which they have formed for themselves.

I have seen in Baghdad and its surroundings a number of heretics who pretend to be followers of Hallaj and make his sayings an argument for their profanity and call themselves Hallajis. They spoke of him in the same terms of exaggeration as the *Shiites* apply to Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). I will refute their doctrines in the chapter concerning the different *Sufi* sects.

Since Hallaj was an ecstatic and not firmly settled, therefore, it is not recommended to follow his sayings. A man needs to be firmly settled before his sayings can be considered authoritative. Although Hallaj is dear to me and I have lot of love for him in my heart, yet his path is not soundly established on any principle, and his state is not fixed in any position and his experiences leads to fear of evil. When my own visions began I derived much support from him, that is to say, in the way of argument and evidence. I have already composed a book in explanation of his sayings and demonstrated their sublimity by proofs and arguments. Furthermore, in another work, entitled *Minhaj al-din*, I have given some detail of his life from beginning to end and now I have given some account of him in this place. How can a doctrine whose principles require to be confirmed with so much caution be followed and imitated? But Truth and idle

fancy never agree. The followers of desires are continually seeking to fasten upon some erroneous theory. As he said:

الاسننه مستطقات تحت نطقها مستهلكات

"Tongues are eager to speak, but there is destruction in their speaking."

Such expressions are entirely harmful and futile in their meaning. If the meaning exists it is not lost by expression, and if it is non-existent it is not created by expression. Expression only produces an unreal notion and leads the student mortally astray by causing him to imagine that the expression is the real meaning.

54. Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Ahmad al-Khawwas (may Allah have mercy on him)

The leader of the custodians of trust on Allah, Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Ahmad al-Khawwas attained a high degree in the doctrine of *tawakul* (trust in Allah). He met with many Sheikhs and benefited from their association. Many signs of saintship and miracles were vouchsafed to him. He is the author of excellent works on the ethics of Sufism. He said:

العلم كله في كلمتين لا تتكلف ما كفيت ولا تضع ما اسكفيت

"All knowledge is comprised in two sentences, do not trouble yourself with that whose fear has been expelled from you by Allah, and do not lack in anything which is mandatory on you to do."

Do not trouble yourself with destiny, for what is destined from eternity will not be changed by your efforts, and do not neglect his commandments, for you will be punished if you neglect it.

On asking that what wonders he had seen, he replied:

"Many wonders, but the most wondrous was that the Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him) desired to let him associate with me, but I refused. Not that I desired any better companion, but I feared that I would depend on him rather than on Allah, and my trust in Allah would weaken by consorting with him, and that in consequence of performing a work of supererogation, I should fail to perform a duty incumbent on me. This is the degree of perfection.

55. Abu Hamza Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him)

The confidant of the steadfast, the foundation of the believers of faith Abu Hamza al-Baghdadi al-Bazzaz was one of the principal *Sufi* scholastic theologians. He was a disciple of Harith Muhasibi, and had association with Sari. He was contemporary of Nuri and Khair Nassaj and enjoyed the company of many eminent Sheikhs. He used to preach in the Rusafa mosque at Baghdad. He was versed in Quranic exegesis and commentary, and related traditions of Prophet (peace be upon him) on trustworthy authority. He was with Nuri at the time of his persecution. Allah delivered all of them from that calamity. I will tell this story in the place where doctrine Nuri is explained.

He said:

إذا سلمت منك نفسك فقد أدبت حقها وإذا سلم منك الخلق قضيت حقوقهم

"If your *nafs* (lower soul) is safe from you, you have rendered its due; and if mankind is safe from you, you have paid that is due to them."

There are two obligations; one which you owe to yourself and the other which you owe to others. If you have refrained yourself from sin and have sought the path of future salvation for it, you have fulfilled your obligation towards it and if you have made others secure from your evils and have wished no injury to them, you have fulfilled your obligation towards them. Remember that neither you blow any harm to others nor to yourself and then fulfill the obligation to Allah.

56. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Musa al-Wasti (may Allah have mercy on him)

Imam of the path, holder of high states and eloquent in his speech Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Musa al-Wasti was a profound theosophist. He attained excellent state in realities of *marifat* and was praiseworthy in the eyes of all the Sheikhs. He was one of the early disciples of Junaid. His sayings and expressions were so complex and deep that formalists were unable to comprehend their depth. He remained agitated wherever he lived until he came to Merv. The inhabitants of Merv welcomed him on account of his amiable disposition and

benefited from his discourses. He passed rest of his life there. He said:

الذاكرون في ذكره اكثر غفلة من الناسين لذكره

"Probability of those who remember Allah is more to get into heedlessness than those who do not remember Him."

The heedlessness of one who remembers Allah in his heart and does not praise His *dikr* is less harmful to that who is forgetful of Him but regular in his *dikr* (praise).

Praise is not the same thing as the object of praise and neglect of the object of praise combined with thought of the praise leads to heedlessness more intimately than neglect of the praise without thought. He who fails to remember His praise, due to forgetfulness and absence, does not think that he is present (with Allah), but he who remembers, in his remembrance and absence from the object of praise, thinks that he is present (with Allah). Therefore, in the state of absence, to consider presence (with Allah) without any assumption is closer to heedfulness than being in absence (from Allah), for conceit is the destruction of the devotee. Where there is more conceit, reality would be extinct and where the reality is less, the conceit would be more. Conceit springs from the suspiciousness of the intellect which leads intellect to more conceits.

Actually *dikr* (remembrance of Allah) is either in absence or in presence and when devotee is absent from himself and present with Allah, that state is not presence but contemplation, and when one is absent from Allah and present with himself, that state is not of *dikr* (remembrance of Allah) but absence from Him. And absence is the result of heedlessness.

57. Abu Bakr Shibli (may Allah have mercy on him)

The ship of discourse Abu Bakr b. Dalaf b. Hujdar al-Shibli was a great and celebrated Sheikh. He had excellent state and spent a pure life. He was subtle in the use of symbolism which was so highly applauded that one of the moderns says that there are three wonders of the world, i.e. the symbolical utterance of Shibli, the mystical sayings of Murtaish, and the anecdotes of Jafar.

He was Imam of the followers of the Path and guide to the adherents of *Shariat*. At first he was chief chamberlain to the Caliph. He repented in the hands of Khair al-Nassaj but became a disciple of Junaid. He remained acquainted with large number of Sheikhs. It is related that he explained the verse of Quran *قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ* "Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze," (Q 24:30) as follows:

اي ابصار الرعوس عن المحارم وابصار القلوب عما سوي الله

"Refrain their bodily eyes from what is unlawful, and refrain their spiritual eyes from everything except Allah," i.e. do not look at lasciviousness and have no thought except the vision of Allah. It is a mark of heedlessness to follow one's lusts and to regard unlawful things, and the greatest calamity that befalls on heedless is that they remain ignorant of their own faults. Who is ignorant here shall also be ignorant hereafter:

مَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى

"Those who were blind in this world will be blind in the Hereafter," (Q 17:72).

Actually, until Allah clears one's heart from lusty desires the physical eyes are not safe from its hidden dangers, and until Allah establishes the desire of Himself in a man's heart the spiritual eye is not safe from looking at others than Him.

Once when Shibli was passing through the bazaar, the people called him an insane. He replied:

"You think I am mad, and I think you are sensible. My insanity is the result of intense love of Allah, while your sense is the result of great heedlessness. May Allah increase my madness so that I become nearer to Him, and may He increase your sense so that you get farther from Him."

This he uttered because of modesty, considering that why anyone should be so beside one's self as not to separate love of Allah from insanity and not to distinguish between them.

58. Abu Muhammad b. Jafar b. Nusair al-Khuldi (may Allah have mercy on him)

He is a well-known biographer who eloquently portrayed the life sketches of the Saints. He was one of the most eminent and oldest disciples of Junaid. He was an expansive ocean of

the knowledge of Sufism. He was trustee of the liberalities and blessings of the Sheikhs and watchman of their rights. He has sublime sayings in each branch of the religion. In order to avoid spiritual conceit, he attributed to different persons the anecdotes which he composed in illustration of each topic. He said:

التوكل استواء القلب عند الوجود و العدم

"*Tawakul* (Trust in Allah) is composure of the heart whether you get anything or not."

One may not feel pleasure on having something, or feel sorrow by not having something, because body is the property of the Lord, Who has a better right than you either to preserve or to destroy it. You need not to interfere, hand over the ownership to the Owner and you should have no control or right on it.

Once he went to Junaid and found him suffering from fever. He asked him to pray Allah so he might restore his health. Junaid replied that last night he was about to tell Him, but a voice whispered in his heart,

"Thy body belongs to Me: I keep it well or ill, as I please. Who are thou, that thou shouldst interfere with My property. Refrain thyself from excessiveness, so thou mayst become a true slave."

59. Abu Ali b. Muhammad al-Qasim al-Rudbari (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was the devotee of the Path and leader of the followers of Sufism. He was of royal descent. He attained very high stature in ethical sciences. Many signs and virtues were vouchsafed to him. He discoursed lucidly on the mysteries of Sufism. He said:

المريد لا يريد لنفسه الا ما اراد الله له والمراد لا يريد من الكونين شيئا غيره

"*Murid* (desirous) is the one who does not desire anything for himself except what Allah desires for him, and *Murad* is he who does not desire anything in this world or the next except Allah."

Who is satisfied with the will of Allah, if abandons his desire and will, be His *murid* (desirous). The lover has no will of his

own, so that only Beloved should be his *Murad* (desire). And who desires Allah, desires only what Allah desires for him, and what Allah desires, he also desires the same. Hence *rida* (satisfaction) is one of the initial *maqamat* (stations) whereas *muhabat* (love) is one of the last states. The *maqamat* are connected with the realization of worship while the degrees of states (ecstasy) are attained by corroboration of Lordship. This being so, the *murid* (desirer) subsists in himself, and the *murad* (desired) subsists in Allah.

60. Abu al-Abbas Qasim b. Mehdi Sayyari (may Allah have mercy on him)

The treasure of unity, gainer of celibacy Abu al-Abbas al-Qasim b. Mehdi al-Sayyari was Imam of his time and was well versed in the inward and outward knowledge. He was associated with Abu Bakr Wasti and also got benefited from many other Sheikhs. He was the most accomplished in companionship and was the most venerable ascetic in cankers of *nafs* (lower soul). He is author of lofty sayings and praiseworthy compositions. He said:

التوحيد ان لا يخطر بقلبك ما دونه

"*Tawhid* (Unity of Allah) is that nothing should occur to ones mind except Allah."

One's secrets should not pass through the hearts of creature and there should not be any impurity in one's acts because thought of other (than Allah) proves its existence and when other is established then *Tawhid* will be non existent?

He belonged to a learned and influential family. There was no family in Merv who could stand equal to his family. Having inherited a large fortune from his father, he gave the whole of it in return for two of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) hairs. Through the blessing of those hairs Allah bestowed on him a sincere repentance. He found the company of Abu Bakr Wasti, and attained such a high status that he was counted among the Imams of Sufism. He made a precept that after his death, the hairs of the Prophet (peace be upon him) should be placed in his mouth. His tomb at Merv is visited by the people who go there to seek their desires. The prayers are granted there.

61. Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Khafif (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was the *Imam* of his age and Sheikh in different religious sciences. He was renowned for abstinence and mortifications and for his convincing elucidation of mystical truth. His spiritual attainments are clearly evident from his compositions. He had the honor to meet Ibn Ata, Shibli, Hussein b. Mansur and Jurairi, and while at Mecca he was associated with Abu Yaqub Nahrajuri. He traveled the path of *tajreed* تجريد (detachment from the world) to its depth. He was a royal descent, but when Allah bestowed on him repentance, he turned his back on the glories of this world. He is held in high esteem by spiritualists. He said:

التوحيد الاعراض عن الطبيعة

“Unification consists in turning away from disposition,”

The disposition of mankind is veiled from the bounties and is blind to the beneficence of Allah. Hence no one can turn to Allah until he has turned away from disposition, and the possessor of disposition is ignorant of the truth. When you see the corruption of your own nature, you will get to know the reality of the Truth. He has lot of sayings and proofs on *Marifat* and Divine.

62. Abu Uthman Said b. Salam Maghrabi (may Allah have mercy on him)

The sword of leadership, the sun of auspiciousness Abu Uthman Said b. Salam al-Maghrabi was an eminent spiritualists of the class *ahl-i tamkin* (those who attained the state of fixity), and was profoundly versed in various departments of knowledge. He practiced austerities, and is the author of many notable sayings and excellent proofs concerning the observation of spiritual blemishes. He said:

من اترصحة الاغنياء علي مجالسة الفقراء ابتلاه الله بموت القلب

“One who prefers the association of the rich over sitting with the dervishes, Allah afflicts him with spiritual death.”

The terms “association” and “sitting with” are used, because only that man turns away from the dervishes who has sat with them, not one who has associated with them, for there is no

turning away in association. Since the result of preferring the association of rich over sitting with the dervishes is spiritual death, what would be the result of turning away from the association of dervishes? The two terms are clearly distinguished from each other in this saying.

63. Abu al-Qasim Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. Mahmud Nasrabadi (may Allah be pleased with him)

A resident of Nishapur where he was like a king, save that the glory of kings is in the materialistic world, while his was in the spiritual world. Many original sayings and exalted signs were vouchsafed to him. He was a disciple of Shibli and master of the later Sheikhs of Khurasan. He was the most learned and ascetic venerable of his age. He said:

انت بين النسبتين الي ادم ونسبة الي ادم ونسبة الي الحق فاذا اتسبت الي ادم دخلت في ميادين الشهوات و مواضع الافات و الزلات وهي نسبة تحقق البشرية

"You are between two relationships: one to Adam, and the other to Allah. If you claim relationship to Adam, you enter in the arenas of lust, error, evils and indignity. Since physical relationship has no value and this is a proof of your relationship with humanity, for Allah has said, **إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا**," (Q 33:72), "If, however, you claim relationship to Allah, you enter the stations of revelation, evidence, chastity and saintship. The first relationship is connected with the affliction of mankind and the second relationship is the devotion to Allah." Allah hath said:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا

"And the servants of (Allah) most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility," (Q 25:63).

The first relationship pertains to the calamities of humanity and the second to the realization of devotion to Allah. The Relationship to Adam will end at the Resurrection, whereas the relationship of being a servant of Allah will subsist always and is unalterable. The excellence of relationship when a man refers him to himself or to Adam is **إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي** "I have indeed wronged my soul" (Q 28:16), but when he refers himself to Allah, his state should be such that as Allah says, **يَا عِبَادِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيَّكُمْ** My devotees! No fear shall be on you that day," (Q 43:68).

64. Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ibrahim al-Husri (may Allah have mercy on him)

The delight of the aspirants, noble of the Court of the Truth Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ibrahim al-Husri was one of the great Imams of the *Sufis* and was unrivalled in his time. He has lofty sayings and admirable explanations on all spiritual matters. He said:

دعوني في بلاءي هاتوا مالكم الستم من اولاد ادم الذي خلقه بيده ونفخ فيه من روحه و اسجد له
ملاعنته 'ثم امره فخالف فاذا كان اول الدون ورويًا كيف يكون اخره

"Leave me alone in my affliction and listen! Are you not the children of Adam, whom Allah without any intermediary formed with His own hand and breathed a spirit into him and caused the angels to bow down to him? Then He commanded him to do something, and he disobeyed. If the first of the goblet has dregs, what will its last be? When a man is left to himself he is all disobedience, but when Divine favor comes to his help he is all love. Therefore, regard the beauty of Divine favor and continue to compare ugliness of your character with it, and pass your whole life in this way."

I have mentioned some of the ancient *Sufis* whose example is authoritative. If I had mentioned them all and had set forth their lives in detail and had included the anecdotes respecting them, my purpose would have relegated to secondary position, and this book would have run to great length. Now I will add some accounts of the modern *Sufis* so that you are benefited the maximum.

Chapter XII

Mystics of Recent Times

Nowadays there are some persons who cannot endure the burden of continence and the religious exercise but still are desirous of rank and authority. They consider the followers of the Sufism like themselves. When they hear the sayings of the ancestors, see their eminence and read their devotional practices and then examine themselves, and found that they are far inferior to the Sheikhs of old times. Even then they are reluctant to accept their weaknesses, rather stress that their era do not have those types of devotees whose anecdotes they have read in the books. Their contention is ridiculous, for Allah never leaves the earth without a disputation and neither this *Ummah* (Muslim community) would ever be without the presence of *Wali* (saint), as the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said:

لا يزال طائفة من امتي علي الخير والحق حتي تقوم الساعة

"My *Ummah* would never be free of a group who would be on honesty and truth until the hour of the Resurrection." And:

لا يزال من امتي اربعون علي خلق ابراهيم

"In my *Ummah* there shall always be forty pious who would be on the nature of Abraham."

Some of those whom I shall mention here have already deceased and have met with eternal happiness in the highest Heaven, and some are still living. May Allah be well pleased with them.

1. Abu al-Abbas Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Qassab (may Allah have mercy on him)

The adornment of the seekers of the Path, the beauty of the righteous Abu al-Abbas Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Qassab was associated and benefited from the leading Sheikhs of Transoxania. He was celebrated for his spiritual sublimity, true sagacity, ascetic practices, and abundant proofs and miracles. Imam of Tibrastan Abu Abdullah Khayyati said of him:

"It is one of Allah's bounties that He raises an uneducated person to that eminence which was occupied by Abu Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him). Whenever we faced any difficulty on religious knowledge, its principles or on matters pertaining to subtleties of *Tawhid* (Unification) we seek his help."

Although he was illiterate but he discoursed with inspiring style concerning the science of Sufism and theology. In short, he was whole noble and pious venerable. I have heard many stories of him, but for the sake of brevity would include only one here.

One day a boy along with his camel which was heavily burdened, was passing through the bazaar of Amul. This place was always filled with mud slime. The camel slipped there and broke its leg. People nearby thought to unburden the beast, while the boy started imploring Allah to seek His help. In the mean time Abu Abbas passed from that place. People told him about the incident. He picked up the bridle of the camel and facing skyward which is the Qibla for prayer, said, "O Lord! Make the camel healthy. If Thou wilt not do so, why hast Thou let the heart of Qassab be melted by the tears of a lad?" As soon as he finished his prayer, the camel immediately got up and moved to its way in perfect condition.

He said:

"All mankind, whether they will or not, must reconcile themselves to the will of Allah, else they will suffer pain," because, who reconciles to His will, at the time of affliction, he will see the Causer of the affliction and won't feel it. And if one is not reconciled to His will, on coming of affliction his heart will fill with anguish. Allah does not alter His predestination on someone's satisfaction and dissatisfaction; therefore our pleasure lies in satisfaction of His decrees. Whoever reconciles to the will of Allah, his heart will remain rejoiced and whoever turns away from Him, he will be distressed by the coming of destiny.

2. Abu Ali Hasan b. Muhammad Daqqaq (may Allah have mercy on him)

The exposition of *murid* (desirers), the proofs of researcher Abu Ali al-Hasan b. Muhammad al-Daqqaq was the leading

authority in his department (of religious knowledge) and had no rival among his contemporaries. He was lucid in exposition and eloquent in speech as regards to revelation of the way of Allah. He had met many Sheikhs and benefited from their association. He was disciple of Nasrabadi and was regular in preaching. He said:

من اتس بغيره ضعف في حاله و من نطق من غيره كذب في مقاله

"Who is intimate with other (than Allah) is weak in his spiritual state, and who speaks of other (than Allah) is liar in his speech,"

The intimacy with others (than Allah) is an evidence of knowing Allah inadequately. The intimacy with Him demands renunciation of others and who renounces others, would not speak of them.

An old venerable one day went to the place where Daqqaq held his meetings, with the intention to ask him about the state of those who trust in Allah. Daqqaq was wearing a fine Tibrastani turban. The heart of the old man longed for it. He questioned Daqqaq about *tawakul* (trust in Allah). The Sheikh replied, "*tawakul* is that you refrain from coveting people's turbans." With these words he flung his turban in front of the questioner.

3. Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ahmad al-Khurqani (may Allah have mercy on him)

An unmatched Imam, nobility of era Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ahmad al-Khurqani was a great splendid Sheikh. He was praised by all the Saints in his time. Sheikh Abu Said visited him, and they conversed with each other on every topic. When he was about to take leave he said to al-Khurqani that he had chosen him to be his successor.

Hasan Muadib who was the servant of Abu Said said that when Abu Said visited al-Khurqani, he did not speak a single word at his own but committed himself to hear Khurqani and spoke only when he was needed to reply of some question. Hasan asked him why he had been so silent. He replied:

"From One, one is enough to talk."

Abu al-Qasim Qushayri said that when he came to Khurqan, because of the dignity and veneration of the Sheikh of the time he lost his eloquence and no longer had any power to express himself. He thought that he might have deposed from his saintship.

Khurqani said:

"There are two ways, one of erring and one of righteousness. The one is Man's way to Allah and the other is Allah's way to Man. The erring path is Man's way to Allah and righteous way is from Allah's part His way to Man. Whoever says he has attained to Allah has not attained but who says that he has been made to attain to Allah, knows that he has really attained." It is because made to attain is linked with not attaining and not attained is linked with attaining.

4. Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Ali al-Maruf Dastani (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was the king of the world of Sufism of his time and was unique in his eloquent speech and discourse. He was learned in various branches of religious knowledge, accomplished and a chosen one of the Court of the Lord. He is the author of refined discourses and fine symbolical indications. He found an excellent successor in Sheikh Sehlaki, who was the Imam of that area. I have heard from Sehlaki some of his spiritual utterances which are very sublime and admirable. He said:

التوحيد عنك موجود وانت في التوحيد مفرد مفقود

"*Tawhid* (Unification) is in accord and right with you but you are not in accord and right with *Tawhid*." i.e. you are not firm with the just demands of the *Tawhid*. The lowest degree in unification is the negation of your personal control over anything that you possess, and the affirmation of thy absolute submission to Allah in all your affairs.

Sheikh Sehlaki relates that once the locusts came to Bastam in such numbers that every tree and field got black with them. The people cried aloud for help. The Sheikh asked me about the uproar. I told him that people were distressed over the locusts attack in the city. He got up and went up to the roof and looked towards heaven. The locusts immediately began to fly away. By the hour of the afternoon prayer not one was left, and nobody lost even a leaf.

5. Abu Said Fadalallah b. Muhammad al-Mehni (may Allah have mercy on him)

The Shah of lovers, Imam of the *Sufis* Abu Said Fadalallah b. Muhammad al-Mehni was the king and the ornament of the Mystic Path. All his contemporaries were subject to him, some through their sound perception and belief, and some through the strong influence of their spiritual feelings. He was versed in the different branches of religious science. He had a wonderful religious experience and an extraordinary power of reading men's secret thoughts. Besides, he had many remarkable powers and evidences, of which the effects are manifest at the present day.

In his early days he went to Sarkhas and associated with Abu Ali Zahir. He used to learn from him his three days syllabus in one day, and spend his spared time in devotion. Abu Ali Zahir seeing the signs of obedience and devotion in his disciple developed regards and affection for him. Abu Fadl Hasan was the saint of Sarkhas at that time. One day, when Abu Said was walking by the river of Sarkhas, he met with Abu Fadl who said to him that the way he had adopted did not suit to him and advised him to follow his own course. Sheikh's message stuck to his heart. He returned to his lodging and engaged in asceticism and austerities until Allah opened to him the door of guidance and raised him to the highest rank.

Sheikh Abu Muslim Farisi related that his heart was never clean towards the Sheikh. Once he went to him clad in a patched frock which was so dirty and old that it had become like leather. When he entered to his presence, he found him sitting on a couch, dressed in a robe of Egyptian linen. He thought in his heart that how could this man claim to be a dervish with all these worldly encumbrances, and comparing his own state with his, he thought that there was no possibility of conformity with him. The Sheikh read his thoughts, and raising his head cried,

يا ابا مسلم في اي ديوان وجدت من كان قلبه قاعما في مشاهدة الحق يقع عليه اسم الفقير

"O Abu Muslim, in which *divan* have you found that the name of dervish is applied to one whose heart subsists in the contemplation of Allah?"

The contemplators are rich with Allah, whereas the name of dervish is applied to those who are occupied with self-mortification. Abu Muslim repented of his conceit and asked Allah to pardon him for such an unseemly thought.

Abu Said said:

التصوف قيام القلب مع الله بلا واسطة

"Sufism is the subsistence of the heart with Truth without any intermediary." This alludes to contemplation, which is attained through deep love, absorption in realizing the vision of Allah, and their annihilation by the everlastingness of the Truth. I will discuss the nature of contemplation in the chapter which treats of the pilgrimage.

On one occasion Abu Said set out from Nishapur for Tus. While he was passing through a cold valley his feet felt chill. A dervish who was accompanying him thought of tearing his waist-cloth into two halves and wrapping them round his feet. Since his garment was costly therefore he refrained from acting on his thought. After reaching at Tus, in one of the meetings the dervish asked the Sheikh to tell him the difference between evil suggestion and inspiration. The Sheikh answered, "It was a divine inspiration that urged you to tear your waist garment into two pieces for the sake of warming my feet and it was devil's suggestion that hindered you from doing so."

He performed a whole series of miracles of this kind.

6. Abu al-Fadl Muhammad b. Hasan Khutli (may Allah have mercy on him)

The adornments of noble saints Abu al-Fadl Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Khutli is my Sheikh in Sufism. He was well versed in the science of Quranic exegesis and in traditions. In Sufism he was the follower of Junaid. He was a disciple and close confident of Husri and a contemporary of Abu Umru Qazwini and Abu al Hasan Saliba. He remained in solitude for sixty years, for people had even forgotten his name also. He spent his most part of the solitude on Mount Lukam. He displayed many signs and proofs. He did not wear the garb or adopted the external fashions of the *Sufis* and he was very severe on formalists. I never saw any person of better dignity and awe than him.

I heard him saying:

الدنيا يوم و لنا فيها صوم

"The world is but a single day, in which we are fasting," We get nothing from it, and are not tempted by it, because we have perceived its corruption and its veils, therefore, have turned our backs upon it.

Once while I was helping Sheikh in his ablution a thought occurred to me that when everything was predestined, why then free men make themselves the slaves of spiritual guides? The Sheikh picked up my thought and said:

"O my son, I know what you are thinking. Be assured that there is a cause for every decree of Providence. When Allah wishes to bestow a crown and a kingdom on an ordinary man, He guides him to repentance and employs him in the service of one of His friends, and ultimately this service leads him to nobility and honor."

Many such happening I used to witness every day.

At the time of his death he was at Bayt al-Jinn, a village situated at the head of a mountain pass between Baniyar and Damascus. While he was counting last breaths, his head was resting on my bosom. At that time I was feeling hurt, as it is the nature of man to feel sad on departure of his close associate. The Sheikh said to me:

"O my son, I tell you one article of belief which if you follow firmly will deliver you from all troubles. Know that all good or evil is created by Allah, it is not desirable from you to put across your finger on any of His act or feel grieved in your heart."

He did not give any further command, but yielded up his soul.

7. Abdul Karim Abu Qasim (may Allah have mercy on him)

The teacher and Imam, and adornment of Islam Abdul Karim Abu al-Qasim b. Hawazin al-Qushayri is a wonder of his time. His rank is high and his position is great, and his spiritual life and manifold virtues are well known to the people of the present age. He is the author of many fine sayings and exquisite works, all of them profoundly theosophical in every

branch of science. Allah has rendered his feelings and his tongue secure from all sorts of extravagances. He said:

مثل الصوفي كعلة البرسام اوله هذيان واخره سكوت فاذا تمكنت خرس

"The *Sufi* is like the disease of *birsam*, which begins with disordered talks and ends in silence; for when the disease sets in, it make the one dumb."

Sufism (mysticism) has two sides, ecstasy and *namud* نمود (vision). Vision belongs to novices, and the expression of such vision is delirium. Ecstasy belongs to adepts, and the expression of ecstasy, while it continues, is impossible. So long as they are only seekers they utter lofty aspirations, which seems delirium even to aspirants, but when they attain their object they cease to utter, and no more express anything either by word or sign. Its example is that since Moses was a beginner therefore all his desire was for vision of Allah. He expressed his desire and said, "رَبِّ أَرْنِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ" O Lord, show (Thyself) to me that I may look upon Thee," (Q 7:143). This state of an unattained desire is like delirium. But Prophet (peace be upon him), however, had acquired the excellence and was firmly established of that state, therefore, when his person arrived at the highest station his desire was annihilated, and he said, "لا احصي ثنا عليك" I cannot praise Thee aptly." This is the highest station and most exalted position.

8. Abu al-Abbas Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Ashqani (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was an Imam in every branch of fundamental and derivative sciences of religion, and an accomplished venerable in all respects. He had met a great number of eminent *Sufi* Sheikhs. He is counted among the eminent *Imams* and Sheikhs. His doctrine was based on "annihilation", and his expressions used to be highly complex. Some ignorant imitated him and have adopted his difficult writing style. When in its spiritual meaning it is not laudable to imitate then how it is right to imitate a mere expression! I was very intimate with him, and he had also a sincere affection for me. He was my teacher in some sciences. In my whole life I have never seen anyone, who held the *Shariat* in greater veneration than him. He kept himself detached from all created things.

Because of his complicated writings on account of the subtlety of his theological expositions only an *Imam* of profound insight could derive instruction from him. He always had a natural disgust of this world and the next, and would constantly exclaim, "اشتهدى عدمًا لا عود فيه" I yearn for a non-existence that has no existence." And he used to say:

"Every man desires for impossible, and I too have desire for impossible, which I surely know will never be realized, namely that Allah should take me to a non-existence that will never return to existence, for stations and miracles are all veils and troubles and the man is becoming a suitor of his own veil. It is better to get annihilated in vision than being remain in constant state of veil. Almighty Allah is a Being that is not subject to none being, what loss would His kingdom suffer if I become a nonentity that shall never be endowed with existence?"

This is a sound principle in a real annihilation.

9. Abu al-Qasim b. Ali b. Abdullah al-Gurgani (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was unique and incomparable *Qutb* of his time. His initial state was excellent and strong. He performed long journeys with conscientious observance (of *Shariat*). All the aspirants of his time were whole heartedly inclined to him and seekers of the path of Truth had full faith on him. He possessed marvelous power of revealing the inwardly states of novices. He was well learned in various branches of knowledge. All his disciples because of their knowledge and conduct are ornaments of the society in which they move. Allah wills, he will have an excellent successor, whose authority the whole body of *Sufis* will recognize, namely, Abu Ali al-Fadl b. Muhammad who has fully committed himself to the service of his Sheikh and has turned his back on all (worldly) things. Allah in reward has made him the spiritual mouthpiece of that venerable Sheikh.

One day in the presence of Sheikh I was recounting to him my spiritual experiences and visions, in order that he might test them, for he had unrivalled skill in that. He was listening kindly to what I was saying. The vanity and enthusiasm of youth made me to relate those matters, and the thought occurred to me that perhaps the Sheikh, in his novitiate, did

not enjoy such experiences, and that's why he was fully concentrated towards me. The Sheikh perceived what I was thinking and said:

"O my son, you must know that my humility is not on account of you or your experiences, because who alters the conditions does not come to altering place. I am doing this all for the respect and majesty of Creator of the states. They are not peculiar to you, but common to all seekers of Allah and you are not any exception."

I was taken aback by his statement. He noticed my confused state and said:

"O my son, man has no more relation to this Path than that when he is admitted to the path, he commits himself to obtain it and when is deposed from it, he gets delight by remembering it. Hence his negation and affirmation, his existence and non-existence, are imagination. Man can never escapes from the prison of imagination. The man should follow the path of devotion and put away from himself every relation except that of manhood and obedience."

I had much spiritual conversation with him, but if I were to enter upon the task of setting forth his extraordinary powers my purpose would be defeated.

10. Abu Ahmad Muzaffar b. Ahmad b. Hamdan (may Allah have mercy on him)

Leader of the Saints, an admonisher of the pious Abu Ahmad al-Muzaffar b. Ahmad b. Hamdan was ruler of a state while Allah opened to him the door of this path and bestowed on him the crown of honor and greatness. He spoke eloquently and discoursed with sublimity on annihilation and subsistence. Sheikh, Abu Said, said:

"We were led to the Holy Court (of Allah) by the way of servitude, but Khawaja Muzaffar was conducted thither by the way of magnitude and dominion, i.e. we attained contemplation by means of self-mortification, whereas Muzaffar came from contemplation to self- mortification."

I heard Khawaja Muzaffar saying that:

"What blessings other mystics obtained by traversing deserts and wilderness I gained that while in the seat of power and pre-eminence."

Some foolish and conceited persons have attributed this saying of his to arrogance; it is merely their short sightedness. It is never arrogant to declare one's true state, especially when the speaker is a capable spiritualist. Muzaffar has an excellent and honored successor namely Rashid Khawaja Ahmad.

One day, while I was in his company, a pretender of Sufism from Nishapur visited him and during discussion he used the expression, "He becomes annihilated and then becomes subsistent." Khawaja Muzaffar said:

"How subsistence can emerge of annihilation? Annihilation means not-being, while subsistence refers to being, and each negates the other. Therefore, annihilation is known until non-being is under consideration and if non-being is missing i.e. non-being becomes being then its identity is lost. Essences are not capable of annihilation, however attributes can annihilates, and similarly the cause is also get annihilated. Therefore, when attributes and causes are annihilated, the object invested with attributes and the Author of causes continues to subsist. His essence does not admit of annihilation."

I do not recollect the precise words in which Sheikh Muzaffar expressed, but this was how I comprehended his words. Now I will explain more clearly what he intended, in order that it may be more generally benefited.

One's free will is an attribute of him, and he is veiled by his will from the will of Allah, therefore man's attributes veil him from Allah. Necessarily, the Divine will is eternal and the human will is non eternal, and what is eternal cannot be annihilated. When the Divine will in regard to a man becomes subsistent, his will is annihilated and his personal initiative disappears.

One day in a hot weather wearing traveler's dress covered with dust and my hair in disorder I came into Sheikh's presence. He asked me to tell him in what state I was then. I replied that I had desire of *sama* سماع (singing). He immediately sent for a *qawal* (tale teller) and a number of musicians. In the mean time a group who would fall into

ecstasy on *sama* also came. I being young and enthusiastic and filled with the ardor of a novice became deeply agitated as the initial verses fell to my ear. After a while when break took place, I also regained my normal posture. Sheikh asked me how was the *sama*. I told him that I had enjoyed it very much. He said:

"A time will come when *sama* will be no more to you than the croaking of a raven. The desire of *sama* only lasts so long as there is no contemplation, and as soon as contemplation is attained the desire for *sama* subsides. Take care not to accustom yourself to this, lest it becomes part of your nature and keep you back from contemplation."

Chapter XIII

Modern Mystics of Different Countries

If the detailed account of all the Sheikhs from different parts of the world is mentioned it would lengthen the book and if some are mentioned and some are left would not meet my aim. Therefore I now mention the names of the *Sufis* and leading spiritualists who have lived in my time or are still alive. They are eminent lords and Sheikhs of the path of Sufism. They are not the formalists but the true spiritualists. The aim of mentioning the names of these Sheikhs (may Allah have mercy on them) is that it may ease up the acquisition of my desire.

Syria and Iraq

Zaki Ibn Ula was an eminent Sheikh and a guide of his time. When I met him I found him to be like a flame of love. He was endowed with superb signs and evidences.

Abu Jafar Muhammad b. al-Misbah Saydalani was one of the leading aspirants to Sufism. He discoursed eloquently on theosophy and had a great fondness for Hussein b. Mansur. I have read some of his works.

Abu al-Qasim Suddi followed the path of mortification and abstinence. He led an excellent spiritual life. He cared for dervishes of whom he had great belief.

Persia

Abu al-Hasan b. Saliba, spoke with the utmost elegance on Sufism and with extreme lucidity on *tawhid* (unification). His sayings are well known.

Abu Ishaq b. Sheharyar was one of the most venerable *Sufis* and well authoritarian.

Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Bakran was a great *Sufi*.

Abu Muslim was unique and highly respected Sheikh.

Abu al-Fateh b. Saliba is hopeful of blessings and succession to his father.

Abu Talib was a man enraptured by the words of the Truth.

Abu Ishaq was a grand Sheikh but I could not meet him.

Qahistan, Azerbaijan, Tibrastan, and Kimish

Shafique Farj alias as **Akhi Zanjani**, was a man of excellent disposition and admirable doctrine. He was the Sheikh of his time and his good deeds are many.

Vandari was among the venerable of Sufism.

Badshah Taib was profoundly versed in mysticism.

Abu Abdullah Junaid was a very respectable Sheikh and always used to be in service of the aspirants of Sufism.

Abu Tahir Makshuf was amongst the eminent *Sufis*.

Khawaja Hussein Simnan is an enraptured and hopeful for the Mercy of Allah.

Sheikh Sehlaki was one of the intellectuals of dervishes.

Ahmad was an excellent successor to his father **Khurqani**.

Adib Kumandi was distinguished personality of the time.

Kirman

Khawaja Ali b. al-Hussein al-Sairgani was the wandering devotee who made long journeys in the way of Truth. His son, **Hakim** is also a wonderful personality.

Muhammad b. Salma was among the eminent of his time. There have been unknown and hidden saints of Allah before him but now many hopeful youths to be found there.

Khurasan

It is a blessed area where nowadays shadow of Allah's blessing is in its full bloom.

The Sheikh and *Mujtahid* (practicing Jurisprudence) **Abu al-Abbas** was the heart of spiritualism..

Khawaja Abu Jafar Muhammad b. Ali al-Jawani is one of the eminent theosophists of Sufism.

Abu Jafar Turshizi was highly respected personality.

Khawaja Mahmud Nishapuri was regarded as an authority by his contemporaries.

Sheikh Muhammad Mahshuq had an excellent spiritual life.

Jumrat al-Hub was pious inwardly and was happy with his *auqat* (time).

Khawaja Syed Muzaffar son of **Sheikh Abu** is hopeful to become an example to all *Sufis* and a point to which their hearts will turn.

Khawaja Ahmad Hammadi Sarkhasi was the falcon of his time. For some time we remained together and I witnessed many wondrous experiences from him. He was man of the path of the *Shariat*.

Sheikh Ahmad Najar Samarqandi belonged to Merv, was the *sultan* of the path of the *Shariat*.

Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Abi Ali al-Aswad was an excellent successor to his father, and was unique in the sublimity of his aspiration and the sagacity of his intelligence.

It would be difficult to mention all the Sheikhs of Khurasan. I have met over three hundred saints in Khurasan alone residing separately and who had such mystical endowments that a single one of them would have been enough for the whole world. They are the luminaries of love and prosperity on the spiritual sky of Khurasan.

Transoxania

The Khawaja and Imam, honored by all high and low, **Abu Jafar Muhammad b. al-Hussein al-Harmi** a hearer, ecstatic and enraptured man, who has great affection towards the seekers of Allah. He was all purity in his life.

Khawaja Abu Muhammad Bathghari had an excellent spiritual life, and free of weakness in his devotional practices.

Muhammad Ailaqi was the Sheikh and respectable personality of his time. He hated forms and habits.

Khawaja Arif was unique and unparallel person in his days.

Ali b. Ishaq was very eloquent in his speech and a guide of his time.

I have met all these Sheikhs and got knowledge of their virtues and literary attainments. They were all profound theosophists.

Ghazna

Abu al-Fadl b. Asad was venerable director, with brilliant evidences and manifest miracles. He was like a flame of the fire of love. His spiritual state was hidden.

Ismail al-Shashi was highly esteemed Sheikh. He followed the path of blame.

Sheikh Salar Tibri was one of the *Sufi* divines and had an excellent state.

Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. al-Hakim known as **Murid** also, was amongst the intoxicated of Allah. He was unrivaled by any contemporary in his own field. His state was hidden from the mankind, but his signs and evidences were conspicuous. His state was very high and his inward was much pure and cleaner than his outward.

Sheikh Said b. Abu Said al-Ayar was preserver of *Hadith*. He had seen many Sheikhs and had lofty spiritual state and had great knowledge of the path. He followed the way of concealment and never exhibited his true character.

Abu al-Ala Abd al-Rahim b. Ahmad Safri is honored by all *Sufis*, and my heart is well-disposed towards him. His spiritual state was excellent. He was well acquainted with various branches of science.

Qasurat b. Muhammad al-Kardezi has boundless affection for the *Sufis* and holds every one of them in reverence.

In consequence to my faith, I have firm conviction of the people and divines of Ghazna, that hereafter persons will appear in whom we shall believe, and that those wretches who have found their way into this city and have made the externals of Sufism abominable will be cleared out, so that Ghazna will once more become the abode of saints and venerable men.

Chapter XIV

Doctrines of Sufism

I have already stated in the recital of Abu al-Hasan Nuri that the Sufism has twelve sects, of which ten are approved and two are reprobated. Every one of these ten sects has an excellent system and doctrine as regards both *mujahida* مجاهدة (purgation) and *mushahida* مشاهده (contemplation). They all possess elegant style in their doctrines and all own subtleties of *mushahida*. Although they differ from each other in their devotional practices and ascetic disciplines, but they agree in the fundamentals and derivatives of the *Shariat* (religious law) and *Tawhid* (Unification). Abu Yazid said, "اختلاف العلماء رحمة الا في تجريد التوحيد except true concept of Unification, the difference of *Ulema* (religious Authorities) on religious matters is mercy," and in agreement to this there is a famous *Hadith* (tradition) also. The real essence of Sufism lies amidst the sayings and traditions of the Sheikhs, and its division among different *Sufi* sects is only figuratively and formally. I will briefly touch upon this division and will elucidate the basis and basics of the doctrine of each sect in order that the seekers of Truth may understand the matter, *Ulama* get the proofs, may cause reform to the disciples and I may be blessed with success in both the worlds.

The Muhasibis

They are the followers of Abu Abdullah al-Harith b. al-Asad Muhasibi. All of his contemporaries are agreed upon that he was a man of approved spiritual influence and mortified passions. He was learned in theology, jurisprudence, and mysticism. His discourse is on detachment from world, proofs of unification, and accuracy of outward and inward states. The oddity of his doctrine is that he does not reckon *rida* (satisfaction) among the *maqamat* (stations). He considers *rida* amongst the types of *ahwal* (states). He was the first to hold this view, which was adopted later on by the people of Khurasan. The Sheikhs of Iraq on the contrary, asserted that *rida* is one of the stations and it is the extreme of *tawakul* (trust in Allah). The controversy between them is still on and we start our discussion from this point.

The Nature of Satisfaction (*rida*)

It will be proper to first establish the true nature of *rida* رضا (satisfaction) and set forth its various kinds and after this the reality of *maqam* (station) and *hal* (state) and the difference between them will be discussed.

Rida is mentioned both in Quran as well as in Hadith (traditions of Prophet, peace be upon him) and whole *Ummah* is unanimous on it. Allah revealed:

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ

“Allah well pleased with them, and they with Allah:” (Q 5:119),

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ

“Allah’s Good Pleasure was on the Believers when they swore Fealty to thee under the Tree: (Q 48:18).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

ذاق طعم الايمان من قد رضي الله رباً

“Who proclaimed satisfaction on Allah’s being Lord, he has found the True Faith.”

Satisfaction (*rida*) is of two kinds:

- the satisfaction of Allah with man, and
- the satisfaction of man with Allah.

Allah’s satisfaction consists in that He recompenses the man (for his good deeds) and bestows His blessings, favors and *karamat* (miracles) upon him. The man’s satisfaction consists in his performing the commands of Allah and submitting to His decree. Allah’s satisfaction is preferred that of man, for until man is divinely aided he can not submit to Allah’s decree and perform His command, because man’s satisfaction is connected with Allah’s satisfaction and subsists thereby.

In short, the satisfaction of man is that he remains satisfied towards destiny under both the conditions, may he be rewarded or withheld. Similarly, satisfaction also includes that he shows spiritual steadfastness under different circumstances and states, whether they be the manifestation of Divine Beauty or of Divine Majesty; he passes through forbidden areas or blessed with happiness both should be same for him.

And if he is being consumed in the fire of wrath or illuminated by the light of mercy, both should be alike for his heart, as all is being caused by Allah and are evidences of Him and whatever proceeds from Him is right and correct and he must wholeheartedly be satisfied with His decree.

Imam Hussein b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was asked about the saying of Abu Dhar Ghaffari (may Allah be pleased with him): "الفقرالي احب من الغني والسقم احب من الصحة" I love poverty more than prosperity, and sickness than health," Hussein replied:

رحم الله ابا ذرما انا فاقول من اشرف علي حسن اختيار الله لم يتمن الا ما اختار الله له

"Allah have mercy on Abu Dhar! But I say that who ever have the knowledge of His will, does not desire anything except what Allah has chosen for him."

When a man has attained the knowledge of Allah's will and abandoned his own choice he is delivered from all sorrows. This state, however, can not be achieved while in absence from Allah but it requires presence with Allah because "لان الرضا لان الرضا" satisfaction is deliverance from sorrows and heedlessness and cleans the heart from the thoughts of others (than Allah) and frees from the bonds of distresses and troubles," for *rida* (satisfaction) is the cause and means of salvation. The true satisfaction is the acquiescence of one on the knowledge of Allah and to have firm belief that Allah sees him in all circumstances. There are four ways to attain satisfaction:

- the first group gets satisfied with Allah's bounty, it is cognizance;
- the second group who gets satisfied with delight, are worldly;
- the third group gets satisfied with affliction, they pass through diverse distresses; and
- the forth group is of those who are satisfied with being chosen (by Allah), it is love.

He who looks in the gift the Giver accepts it with his soul, and trouble and grief vanishes from his heart. And he who looks in the Giver the gift he is satisfied with the gift and treads the path of satisfaction by his own effort which is painful and grievous. The true gnosis is apprehended only when the seeker is divinely revealed. If gnosis becomes cause of veil

and obstacle then that gnosis is non-cognition, delight is inconvenience and gift becomes veil and who gets satisfied with this in this world suffers from destruction and perdition and his satisfaction is the faggot for Hell. Therefore, the world is not worth that one should keep any concern with it and any thought or grief of it enters one's mind.

Blessing is that which be a proof of the Beneficent and if one is veiled from the Beneficent then it is an affliction. He who is satisfied with the affliction that Allah sends is amongst those who see the Author thereof and they endure its pain with delight in the contemplation of the Beauty of the Beloved and when in the delight of contemplation with the Beloved the affliction is no more an affliction.

Finally, those who are satisfied with being chosen by Allah are His lovers, and for them satisfaction and severity is alike. Their hearts are ever present in His presence and the veils of their confidentiality do not open except in mortification in His love. They are ever present (with Allah) though seem to be absent; they are on Empyrean while living on earth and spiritual with physical existence. Such are the believers of Allah. Their hearts are free of the thoughts of creation and are free from the bonds of stations and states and are ever devoted for the love of Allah Who said:

لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لِنَفْسِهِمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً وَلَا نُشُورًا

"that they have no control of hurt or good to themselves; nor they can control Death nor Life nor Resurrection." (Q 25:3).

To get satisfied with other (than Allah) is surly loss and destruction whereas satisfaction with Allah leads to delight and happiness. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

من لم يرض بالله و بقضائه شغل قلبه وتعب بدنه

"One who is not satisfied with Allah and His Decree, his heart for destiny and causes and his body is captivated by pain and affliction to acquire these things."

Moses said, "اللهم دلني على عمل اذا عملت رضييت عني" O Allah, guide me an action with which, if I did it, Thou would be satisfied."

Allah answered, "انك لا تطيق ذلك يا موسى" thou canst not do that, O Moses!"

Hearing this Moses fell in prostration and started bewailing. Allah sent a revelation to him:

"O son of Imran, My satisfaction with thee consists in thy being satisfied with My decree," i.e. when a man is satisfied with Allah's decrees it is a sign that Allah is satisfied with him.

Bashr Hafi asked Fudayl b. Iyad which was better of abstinence (*zuhd*) and satisfaction (*rida*). Fudayl replied:

الرضا افضل من الزهد لان الراضي لا يتمني فوق منزلته

"*Rida* (satisfaction) is preferred over *zuhd* (abstinence) because it is the last desire of the one who is satisfied. He does not have anything better in his heart to desire, that means he does not have any desire whereas the ascetic is desirous of the *hal* (state) of *Rida* (satisfaction). There is no degree higher than *Rida* which the one who is satisfied should desire. Therefore, the presence with the Truth has superiority over being remain away from Him.

This also justifies the doctrine of Muhasibi, that satisfaction belongs to the class of states and is a gift of Divine, not to the stages that are acquired (by effort). It is possible, however, that the satisfied man should have no desire as the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say in his prayers:

اسالك الرضا بعد القضاء

"O Allah, I ask of Thee satisfaction after going forth of Thy decree," i.e. keep me in such a state that when the decree comes to me from Thee, destiny may find me satisfied with its coming.

Here it is affirmed that satisfaction has no significance before the advent of destiny because under such condition there will only be an intention to be satisfied, which is not the same thing as actual satisfaction. Abu al Abbas b. Ata says:

الرضا نظر القلب الي قديم اختيار الله للعبد

"In the light of eternal choice of Allah, *Rida* (satisfaction) for a man is to take care of his heart." i.e. the man is bound that whatever befalls on him, he should recognize it as the eternal will of Allah and His decree, and should not be distressed, but should accept it cheerfully. Harith Muhasibi, the author of the doctrine, says:

الرضا سكون القلب تحت مجاري الاحكام

"*Rida* (satisfaction) is the quiescence of the heart under the commands which proceed from the Divine decree."

This is a sound doctrine, because the quiescence and tranquility of the heart is not acquired through man's own efforts but is the result of Divine gift. Hence, as an argument to establish that *Rida* is a "state", not a "station", Muhasibi cites the incidence of Utba al-Ghulam, who one night did not sleep, but kept on saying:

ان تعذبني فانالك محب و ان ترحمني فانالك محب

"If Thou punish me I love Thee, and if Thou have mercy on me I love Thee," i.e. the pain of punishment and the pleasure of bounty affect the body alone, whereas the anxiety of love resides in the heart, which is not affected thereby. This also confirms the view of Muhasibi because satisfaction is the result of love, as the lover is satisfied with each and every act of the Beloved. Abu Uthman Hairi says:

منذ اربعين سنة ما اقامني الله في حال فكر هته و ما نقلني الي غيره فسخطته

"For the last forty years I am satisfied in whatever state Allah kept me and never resented when He transferred me from one state to another." This indicates continual satisfaction and perfect love.

Once, a dervish fell into the Tigris River. A man standing on the bank of the river, realizing that the dervish did not know swimming cried out to him: "Shall I tell some one to bring you ashore?"

The dervish said, "No."

He again cried: "Then do you wish to be drowned?"

"No." was the reply of dervish.

The man made another effort and asked: "then what do you wish?"

The dervish replied: "That which Allah wishes. What have I to do with wishing?"

The Sufi Sheikhs have uttered many sayings on satisfaction, which differ in phraseology but agree in two principles that have been mentioned. I have preferred brevity over unnecessary detail. It is appropriated now to mention the definitions of *hal* (state) and *maqam* (station) and distinction between them.

Maqam مقام (station) and **Hal** حال (state)

You must know that **maqam** مقام (station) and **hal** حال (state) are in common use both among **Sufis** and theologians, and it is necessary that the seekers of Truth should know their exact definitions. Although it will not be possible to provide proofs and elaborate their definitions in this section, however endeavor is there to discuss the needed details.

"**Maqam** مقام (station)" denotes one's stay in the Way of Allah, and his fulfillment of all rights and obligations pertaining to that "**maqam**" and his keeping it until he comprehends its perfection. It is beyond man's power to pass through a **maqam** without meeting its due obligations. There are following stations:

- the first station is repentance, (**tawba** توبه)
- the second station is conversion to Allah (**inabat** انابت),
- the third station is abstinence (**zuhd** زهد), and
- the fourth station is trust in Allah (**tawakul** توكل).

It is not permissible that one should pretend to conversion without repentance, or to abstinence without conversion, or to trust in Allah without abstinence.

وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ

(Those ranged in ranks say): "Not one of us but has a place appointed;" (Q 37:164).

"**Hal** حال (state)" is that state which descends from Allah into a man's heart. It is not attainable by efforts neither it can be repelled with efforts when it happens.

The term **maqam** (station) denotes, the way of the seeker of the Truth, progress in his diligence and efforts and acquisition of rank in the Court of Lord on the merit of one's excellence and efforts. The term **hal** (state) denotes that favor and grace of Allah which descends on man's heart without any mortification on his part.

Therefore, **maqam** (station) belongs to the category of acts and **hal** (state) is favor and grace of Lord. **Maqam** (station) is acquired through efforts whereas **hal** (state) is gifted. Hence the man of **maqam** (station) stands by his own self-mortification, whereas the man of **hal** (state) is dead to self and stands by a "state" which Allah creates for him.

Here the Sheikhs are at variance. Some hold that a state may be permanent, while other rejects this view. Harith Muhasibi maintained that state may be permanent. He argues that love and longing, and contraction and expansion are all states and if the states lack permanency then the lover would not be a lover and desirer would not be a desirer. And until a man's state becomes his attribute the name of that state is not properly applied to him. It is for this reason that he holds *rida* (satisfaction) to be one of the states, and the same view is indicated by the saying of Abu Uthman, "منذ أربعين سنة ما أقامني الله عليّ" "for the last forty years I am satisfied in whatever state Allah kept me."

The other group denies that a state can be permanent. Junaid says:

الاحوال كالبروق فان بقيت فحديث النفس

"States are like flashes of lightning: their permanence is merely a suggestion of the lower soul."

Another group has said:

الاحوال كاسمها يعني انها كما تحل بالقلب تزول

"States are like their name, as soon as they reveal on the heart they perish," and whatever remains behind is the attribute and the attribute subsists in an object which must be more perfect than the attribute itself. This is absurd. I have set forth the distinction between *hal* (state) and *maqam* (station) in order that wherever they occur in the phraseology of the *Sufis* or in the present work you may know what is signified by these terms.

This leads to know that satisfaction is the end of *maqamat* (stations) and the beginning of the *ahwal* (states). It is such a stage whose one side rests on acquisition and effort, and the other side on love and longing. There is no *maqam* (station) above it and at this point mortification ceases. Its beginning is through efforts and mortification and its end in on Divine's gift and blessing. It is likelihood that one who in the beginning keeps an eye on his *rida* (satisfaction) may consider it a *maqam* (station) and one who at the end see his *Rida* (satisfaction) through the Truth gives it the name of *hal* (state). This is the basis of the doctrine of Muhasibi as regards to the theory of Sufism.

As regards to practice, however, he made no difference, except that he used to warn his disciples against expressions and acts which might lead to error, though the expressions and devotions be very sound.

Once Abu Hamza Baghdadi one of his disciples and an ecstatic man, came to see him. Muhasibi had a cock with him who was habitual of uttering loud notes of and on. One day the crowing of the bird was loud and Abu Hamza gave a shriek. Harith rose up with a knife in his hand and cried on Hamza that he had committed an infidelity. He made an attempt to kill him but his disciples intervened and got saved the life of Hamza. Then he said to Abu Hamza, "Become a Muslim, O miscreant!"

The disciples exclaimed: "O Sheikh, we all know him to be one of the elect saints and Unitarians: why does the Sheikh regard him with suspicion?"

Harith replied: "I also do not suspect him. His heart is adorned with the vision of the Truth and he is a profound Unitarian, but why should he do something which resembles the actions of those who believe in incarnation or his action has the appearance similar to their? The bird is a senseless creature who by nature or habit crow randomly, why should he behave as though its note was the voice of the Truth? The Truth is indivisible, lovers have no rest without supplication to Him and He does not become incarnate, or united with phenomena or commingled with them."

When Abu Hamza perceived the Sheikh's insight, he said: "O Sheikh, although I am right in theory, yet, since my action resembled the action of heretics, I repent and withdraw."

There are so many similar anecdotes referred to him but we have chosen the concise path. His method is laudable, safe for the way of Truth and accomplished for attaining the degree of *sahw* صحو (sobriety). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

من كان يؤمن بالله و الآخر فلا يقض مواقع التهم

"Amongst you who have belief in Allah and Resurrection should refrain himself from imputation"

And I all the time pray to Allah that He may keep my conduct above suspicion! But this is impossible when one associates with worldly formalists whose enmity is aroused by anyone who does not submit to their hypocrisy and sin.

The Qassarīs

They are the followers of Abu Saleh Hamdun b. Ahmad b. Umara al-Qassar, who was a celebrated divine and eminent Sufi. His doctrine was the manifestation and divulgence of *malamat* (blame). His discourses on ethical sciences are of immense value. He used to say:

"One have firm faith that Allah has more and better knowledge of them than the knowledge of mankind," i.e. your dealing with Allah in private should be better than your dealings with men in public, for your preoccupation with men is the greatest veil between you and Allah. I have already given some account of Qassar in the chapter on Blame. From many strange tales named to his credit I for the brevity sake select the following one which he related as:

Once I was walking along Hira canal in Nishapur. Incidentally I came across Noah a known swindler. All the thieves and swindlers of the area were under his influence. He was famous for his courage and generosity. I asked him, "O Noah, what is generosity?" He said, "My generosity or yours?" I said, "Describe both." He replied:

"My generosity is that I substitute my clothing with *Muraqqa* (patched frock) and practice the conduct appropriate to that garment, until I become a *Sufi* and refrain from sin because of the shame I may feel before people. Generosity on your part is that you put off the *Muraqqa* in order that you because of people or they because of you may not be affected with evils. Therefore, my generosity is formal observance of the *Shariat* (religious law), while your generosity is spiritual observance of the Truth."

This is very sound principle.

The Tayfurīs

They are the followers of Abu Yazid Tayfur b. Isa al-Bastami, a great and eminent Sheikh. His doctrine is *ghalabah* غلبه (rapture) and *sukr* سكر (intoxication). Rapture here refers to rapturous longing for Allah and intoxication of love does not belong to those things which can be acquired by human

efforts. It is futile to claim, and ridiculous to imitate anything that lies beyond the range of acquisition. Intoxication is not an attribute of the sober, and man has no power of drawing it to himself. The intoxicated man is enraptured and pays no heed to created things. It does not happen that he should manifest a quality involving conscious effort. The *Sufi* Sheikhs are unanimous that one should only follow that man who is steadfast in his states and has passed through its ups and downs. But still there are some who consider it lawful if the way of rapture and intoxication is trodden with effort, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "ابكو فان لم تبكو فتباكوا" weep, or else appear like them!"

Now, to imitate others for the sake of pretension is clear polytheism, but if one imitates with an intention that Allah may raise him to the rank of those whom he has imitated, is in accordance with the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said, "من تشبه فهو منهم" whoever makes himself like unto a people is one of them."

The seeker should fulfill whatever purgation he might come across in this way and keep hope that may Allah opens the doors of the way of Truth to him, as one of the Sheikhs have said, "المشاهدات مواريث المجاهدات" contemplations are the fruition and result of mortifications."

My own view is that, mortifications are always excellent, but intoxication and rapture do not belong to the class of achievable by efforts hence, they cannot be induced by mortifications, which in themselves never become a cause of intoxication. Mortifications only take place in the state of sobriety and one who is sober never like to accept intoxication, it is obstinate.

I will now set forth the different opinions of the Sheikhs concerning the true nature of *sukr* (intoxication) and *sahw* (sobriety), in order that difficulties may be removed.

***Sukr* سكر (Intoxication) and *Sahw* صحو (Sobriety)**

You must know that *sukr* سكر (intoxication) and *ghalabah* غلبه (rapture) are terms used by spiritualists to denote the rapture of love for Allah, while the term *sahw* صحو (sobriety) expresses the attainment of desire. They have deliberated this matter in

length. One group prefer sobriety to intoxication and the other group hold the intoxication to be superior.

Abu Yazid and his followers prefer intoxication to sobriety. They say that sobriety involves the fixity and equilibrium of human attributes, which are the greatest veil between Allah and the man, whereas intoxication involves the diminish of catastrophe, blemishes of human attributes, and the annihilation of foresight and choice, so that only those faculties remains to act which are above humanity and these faculties are more perfect and accomplished. Thus David (may blessings of Allah be on him) was in the state of sobriety when an act proceeded from him which Allah attributed to him and said, "وَقَتْلَ دَاوُدَ جَالُوتَ" and David slew Goliath" (Q 2:251), but Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was in the state of intoxication when an act proceeded from him which Allah attributed to Himself and said:

وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى

"When thou threwest (a handful of dust), it was not thy act, but Allah's:" (Q 8:17).

How great is the difference between man to man!

Allah said to him who was dormant to himself and set to his own attributes that "you did it", and to whom who was firm with the Truth and annihilated from his attributes said "whatever was done We did it". The attribution of a man's act to Allah is better than the attribution of Allah's act to a man, for in the latter case the man stands by the attributes of humanity, while in the former case he stands through Allah because when man stands by human attributes his example is like this:

When David looked at where he was not supposed to look i.e. the wife of Adriya, in remand of that what happened with David, only he knew but when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) looked at, resultantly, that woman was forbidden for her husband. The David was in state of sobriety and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was dwelling at *maqam* (station) of intoxication.

Junaid and his followers prefer *sahw* صحو (sobriety) to *suhr* سكر (intoxication). They say that intoxication is a palace of misfortunes, because it involves the disturbance of one's

normal state and loss of health and self-control. The desire of the seeker is to get to know the mystical meanings, may these be concerning to annihilation or subsistence, or of effacement or affirmation, and without being in right state how he can verify his quest. The hearts of the seekers of Truth should remain clear of all created and merely by closing eyes one is not free from the world and its motives and nor one is free from its tribulations. The attachment of creature with other things (save Allah) is because they are ignorant of their reality and had the reality be known to them they would have got escaped of them.

There are two ways to see the things correctly. He who looks at anything sees it either with the eye of subsistence (*baqa* بقا) or with the eye of annihilation (*fana* فنا). In the first case he perceives that the whole universe is imperfect in comparison with their own subsistence, for they in their subsistence are not subsistent to their own self. And if he looks with the eye of annihilation, he perceives that all created things are non-existent beside the subsistence of Allah. In either case he turns away from created things. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said in his prayer, "اللهم ارنا الا شياء كما هي" O Allah, show us things as they really are," because, whoever truly perceives the reality, finds peace. And this saying of Allah has also similar meaning:

فا عتبر وايا ولي الابصار

"Take warning, then, O ye with eyes (to see)! (Q 59:2).

Because until we see, how can we perceive warning. Such vision cannot be properly attained except in the state of sobriety, and the intoxicated have no knowledge thereof. Since Moses was in state of intoxication, therefore, he could not endure when Allah manifested His glory, but fell down in a swoon (Q 7:143), but Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who was in state of sobriety, beheld the same glory continuously, all the way from Mecca until he stood at the distance of two bow-lengths from the Divine presence (Q 53:9) and his every moment was ever-increasing consciousness,

شربت الراح كاسا بعد كاس فما نفذ الشراب وما رويت

I took wine of His *Marifat* in abundance, but
Neither wine finished nor did I get satisfied.

My Sheikh, who followed the doctrine of Junaid, said:

"*Sukr* (intoxication) is child's play, but sobriety is the death field of men."

I, in agreement with my Sheikh say, that the perfection of the state of the intoxicated man is sobriety and the lowest stage of sobriety is the perception of powerlessness of human nature, therefore, even that sobriety which may leads to some injury is better than *sukr* (intoxication) because intoxication is a total catastrophe.

Uthman Maghrabi, in the earlier part of his life, spent twenty years in solitude, living in wilderness and deserts where he never heard the sound of a human voice. His body shriveled due to toil and diligence, his eyes became as small as the eye of a sack-needle and his facial features had hardly anything common with the human face. After twenty years he was commanded to associate with mankind. He resolved to begin with the friends of Allah and attendant of Kaba and left for Mecca. The Sheikhs of Mecca through insight were aware of his coming and went forth to meet him. Finding him so changed that he hardly seemed to be human creature, they said to him:

"O Abu Uthman, you have spent twenty years in such condition that sons of Adam are unable to perceive. Tell us.

Why did you dwell in wilderness?

What did you see there?

What all did you gain?

And now why have you come back?"

He relied: "I went because of intoxication, and I saw the wretchedness of intoxication. I have come back with humility and despair. "

All the Sheikhs said in one voice: "O Abu Uthman, it is not lawful for anyone after you to explain the meaning of sobriety and intoxication, for you have done justice to the whole matter and have shown forth the evil of intoxication."

Hence, *sukr* (intoxication) is to erroneously consider self annihilation while the attributes really subsists and this is a veil. But *Sahw* (sobriety) on the other hand, is the vision of subsistence while the attributes of human nature are annihilated and this is actual revelation.

It is absurd for anyone to suppose that intoxication is nearer to annihilation (*fana*) than sobriety, for intoxication is such an aspect that adds to sobriety, and so long a man is thoughtful of increase in his attributes he remains ignorant and when attributes starts diminishing, the seekers of the Truth get hopeful. This is the limit and end state of seekers in *sahw* (sobriety) and *sukr* (intoxication).

Yahya b, Maud wrote to Abu Yazid: "What do you say of one who becomes intoxicated by just taking a single drop from the ocean of love?"

Bayazid wrote him in reply: "What do you say of one who drinks all the rivers of the world filled with wine of love and still cry for more to satisfy his thirst of love?"

People perceived as if Yahya was speaking of intoxication, and Bayazid of sobriety. But in fact the man of sobriety is he who is unable to drink even a single drop, and the man of intoxication is he who in his intoxicated state drinks all and still desires for more. The wine of love is an instrument of intoxication and demands what is homogeneous with itself and *sahw* (sobriety) is anti intoxication, therefore, sobriety has no relation with intoxication.

The *sukr* (intoxication) is of two kinds, i.e. with the wine of friendship and with the cup of affection.

The former is dependant on a cause i.e. it arises because of a benefit but the later has no cause, since it arises from the vision of the benefactor. He who regards the benefit sees through himself and therefore sees himself but he who regards the benefactor sees through Him and therefore does not see himself, so that, although he is in state of intoxication but his intoxication is sobriety.

The *Sahw* (sobriety) is also of two kinds, i.e. sobriety in heedlessness and sobriety in love.

The former is the greatest of veils, but the later is the clearest of revelations. The sobriety that is connected with heedlessness is actually intoxication, while that which is linked with love, although it is intoxication but is actually sobriety. When the origin is firmly established, sobriety and intoxication resemble one another, but when origin and base is missing, both are useless.

In short, sobriety and intoxication exist with difference of opinion amongst seekers of the Truth. If the Truth unveils Its secrets, both sobriety and intoxication appear to be uninvited intruders as the boundaries of both are joined, and the end of the one is the beginning of the other, and beginning and end are terms that imply separation, which has only a relative existence. In union all separations are negated, as the poet says:

إذا طلع الصباح بنجم راح تساوي فيه سكران وصاح

When the morning rises with the heart pleasing goblet of wine,
The drunkard and the sober are in similar state.

At Sarkhas there were two Sheikhs, namely, Luqman and Abu Fadl Hasan. One day Luqman came to Abu Fadl and found him searching something from the pieces of papers (of manuscript) in his hand. He asked him that what he was seeking in those papers. Abu Fadl replied, "the same thing which you are seeking by turning them away." Luqman said: "Then why this difference?" Abu Fadl answered:

"You see a difference when you ask me what I am seeking. Come to sobriety from intoxication and get disgusted of sobriety, in order that the difference may be removed from you and that you may know what you and I are in search of."

The Tayfuris has only this much difference with Junaidis which has been indicated. Their doctrine as regards to ethics consists in shunning companionship and choosing retirement from the world, and he enjoined all his disciples to do the same. If attained, this is a praiseworthy and laudable Path.

Junaidis

They are the followers of Abu al-Qasim al-Junaid b. Muhammad, who in his time was called the Peacock of the *Ulama*. He was the chief of the seekers of the Truth and the *Imam* of their *Imams*. In contrary to Tayfuris his doctrine is based on *sahw* صحو (sobriety). The difference between them has already been explained. It is the best known and most celebrated of all doctrines, and all of my Sheikhs were from this sect. Besides *sahw* صحو (sobriety) and *sukr* سكر (intoxication), Junaidis also have difference with other Sheikhs on matters pertaining to ethics and principles of Sufism. Want

of space forbids me to discuss it further in this book. Those who wish to become better acquainted with it must seek information from other books as my aim for this book is to ensure brevity.

When Hussein b. Mansur (al-Hallaj) in his rapture state broke off all relations with Umru b. Uthman and came to Junaid, he asked him for what purpose he had come to him. Hussein said: "To get benefited from Sheikh's association." Junaid replied: "I do not accept insane in my association. Association demand sanity and if you join me with this affliction of insanity the result of such behavior will be same as it has been your association with Sahl b. Abdullah and Umru b. Uthman."

Hussein said, " ايها الشيخ الصحو والسكر صفتان للعبد وما دام العبد محجوبا عن ربه حتي O Sheikh, sobriety and intoxication are two attributes of man, and man is veiled from his Lord until his attributes are annihilated."

Junaid replied, " اخطأت في الصحو والسكر لان الصحو بلا خلاف عبارة عن صحة حال العبد مع الحق وذلك لايدخل تحت صفة العبد واكتساب الخلق وانا اري you are in error concerning sobriety and intoxication. The former without difference denotes soundness of one's spiritual state in relation to Allah, and this state does not fall in the class of ones attributes or attainable by efforts. O son of Mansur, your words are meaningless and absurd."

Nuris

They are the followers of Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. Muhammad Nuri who is one of the most eminent and illustrious *Sufi Ulama*. He is well known amongst the *Sufis* because of the clarity in wisdom and conclusiveness in proofs. His doctrine about Sufism is laudable and is based on excellent principles. In his doctrine *tasawwuf* تصوف (mysticism) has superiority over *faqr* (poverty), and in matters of conduct he is in accord with the doctrine of Junaid.

The peculiarity of his doctrine is that in companionship he prefers his companion's claim to his own, and considers companionship illegal without preference. He also holds that companionship is obligatory on part of dervishes, and that retirement from the world is not a praiseworthy act. It is

obligatory for everyone to prefer his companion to himself. He said:

اياكم والعزلة فان العزلة مقارنة الشيطان وعليكم بالصحبة فان في الصحبة رضا الرحمن

"Beware of solitude! For it is nearness with Satan; and must you join companionship, for therein is the satisfaction of the Merciful Allah."

Now I will deliberate on the true nature of *ithar* (preference), and it will be fully explained in the chapter on companionship and solitude in order to make it more generally instructive.

Preference (*ithar* ايثار)

Allah said:

وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

"But give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot)." (Q 59:9). This verse was particularly revealed concerning the poor among the companions.

The true nature of preference consists in maintaining the rights of the person with whom one associates, and even gives away his own share to him. One should bear trouble for the sake of promoting his happiness because preference is the rendering of help to others, and putting it into practice. Allah commanded the Prophet (peace be upon him):

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

"Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant." (Q 7:199).

This will be explained in the chapter on the rules of companionship. Here the aim is to explain about preference only which falls under two categories, in companionship, as has been mentioned; and secondly, in love. Although there is a sort of trouble in preferring the claim of one's companion but in preferring the claim of one's beloved there is only pleasure and delight.

It is a well known tale that when Ghulam Khalil showed malice and started troubling the *Sufis* on different pretext, he got Nuri, Raqqam and Abu Hamza arrested. They were produced before the Caliph as a group of heretics. Ghulam Khalil

convinced the Caliph that their death would eliminate the root of heretics, since they were their leaders. The Caliph immediately acted on his advice and gave orders for their execution. When the executioner approached Raqqam, Nuri rose and put his head under the sword with the utmost cheerfulness and submission. All the spectators were amazed. The executioner said: "O brave man, the sword is not a thing that people desire to meet as eagerly as you have welcomed it whereas your turn has not yet come." Nuri answered:

"Yes; my doctrine is founded on preference. Life is the most precious thing in the world. I wish to sacrifice the few breaths left to me on my brethren's sake. In my opinion, one moment of this world is better than a thousand years of the next world, because this is the place of service and that is the place of proximity, and proximity is attained by service."

The incident was immediately reported to the Caliph who got so astonished on the tenderness of Nuri and the fineness of his saying that he suspended their execution and later on they were handed over to chief *Qadi*, Abu al-Abbas b. Ali, to further inquire into the matter. The *Qadi* took them to his house and questioned them concerning *Shariat* (religious law) and the Truth. He found them perfect in all respects and he felt remorse for his ignorance and negligence about them. Nuri said:

"O *Qadi*, although you have asked all but still you have not asked anything to the point, for Allah has servants whose existence is through Him, drink through Him, sit through Him, live through Him, and abide in contemplation of Him. If they were cut off from contemplating Him they would cry out in anguish."

The *Qadi* was amazed at the subtlety of his speech and soundness of his state and immediately he wrote to the Caliph that if those *Sufis* were heretics, then he was evidence to the fact and declared that there was none in the world a Unitarian. The Caliph called them to his presence and asked them to demand boon. They replied:

"The only thing we desire of you is that you should stop thinking about us, and neither take us as your favorites nor banish us from your court, for your favor and displeasure are alike to us."

The Caliph wept and dismissed them with honor.

Nafi²¹ (may Allah be pleased with him) related:

Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) desired to eat fish. I sought through the town, but did not find. However after few days I happened to procure it. After cooking I presented it to him. I noticed an expression of joy on his face as he received it. In the mean time a beggar came to his door and asked for something. He ordered his servant to give that fish to the beggar. The servant pointed out, "O master, you have desired fish for several days, now you are giving it to the beggar." He suggested giving something else to the beggar but Ibn Umar replied, "this fish is unlawful to me, for I have put it out of my mind on account of a tradition which I heard from the Prophet (peace be upon him):

ایما امریء یشتہی شہوة فرد شہوتہ و اثر علی نفسہ غفرلہ

"When a person meets his desire and then repel it and prefers other to himself, he shall be forgiven."

Once ten dervishes lost their way in the wilderness and were overtaken by thirst. They had very little water with them and everyone preferred the claim of the others, so that none of them would drink and they all died except one. The survived drank that water and with its strength escaped death. Someone said to him that it would have been better had he also not drunk. He replied:

"O my brother, had I not drunk at that time according to religious law I would have committed suicide and on resurrection would have punished on this account."

The other said: "Then did your friends kill themselves?"

The dervish said; "No, they refused to drink in order that their companions might drink, but when I alone survived I was legally obliged to drink."

At the time of [Hijra](#) (migration) when the infidels of Mecca had conspired to kill Prophet (peace be upon him), Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) slept on the bed of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who along with Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) had flown from Mecca and rested in a cave.

²¹ A well-known traditionalist, died 120 A.H.

Allah called Gabriel and Mikhail and said to them that He had established brotherhood amongst them and had made longer one's life than other. Now tell Me who amongst you gives his life to his brother and get ready to meet death before him. Both of them desired for life. Allah said:

"Have you noticed the state of Ali that how much superiority he has over you? I established brotherhood between him and My Prophet. Ali accepted killing and death and slept on his bed and sacrificed his life on Muhammad. Now you go on earth and protect him from the enemies."

Both the angels came and one sat on the head part whereas second occupied the seat near Ali's feet. Gabriel said:

"O Ali, who can match you because today Allah has given you superiority over angels and you are enjoying your sleep."

And Allah revealed the following verse in honor of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him):

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

"And there is the type of man who gives his life to earn the pleasure of Allah; And Allah is full of kindness to (His) devotees. (Q 2:207).

In the battle of **Uhad** when Allah put the Muslims in trial, about that time an Ansari woman has narrated:

I went to the battle field to serve the injured. I saw one companion badly injured and counting his last breaths. He requested for some water. As soon as I gave him water, another injured shouted for water. The first injured without drinking returned the water and commanded me to serve the other injured first. As soon as I reached to him and gave him the water, another injured gave a call for water. The second injured also acted like the first one and returned the water without taking any sip. The similar situation kept on occurring until when I reached to the seventh injured, he had already died. I thought to serve those who had called for water earlier but all of the six had also died before I could reach to them. So all seven died but everyone preferred other over his own thirst and Allah praised their act as:

وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

"But give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot)." (Q 59:9).

One day, a devotee from Israelites who had served Allah for four hundred years, said, "O Lord, if Thou had not created these mountains, excursion and traveling on earth would have been easier for Thy servants." The Divine command came to the Apostle of that time to tell to the devotee:

"What business has you to interfere in My kingdom? Now, since you have interfered therefore I have removed your name from the register of the blessed and inscribe it in the register of the damned."

On hearing this, the devotee shivered with joy and bowed to the ground in thanksgiving. The Apostle said: "O brother, why this thanks giving for damnation." The devotee replied:

"My thanks giving are not for damnation, but for because my name is at least inscribed in one of His registers. Then he said, "O Apostle, I have a boon to ask". The Apostle asked him to let him know his request. The devotee said:

"Say unto Allah, since Thou wilt send me to Hell, make me so large that I may take the place of all sinful Unitarians, and they all go to Paradise."

Allah commanded the Apostle to tell the devotee that the probation which he had undergone was not for the purpose of humiliating him, but to reveal him to the people, and on the Day of Resurrection to whom he intercedes would enter in Paradise.

On my quest Ahmad Hammadi of Sarkhasi narrated this account about his repentance.

Once I along with my camels set out from Sarkhas and took abode in a jungle. I stayed there for a considerable time, during which I always desired to remain hungry and oblige others by giving my share of food in observance of Allah's command, "وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ" but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot)" (Q 59:9). I sincerely had devoted myself to such people possessing this quality.

One day a hungry lion came from desert and killed one of my camels. After that he occupied a place on higher ground and

started roaring. In no time beasts of the jungle gathered around him. The lion came down to the dead camel and tore it into pieces and went back to the higher ground without having eaten anything. The beasts began to eat, and the lion waited until they had gone away after satisfying their hunger. Then he approached in order to eat a morsel, but seeing a lame fox in the distance he withdrew once more until the newcomer had eaten his fill. After that, he came and ate some of the camel's meat. I was watching all this from a distance. As he intended to leave the hunting place, he spoke to me in an eloquent human voice and said:

"O Ahmad, to prefer others to one's self in the matter of food is an act only worthy of dogs. The men on the way to Allah sacrifice their lives and souls."

When I saw this clear demonstration I renounced all worldly occupations, and that was also the cause of my repentance.

Jafar Khuldi said that one day, when Abu al-Hasan Nuri was praying in solitude I went to overhear him, for he was very eloquent. In his supplication he was praying:

"O Lord, in Thy eternal knowledge and power and will Thou dost punish the people of Hell, whom Thou hast created; and if it be Thy unchangeable will to make Hell full of mankind. Thou art able to fill that Hell and all its limbos with me alone and send them to Paradise."

I was amazed by this prayer, until some one came to me in my dream and said:

"Allah bids thee tell Abu al-Hasan that he has been forgiven on account of his compassion for Allah's creature and his reverence for Him."

He was called Nuri because whenever he discoursed in a dark house it used to be illuminated by the *Nur* (light) of his spirituality. And by the *Nur* (light) of the Truth he used to read the inner most thoughts of his disciples, so that Junaid had to say that Abu al-Hasan was the spy of men's hearts. This is the peculiarity of his doctrine. It is on sound principle, and carries great importance in the eyes of those who have insight.

Nothing is harder to a man than to sacrifice his own precious life and things to whom he loves. Allah has made such sacrifice the key of all good deeds, as He said, "لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّىٰ

تَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ by no means shall ye attain righteousness unless ye give (freely) of that which ye love;" (Q 3:92). Who is willing to sacrifice his life, what values him, his wealth and worldly assets? This is the foundation of Sufism. Some one came to Ruwaym and asked him for advice. Ruwaym said:

يا بني ليس هذا الامر غير بذل الروح ان قدرت علي ذلك والا فلا تشتغل بترهات الصوفية

"O my son, the whole affair consists in sacrificing your own-self. It is well if you are able to do this, otherwise do not occupy yourself with the futilities of the *Sufis*," i.e. all except this is futile;

Allah said:

وَلَا تُحْسِبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ

"Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the Presence of their Lord;" (Q 3:169),

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

"And say not of those who are slain in the way of Allah: 'They are dead,' Nay, they are living, though ye perceive (it) not." (Q 2:154).

Know that eternal life is attained by sacrifice of thyself and this blessing is gained by renunciation of self interest in fulfilling Allah's commandments and by obedience to His friends. But from the standpoint of gnosis preference and free choice are all separation, and real preference consists in union with Allah, for the true basis of self interest is self abandonment.

So long as the seeker's progress is connected with acquisition it is destructive, but when the attracting influence of the Truth manifests its dominion all his actions are confounded, and he loses all power of expression. Neither can any name be applied to him nor any description can be given of him or anything be imputed to him. On this Shibli says in verse:-

غبت عني فما احس بنفسي وتلاشت صفاتي الموصوفة
فانا اليوم غائب عن جميع ليس الا العبارة الملهوفة

"In your separation I am lost to myself and my attributes are annihilated.

Today, I am lost to all things: Naught remains but a forced expression."

The Sahlis

They are the followers of Sahl b. Abdullah Tustari. He was a great and venerable *Sufi*, as has already been mentioned. There are many strange *Karamat* (miracles) vouchsafed to him which intellect fails to comprehend. His doctrine inculcates endeavor and self-mortification and ascetic training, and he used to bring his disciples to perfection through self-mortification.

It is well-known that once he said to one of his disciples to recite continuously Allah, Allah, Allah for the whole day. Next day and the following days he told the disciple to perform the same recitation until he became habituated to that *dikr*. Then he bade him to repeat the same performance at night, until the *dikr* became so familiar that he uttered them even during his sleep. Then he guided him not to repeat it any more, but let all his faculties be engaged in *dikr* (remembering Allah). The disciple did this, until he attained the state that he would always found absorbed in the *dikr* of Allah. Some *Sufi* Sheikhs have said,

ذكر اللسان غفلة وذكر القلب قربة

"*dikr* by tongue is cause of heedlessness and *dikr* by heart is cause of presence with the Truth".

One day, when the disciple was sitting in his house, a piece of wood fell on his head and the injury caused bleeding. The drops of blood started trickling on the ground and drop which landed on the ground would demonstrate inscription الله, الله, الله (Allah, Allah, Allah).

The path of the Sahlis is to educate disciples by acts of self-mortification, and austerity and that of Humdunis (Qassar) is to serve and honor dervishes. The path of Junaidis is to keep watch over one's spiritual state.

Self-mortification and devotion is the name of complete resistance to the *nafs* (lower soul), and until a man knows his lower soul his self-mortification and devotion are of no use to him. I will now explain the knowledge and true nature of the *nafs* (lower soul), so one should know what *nafs* (lower soul) is? And in the later part the doctrines of all sects concerning self-mortification and its principles would be elaborated, so that both are amply manifested to the seekers of the Truth.

The Reality of *nafs* (Lower Soul) and *hawa* (Passion)

You must know that *nafs* نفس (lower soul), etymologically is the essence and reality of anything, but in common use and writings it is used to denote many meanings, and even at times is used for contradictory meanings also. Some take its meaning as spirit whereas some call it manliness and still some refers it to as body and blood. But the theologians accept none of these meaning. However, they all unanimous on that it is the source of evil and wickedness. Some have the view that it is a substance which like *ruh* روح (spirit) has been entrusted to the heart while others hold it to be like life, an attribute of the heart.

But there is a general consensus that through it base qualities are manifested and that it is the immediate cause of blameworthy actions. The actions of *nafs* (lower soul) are of two kinds, namely,

- sins and disobedience of the command of Allah
- base qualities, i.e. pride, envy, avarice, anger, hatred, etc., which are not commendable in law and reason.

These qualities can be removed by self discipline: e.g. sins are removed by repentance, for acts of disobedience and sins are external attributes, whereas the base qualities are internal attributes. The self-discipline is an external act, and repentance is a quality of internal attributes. Therefore, base qualities which appear inwardly can be purged by excellent outwardly attributes and those base qualities which appear outwardly are purged by laudable inwardly attributes.

Both the *nafs* نفس (lower soul) and the *ruh* روح (spirit) are subtle things and exist in the heart just as devils and angels and Paradise and Hell exist in the universe, but the one out of the two is the mansion of good, while the other is the mansion of evil, as eye is the mansion to sight, ear is the palace of hearing and tongue is the mansion of taste and similarly the other attributes which have been inculcated in the human body. Hence, the resistance to the *nafs* (lower soul) is the truth of all acts of devotion and the brilliance of all acts of self-mortification, and without it man can not find his way to Allah because submission to the lower soul is his destruction and resistance to it is his salvation. Allah has also commanded to

resist the *nafs* (lower soul) and have praised those who oppose it and have condemned who submit to their *nafs* and follow its instructions. Allah says:

وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ - فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

"And had restrained (their) souls (نفس) from lower desires, their abode will be the Garden. (Q 79:40-41),

أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰ أَنْفُسُكُمُ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ

"Is it that whenever there comes to you a Messenger with what ye yourselves desire not, ye are puffed up with pride?" (Q 2:87).

And Yusaf (may blessings of Allah be on him) speaks through Quran:

وَمَا أَزِيئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي

"Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul (نفس) is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy," (Q 12:53).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

إذا أراد الله بعبد خيرا بصره الله بعيوب نفسه

"When Allah wants to do good to a person, He makes him to know evils of his *nafs* (lower soul)."

Allah revealed to David:

يا داود عاد نفسك وودني بعد اوتها

"O David, consider your *nafs* (lower soul) thy enemy, thy friendship to Me is in its enmity."

These all are attributes, and every attribute needs an object whereby it subsists, as attribute can not stand by itself and knowledge of that attribute, namely the *nafs* (lower soul), is not attainable save by unveiling its mystery, which knowledge in turn demands an explanation of the human nature and its qualities. People have talked a lot about the reality of humanity that this name implies to what. It is incumbent upon all seekers of the Truth to acquire its knowledge, because one who is ignorant of himself is yet more ignorant of others. Since man is bound to attain *marifat* (know Allah) therefore, he must first know himself, in order that by rightly perceiving his own temporality he may recognize the Eternity of Allah,

and through his own annihilation may understand the Everlastingness of Allah. The following verse of Quran is witness to it:

وَمَنْ يَرْغُبْ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَن سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ

"And who turns away from the religion of Abraham but such as debase their souls with folly." (Q 2:130).

Some venerable elder said that who was ignorant of his self, was more ignorant of others.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه - اي من عرف نفسه بالفناء فقد عرف ربه بالبقاء

"He who knows himself already knows his Lord, i.e. he who understood the annihilation of his *nafs* (lower soul), he found the secret of everlastingness of his Lord." He also said:

من عرف نفسه بالذل فقد عرف ربه بالعز

"Who took his *nafs* (lower soul) as wretched; he perceived the true majesty of his Lord." He further said:

من عرف نفسه بالعبودية فقد عرف ربه بالربوبية

"Who apprehended the humility of his *nafs* (lower soul), he understood the lordship of his Lord."

Who does not know himself, is ignorant of everything and this leads to knowledge of humanity where the people differ.

Among Muslims some assert that man is nothing but *ruh* روح (soul), of which this body is the cuirass and skeleton or residence and resting place, in order to preserve it from interference of natural disposition, and sensation and intelligence are its attributes. But this view is false, because a body which loses its *ruh* (soul) is still called a human being. This identification does not finish, as when a person is alive he is a living human being and when he is dead he is still called dead human being. Moreover, animals also have *ruh* (soul) in their bodies but they are not called human being. Had humanity been the name of *ruh* (soul) everything which possesses it should have been called human being. Since it is not like that, therefore, this assertion is wrong.

Some others have the view that the term is applicable to the soul and the body together, and that it no longer applies when

one is separated from the other; e.g. when two colors, black and white, are combined on a horse, it is called piebald, whereas the same colors, apart from each other, are called black and white and the name piebald will no more exist. This assertion is also wrong because Allah has said:

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا

"Has there not been over Man a long period of Time, when he was nothing – (not even) mentioned?" (Q 76:1).

Here Adam's lifeless clay without soul (for the soul had not yet been joined to his body) is called Man.

Some others have the opinion that human being is such an ingredient which is undividable. Heart, which is the centre of all human attributes, is its resting place. This is also absurd, for if anyone is killed and his heart is taken out of his body he does not lose its identity as human being. Moreover, it is agreed that Adam's body did not have heart before the *ruh* (soul).

Some pretenders to Sufism have fallen into error on this subject. They declare that human being is not that who eats and drinks and suffers decay, but a Divine mystery. This body is his clothing and Divine mystery lies in the interfusion of the natural humors and in the union of body and spirit. In reply to their view point I say that all intellectuals are unanimous that the name of "human being" belongs to all including mad, infidels, immoral and ignorant persons, in whom there is no such divine mystery and they also eat and drink and suffer decay. There is no sign in the body which might be named "human being" either while it exists or after it has ceased to exist. Almighty Allah has given the name of "human being" to the sum of the subsistence which He compounded in us, in spite of the fact that some human beings lack these senses. Allah hath said:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سَلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ - ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ - ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَامًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ -

"Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay); then We placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; then we made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (foetus) lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We

developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, the Best to create! (Q 23:12-14).

Therefore, according to the words of Allah, Who is the most veracious of all who speak the truth, from clay adopting to specified forms and after going through different changes what came into being is named as "human being."

Hence, a group of *Sunnis* (orthodox Muslim) has the opinion that human being is a living creature, whose form has been created on such countenance that death does not deprive him of this name, and that he is endowed with a definite physiognomy and a distinct organ both externally and internally. By "a definite physiognomy" they mean that he has either good or ill health, and by "a distinct organ" that he is either mad or sane. It is a general consensus that the more sound a thing is the more perfect it is in constitution.

You must know that in the opinion of theologians of mystic path the most perfect composition of human being includes three elements, i.e. spirit, soul, and body and that each of these has an attribute which subsists therein, the attribute of spirit being intelligence, of soul, passion, and of body, sensation.

Human being is like a prototype of the whole universe. The universe is the name of the two worlds, and in human being signs of both are found. The signs of this world are four elements, viz. water, earth, air and fire, correspond to the phlegm, blood, bile, and melancholy which constitute the human body. The signs of the other world are Paradise, Hell and place of Resurrection. Soul (*jan*) being subtle corresponds with Paradise, *nafs* (lower soul) being evil and grief corresponds with Hell and body corresponds to the place of Resurrection. Paradise is the reward of Allah's satisfaction, and Hell is the result of His anger. Similarly, the spirit of the true believer reflects the delight of knowledge of the Truth, and his lower soul reflects profligacy and depravity which veils him from Allah. The believer, until and unless is released from the Hell, will not be permitted entry in Paradise and he will neither attain the vision of Allah nor purity of love.

Similarly, in this world until and unless Man escapes himself from the evils of his *nafs* (lower soul) he cannot attain the truth of his devotion, as his essence is spirit and is denied the proximity (of Allah) and gnosis. Hence, whoever knows Him in

this world and turns away from all evils and follows the *Shariat* (religious law), at the Resurrection he will be safe from the bridge *Sirat* and Hell.

In short, the spirit of the believer continues to calls him to Paradise, of which it is a type in this world, and his *nafs* (lower soul) calls him to Hell, of which it is a type in this world. The counselor of spirit is intelligence and guide of the *nafs* (lower soul) is erring greed. One guides to righteousness and other to faults. Therefore it behooves on seekers of the Truth to resist their *nafs* (lower soul), in order that thereby they may reinforce their spirit and the intelligence, which are the palaces of the Divine mystery.

Dhu al-Nun says:

أشد الحجاب رؤية النفس وتدبيرها

"Vision of the *nafs* (lower soul) and its deceitfulness is the worst of veils," because, submission to *nafs* is to oppose Allah's will, and disobedience of Truth is the source of all veils.

Abu Yazid Bastami says:

النفس صفة لا تسكن الا بالباطل

"The *nafs* (lower soul) is an attribute which never rests save in falsehood," i.e. it never let to seek the Truth.

Muhammad b. Ali al-Tirmidhi says:

تريدان تعرف الحق مع بقاء نفسك ولا تعرف نفسها فكيف تعرف غيرها

"You wish to know the Truth while your *nafs* (lower soul) subsists in you, although your *nafs* is incapable to know itself, how would it know the other?"

Junaid says:

اساس الكفر قيامك على مراد نفسك

"To fulfill the desires of your *nafs* (lower soul) is the origin of infidelity," because the *nafs* has no concern with the subtlety of Islam, therefore, it always keeps striving to remain away from it. It turns away from Islam and denies it and who denies, is always a stranger.

Abu Suleiman Durani says:

النفس خائنته مانعته و افضل الاعمال خلافها

"The *nafs* (lower soul) is treacherous and an impediment to seek pleasure (of the Truth) and resistance to it is the best of actions," because dishonesty with trust is otherness, while abandonment of *rida* (acquiescence) is a deviation.

There are many more sayings of *Sufis* on the subject but now I turn to my main purpose, which is to set forth the doctrine of Sahl concerning the mortification and discipline of the *nafs* (lower soul), and to explain its true nature.

Mortification of the *nafs* نفس (Lower Soul)

Allah hath said:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

"And those who strive in Our (cause) – We will certainly guide them to Our path:" (Q 29:69).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

المجاهد من جاهد نفسه في الله

"The *Mujahid* (striver) is he who diligently struggles against his *nafs* (lower soul) for the sake of Allah." And he also said:

رجعنا من الجهاد الاصغر الي الجهاد الاكبر

"We have returned from smaller holy war to the greater holy war." On being asked that what the greater holy war was, he replied, "الاهي مجاهدة النفس" listen carefully! it is the struggle against one's *nafs* (lower soul)."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) pronounced that the mortification of *nafs* (lower soul) was superior to the holy war because there is more affliction and distress in struggle against *nafs* than holy war. It is a great accomplishment to go up against desires and crush the ills of *nafs* (lower soul).

The purgation of *nafs* (lower soul) and its methods are plain and manifest and have been laudable in all the religions and nations, and this subject is particularly observed and practiced by the *Sufis*. Although both nobles and common people have spoken about it but signs and sayings of the *Sufi* Sheikhs are too many. Sahl b. Abdullah Tustari was too exaggerated about mortification and he has very sound sayings and hints on the

subject. He had made a habit to have food after fifteen days and with that little feed he lived long life.

All mystics have affirmed the need of mortification, and have declared it to be mean of attaining contemplation. Sahl emphasizes mortification as cause of the contemplation and believe it to be a powerful tool in attaining the objective. He even regarded the present life, spent in mortification and search, as superior to that life of next world which one strive to attain through arduous efforts in this world. He says fruition lies in mortification, one who would serve divinity in this world would be rewarded with the proximity in the next world. Since proximity is not attainable without devotion, therefore, it becomes incumbent on man to follow the root, path and cause which leads him to the nearness of the Truth and that is the mortification as much as he can endure. He said, "المجاهدات مواريث المشاهدات" the contemplation is the result and fruition of mortification."

Some others have the view that mortification can not be the cause and means of attainment of the Truth. Whosoever has found access to the Truth, it is only through grace and kindness of the Divine which is independent of human actions. The object of mortification is for the refinement of the *nafs* (lower soul), and not to attain real proximity. To turn towards mortification is the act of man, while contemplation is referred to Allah, therefore, it is impossible that mortification be cause of contemplation or contemplation be result of mortification. Sahl strengthen his argument by the words of Quran:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

"And those who strive in Our (cause) – We will certainly guide them to Our path:" (Q 29:69), i.e. Whoever mortifies himself, attains contemplation.

Furthermore, he contends that the enforcement of *Shariat* (religious laws), Commandments of Allah in the shape of books revealed to the Prophets, and all religious ordinances imposed on mankind invoke mortification. Those all must be false and vain if mortification were not the cause of contemplation. Again, both in this and the next world, everything is connected with commandments and causes. One who makes excuses in complying to commandments and denies the causes thereof, he does away with *Shariat* (religious law) and customs which leads to end of all law and

order and under such condition neither can religious obligations be justified nor will food be the cause of repletion and clothes the cause of warmth and everything will become useless and get to standstill.

Thus, to look causes in acts is *tawhid* (unification) and its repulsion is cessation. Its proofs are manifest and their denial is denying the existence of contemplation and absurd reasoning.

Are you not aware that how the qualities of a wild horse are altered by taming and replaced with human qualities so that it picks up a whip from the ground and gives it to his master, or roll a ball with its feet? In the same way, a child of foreign race can learn to speak Arabic by training and take a new language in exchange for his mother tongue. Similarly savage beast is trained to such an extent that they work according to the command given to them. They go away when leave is given and come back when they are called, thus preferring captivity to freedom. By imparting training to impure dogs, it gains such perfection where its hunted game becomes legal but if an ignorant man slaughter an animal without fulfilling the *Shariat* requirements it becomes illegal. This indicates that *Shariat* (religious law) and habit depend on devotion and mortification.

Prophet (peace be upon him) who had attained his object, proximity of the Truth, peace for the next life and being free from evils, still mortified him through long hungriness, regular fasting and sleeplessness. So much so that Allah commanded, "مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى" We have not sent down the Quran to thee to be (An occasion) for thy distress, (Q 20:2).

Abu Huraira relates that during the construction of mosque I saw Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) transporting the bricks and observed that he was feeling some problem in carrying them. I suggested him that I might carry his bricks. He said O Abu Huraira! "خَذْ غَيْرَهَا فَانَّهُ لَا عِيشَ إِلَّا عِيشُ الْآخِرَةِ" you carry other bricks, this world is place of affliction, peace only rests in the next world.

Hayyan b. Kharja asked Abdullah b. Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) about his views on *Jihad* (holy war). Abdullah replied:

ابدا بنفسك فجاهدها وابداء بنفسك فاغزها فانك ان قتلت فاراً وبعثك الله فاراً وان قتلت مراعيًا
بعثك الله مراعيًا و ان قتلت صابراً محتسباً بعثك الله صابراً محتسباً

"Start your struggle against your *nafs* (lower soul), and from the same place start your war. If you are slain during the fight, Allah will raise you in the same condition and if you are killed in wickedness, on Resurrection day you will be raised as such and if you are slain in a state of patience and thankfulness, Allah will raise you as patient and thankful."

Therefore, as diction and composition are necessary for the elucidation of ideas, similarly mechanism and compilation of mortification are must to elucidate its reality. As a statement does not make any sense without proper composition, similarly access to the object of Truth without mortification is not possible. Who claims it to be such, is wrong because to accept universe as created is proof of *Marifat* (knowledge of Allah). The knowledge of lower soul and mortification of *nafs* are the signs of proximity to Allah.

Those who do not accept mortification as cause of the proximity refer their argument to the following verse of Quran:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

"And those who strive in Our (cause) – We will certainly guide them to Our path:" (Q 29:69).

They maintain that the verse cited above and referred by Sahil is to be read from end to beginning "وَالَّذِينَ هَدَيْنَاهُم سُبُلَنَا جَاهَدُوا فِينَا" and that the meaning of it is, "those whom we guide into Our way strive to the utmost for Our sake." And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "لن ينجواحدكم بعمله" not one of you shall obtain deliverance by his deeds." The companions questioned: "O Prophet, not even you?" He said: "Not even I obtain deliverance because of my deeds, unless Allah encompasses me with His mercy."

So, mortification is man's act, and his act cannot possibly become the cause of his salvation, which depends on the Divine Will, as Allah hath said:

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا

"Those whom Allah (in His Plan) willeth to guide – He openeth their breast to Islam; Those whom He willeth to leave straying – He maketh their breast close and constricted," (Q 6:125),

"Thou givest power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest," (Q 3:26).

By affirming His will, Allah denies the obligations of all in the universe. If mortification were the cause of union Iblis would not have been damned and if neglect of mortification were the cause of damnation Adam would never have been blessed. The result hangs on predestined grace, not on abundance of mortification and devotion. That's why the one who exerts the most is also not free of fear but the one who has more blessings and grace is more near to Allah. A monk worshipping in cell of a cathedral may be far from Allah, and another in spite of committed to sinful life may be near to Him.

The noblest of all things is faith. A child who is not yet old enough to be entrusted with the religious command is considered amongst the faithful and a madman also falls in the same category. When the noblest of all gifts i.e. faith, is not dependent on any mortification and devotion then how things inferior to faith should be result of mortification.

I, Ali b. Uthman al-Jullabi, say that when this appear as words and expression is wrong but it is true in their meanings and sense, as some say, "من طلب وجد" he who seeks shall find," and the other says, "من وجد طلب" he who finds shall seek." For some seeking is the cause of finding, and for some finding is the cause of seeking. One practices mortification for the purpose of attaining contemplation, and the other practices contemplation for purpose of attaining mortification. The fact is that contemplation in mortification is due to the blessing of Divine in worshipping and this is a gift of Allah. As obedience is impossible without Divine blessing, so it is also impossible to seek Divine blessing without devotion, and as there can be no mortification without contemplation, so there can be no contemplation without mortification. Therefore, only one splendor of the Divine Beauty is needed to incite the man for devotion and mortification and when it will be the cause of contemplation, the Divine guidance will gain excellence over devotion and mortification.

In reply to the argument of Sahl and his followers that who denies mortification are also denying the Prophets, the Books revealed on them and the Divine Laws because struggle and efforts depend on mortification, it would have been better if

they had depended on the guidance of the Truth for their efforts and struggle. The acts of mortification serve only to affirm the proofs of arguments, not to affect real union with Allah. Allah hath said:

وَلَوْ أَنَّا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَى وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ

"Even if We did send unto them angels, and the dead did speak unto them, and We gathered together all things before their very eyes, they are not the ones to believe, unless it is in Allah's Plan." (Q 6:111), for the cause of belief is My will, not the evidences or mortification and He further said:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

"And to those who reject Faith, it is same to them whether thou warn them or do not warn them: They will not believe." (Q 2:6).

The revelations of the Prophets and the ordinances of religion are means but not causes of attaining the object. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) as regards to being entrusted with Divine Commands was in the same position as Abu Jahl, but Abu Bakr, having justice attained grace, whereas Abu Jahl, having justice deprived of grace. Therefore the cause of attainment is attainment itself, not the act of seeking attainment, for if the seeker and the object were one, then the seeker is successful and when he has achieved his object, he is no more a seeker. He who has attained is at rest, whereas rest is not allowed to a seeker. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "من استوي يوما فهو مغبون" the one whose two days are similar is at loss," and "استقيموا ولن تحصوا" be steadfast but not in one state."

Here mortification has been based on cause and to affirm the argument cause is affirmed and in attainment of the place of Divinity cause has been denied.

In reference to their argument that the qualities of a horse are altered by mortification and discipline, in this respect you must know that mortification is only a means of bringing out qualities that are already latent in the horse but do not appear until he has been put through mortification and discipline. Since donkey does not have such attributes, therefore, it can never be like a horse and neither horse can be a donkey with struggle and effort and nor a donkey be a horse with

mortification because it is the reality of the soul. Therefore, that thing which cannot change the nature and reality how it can be affirmed being present with the Truth.

Sahl used to be prevailed so much with mortification that he would become independent of it and while in reality he was in that state, he was unable to express it in words. He was not like those who have made it their religion to talk about mortification without practicing it. It is not possible to interpret such matters in words.

In short, amongst *Sufis* both mortification and self-discipline exist but its interpretation while in that state and dependence on it is not free of tribulations. Hence, those who deny mortification do not mean to deny its reality, but only to deny its imagination and desire its contradiction, that is to say, not to get pleased with own actions in the place of Holiness. It is so because the mortification is the act of man, while contemplation is a state in which one is kept by Allah, and until and unless there are blessings of Allah, man's action would remain unrealistic.

By my life! Your soul is not free from your ownself, that's why you are engaged in self adornments. You do not look towards the grace of Lord rather seek pleasure by booting your own actions. The mortification of the lovers of Allah is the work of Allah in them without any choice on their part. Their mortification is overwhelming love of Allah and melting away with its burning which is gift of the Divine. The mortification of ignorant is their own work by their own choice and such people do not gain anything from mortification except anxiety and distress. Therefore, restrain yourself the maximum to disclose your actions and deeds and under no circumstances follow your *nafs* (lower soul), for it is your phenomenal being that veils you from the Truth. It is possible that one action may become cause of veil which may be unveiled by another action but since your whole being is a veil, how can you become worthy of subsistence until you are wholly annihilated. As it is said that:

لأن النفس كلب باغ وجلد الكلب لا يطهر الا بالدباغ

"The *nafs* (lower soul) is a wild dog, and its leather does not get purity without tanning."

It is related that Hussein b. Mansur was staying in the house of Muhammad b. al-Hussein at Kufa. Incidentally Ibrahim Khawwas also came to Kufa at that time and having heard of Mansur, went to see him. Mansur asked him, "O Ibrahim, during your forty years affiliation with Sufism, in which area of it have you excelled?"

Ibrahim answered: "I have struggled a lot in *tawakul* (trust in Allah)." Mansur said:

ضيعت عمرك في عمران باطنك فاين انفاء في التوحيد

"You have wasted your life in cultivating your spiritual nature: what has become of annihilation in Unification?" i.e. *tawakul* (trust in Allah) is a term denoting your conduct towards Allah and spiritual purification is denoted in relying on Him. If a man spends his whole life in remedying his spiritual nature, he will need another life for remedying his outward nature, and his life will be lost before he has found a trace of the Truth.

Sheikh Abu Ali Siyah narrated that once he happened to see his *nafs* (lower soul) in a form resembling to his own. Some one who had seized it by its hair handed him over to him. He tied it to a tree and was about to destroy it, when it cried out, "O Abu Ali, do not be harsh. I am from the army of Allah; you cannot reduce me to naught."

Muhammad b. Ulyan Nasvi, an eminent companion of Junaid, related that at the early stage of his novitiate, when he had become aware of the evils of the *nafs* (lower soul) and acquainted with its places of ambush, he developed hatredness for it in his heart. One day something like a young fox came forth from his throat, and Allah caused him to know that it was his *nafs*. He immediately started casting it under his feet, and at every kick which he gave, it grew bigger in size. He questioned it that how comes other things were destroyed by pain and blows but you instead had enlarged in size. It replied, "because I was created perverse, what causes pain to other things is pleasure to me, and their pleasure is my pain."

Sheikh Abu al-Abbas Ashqani, Imam of his time, narrated that one day when he entered into his house he found a dog asleep there. He thought it had come from neighborhood and when he was about to turn him out, the dog crept under his garments and vanished.

Sheikh Abu al-Qasim Gurgani, who is the *Qutb* of time, related that he during his novitiate saw his *nafs* (lower soul) in the shape of a snake.

A Dervish related that he saw his *nafs* in the shape of a mouse and on his quest it replied:

"I am the cause of destruction for the heedless; for I urge them to wickedness and evil, and the salvation of the lovers of Allah, for if I were not in their company with my wickedness they would be arrogant by their acts and proud by their purity. When they see their steadfastness in their acts e.g. purity of hearts, inward spirituality, and devotion, they are engulfed with self-conceit and when they realize me among them, they feel free from such thoughts. "

All these stories prove that the *nafs* (lower soul) is real in subsistence and not a mere attribute and that it has attributes which we clearly perceive. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "اعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جانبيك" your worst enemy is your *nafs* (lower soul), which is between your two sides."

When you have obtained the knowledge of *nafs* (lower soul), you appreciate that it can be controlled by discipline, but its essence and subsistence can not be annihilated. If the seeker rightly perceives it, he would rule over it and would feel no fear in its existence as it is said,

ان النفس كلب نباح وامساك الكلب بعد الرياضة مباح

"*nafs* (lower soul) is a barking dog, and it is legal to keep a dog which has been trained and tamed."

Hence, the attributes of *nafs* (lower soul) can be destroyed by mortification, but its reality cannot be annihilated.

Sheikhs of Sufism have talked in length about it but I content without further prolonging it. Now I will discuss the true nature of passion and renunciation of lusts.

The True Nature of *Hawa* هو (Passion)

You must know that according to the opinion of some, *hawa* هو (passion) is a quality of the attributes of the *nafs* (lower soul), and to the opinion of others, *hawa* (passion) is that natural volition whereby the lower soul is controlled and directed, just as the spirit is controlled by the intelligence.

Every spirit which is devoid of the ability of intelligence is imperfect. Similarly *nafs* (lower soul) which is devoid of the ability of passion is also imperfect. Therefore the imperfection of the spirit is the loss of proximity and imperfection of the *nafs* (lower soul) is entire proximity.

Everyone is lured in contrary ways by intelligence and passion. One who accepts the call of intelligence, he is celebrated with *Tawhid* (Unification) and Faith and the one who is attracted by the call of passion, falls into error and infidelity. Therefore passion is a veil for the lovers of Allah and a place of abhorrence for the seekers of the Truth and man is commanded to resist it. He has been restrained to undertake it because whosoever followed the passion got destroyed and who opposed it, he survived. Allah says:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ

"And for such as had entertained the fear of standing before their Lord's (tribunal) and had restrained (their) souls from lower Desires," (Q 79:40).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

اخوف ما اخاف علي امتي اتباع الهوي وطول الامل

"I fear of my *Ummah* the most is of they being led by their desires and keeping prolonged hopes."

Ibn Abbas (may blessings of Allah be on him) while explaining the verse "أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ" then seest thou such a one as takes as his god his own vain desire?" (Q 45:23) said:

"Here إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ is referred to "إله" god" i.e. woe to him who made desires his god and is in its devotion day and night."

The passion is of two kinds, i.e. desire of pleasure and lust, and desire of worldly honor and authority.

He who follows pleasure and lust, is found in taverns and mankind remains safe from his mischief, but he who desires honor and authority is a constant threat for mankind may he dwell in mosques, churches or in populated areas. He not only himself has lost the right path but also leads others into error. We seek Allah's protection from being led by the desires. One who's every act depends on passion and finds satisfaction in following it, is far from Allah although he be with you in a

mosque. But one who is free of desires and refuses to be led by them is near to Allah although he be in church.

Ibrahim Khawwas related that he heard about a monk that he for the sake of Priesthood was in the monastery for the last seventy years. It was strange for me as monastic vow term was forty years and I was forced to think that under what compulsions and state the monk had exceeded the vow. I went to see him. When I reached there and approached him, he opened a window and said to me:

"O Ibrahim, I know why you have come. I have not stayed here for seventy years because of monastic vows, neither is I a monk but I have a dog foul with passion, and I am watching it and preventing it from doing harm to others."

When I heard him saying that I exclaimed, O Lord, Thou are able to bestow righteousness on a man even though he be involved in sheer error. Then the monk addressed to me:

"O Ibrahim, for how long will you seek men? Go and seek yourself, and when you have found yourself keep watch over yourself, for passion clothes itself everyday in three hundred and sixty diverse garments of godhead and leads men astray."

In short, the Satan cannot have access in man's heart until he is not led by one's desires. When the passion originates as desires the Satan immediately takes over, adorns them and cast the man's heart with its natural affects. These are the temptations of Satan. That means, it takes its origins from man's own passion and that who commences oppression or evil is the real oppressor. When Iblis (Satan) pledged with Allah to seduce all mankind, saying "فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ" by Thy Power, I will put them all in the wrong," (Q 38:82), Allah in reply referring to this sense said, "إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ" for over My servants no authority shalt thou have," (Q 15:42).

Therefore, in reality, Satan is nothing else but man's own *nafs* (lower soul) and its passions. Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

مامن احد الا وقد غلبه شيطانه الا عمر فانه غلب شيطانه

"There is no one whom his Satan (his passion) has not subdued except Umar, for he has subdued his Satan (his passion)."

Passion is mingled as an ingredient in the clay of Adam and it is a source of tranquility for him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "الشهوة معجونة بطينته ادم" passions and lust is mingled in the clay of Adam."

The renunciation of passion makes a man independent and its adoption makes him captive. Therefore, Zulaikha a rich lady, by subduing before her passions became captive, whereas Yusaf (may blessings of Allah be on him) who was a captive by renouncing the passions attained liberty.

Junaid was asked: "ما الوصل! What is union (with Allah)?"

He replied: "ترك ارتكاب الهوي to renounce passion,"

The one who wants that he is honored by the proximity of the Truth, should oppose the sensual desires because no devotion is more superior than opposing the self sensual desires which is harder to digging a mountain with nails.

Dhu al-Nun related that he saw a man flying through the air, and on asking that how had he attained that degree, he answered, "I treaded over my passion and started flying in the air."

Muhammad b. Fadl al-Balkhi said:

"I wonder at one who goes with his passion into Allah's house and visits Him. Why does not he step on his passion that he may find His proximity and have His vision?"

The most manifest quality of the *nafs* is lust. It is the name of that thing which is dispersed in all parts of the human body, and is served by all the senses. Man is entrusted to guard and is answerable for all their acts. The lust of:

- the eye is sight,
- of ear is listening,
- of nose is smell,
- of tongue is speech,
- of palate is taste,
- of body is touch, and
- of the mind is thought.

Therefore, it is incumbent on the seeker of the Truth to be a ruler and guardian of his ownself and spend his time in guarding them, so that causes of passions which develop in the senses get eliminated at their own, and to pray Allah that

He inculcates in him such quality which guards his inward nature from incursion of passions and evil thoughts. One who is entrapped in the whirlpool of lust is veiled from all spiritual realities and if he tries to repel it by his own exertions, his task would be long and painful. One must safeguard against lust, so that he might attain proximity of the Truth.

It is related about Abu Ali Siyah that once when he was at a bath place and busy in shaving hair from his lower private parts, in accordance with *Sunnah*, he passed through a thought that he might amputate his penis which was the source of all lusts and afflictions. A voice in his heart whispered:

"O Abu Ali, you interfere in Our kingdom? No limb has superiority over other. If you do this, I swear by My Glory that I will put hundredfold lust and passion in your every hair."

Although man has no power over his basic structural constitution but he can get an attribute changed by Divine aid and by resigning himself to Allah's will and by his own efforts and strength. When man surrenders to His command, he is taken care of by Allah, and he gets nearer to the chastity of the Truth by protection of Allah and annihilation of the evil, than by self-mortification because it is easy to drive away flies with broom than with a stick. Hence, Divine protection is the remedy of all the evils of the *nafs* and cure of all the diseases. The man has no partnership in any of His attributes except those in which He Himself permitted and similarly interference in His kingdom is also not permissible. Unless Divine protection is predestined to a man, he cannot save himself from anything as his efforts are only rewarded by the blessing of Allah. Unless aid of Allah is not with him, his efforts are of no use. The object of all acts of efforts is, either to avert the predestination of Allah or to acquire something in spite of predestination; and both these objects are not permissible.

Once, Shibli fell sick. The physician advised him to observe abstinence. In reply Shibli said, "From what shall I abstain? From that which Allah bestows upon me, or from that which He does not bestow? It is impossible to abstain from the former, and the latter is not in my hands, as *لأن المشاهد يجاهد*" man of contemplation does not go through the rigour of mortification."

I will discuss this question carefully at another occasion.

Hakimis

They are the followers of Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Ali al-Hakim Tirmidhi, who was the *Imam* of his time and the author of many works on every branch of exoteric and esoteric sciences. His doctrine was based on *walayat* وِلَايَت (saintship), and he used to explain the true nature of saintship and the degrees of the saints and the observance of the proper arrangement of their ranks. He in himself was a boundless ocean which possessed numerous marvels.

To understand his doctrine, you must know that Allah has given superiority to *Auliya* اَوْلِيَاء (friends) on whole of mankind. He has withdrawn them from worldly ties and delivered them from sensual temptations. He has placed each of them in a particular stage and has opened unto them the door of His mysteries. This topic is much in length, therefore, I must first briefly set forth several points of capital importance which may help in understanding the subject.

Saintship (*walayat* وِلَايَت)

You must know that the principle and foundation of Sufism and *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) rests on *walayat* وِلَايَت (saintship) and its authenticity. The reality of saintship is unanimously affirmed by all the Sheikhs, though everyone has expressed himself in different way. Muhammad b. Ali al-Hakim has a peculiar way of using this term particularly its manifestation to Sufism.

Walayat وِلَايَت entomologically means, power to dispose and help and *wilayat* وِلَايَت means circumstantial evidence. *Walayat* also means lordship; hence Allah hath said, هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ there, the (only) protection comes from Allah, the True One. (Q 18:44), i.e. the unbelievers at Resurrection will seek His protection and turning unto Him would renounce their idols. And *walayat* also means love. And this is also possible that *wali* وَلِي may be in the form of an agent refers to an accusative case, as Allah have said, وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى الصَّالِحِينَ and He will choose (يَتَوَلَّى) and befriend the righteous" (Q 7:196), for Allah does not leave His servant to his own actions and attributes, but keeps him under His protection. And *wali* وَلِي may be the form of

faa'il, equivalent to an *agent*, with an intensive force, because man takes care to obey Allah and remains constant to fulfill the obligations that he owes to Him and refrains from His others. Thus *wali* in the active meanings is *Murid* مرید (desirer), while in the passive meaning it denotes *Murad* مراد (intended). All these meanings, whether they signify the relation of Allah to man or that of man to Allah, are allowable, for Allah may be the protector and helper of His friends as He has promised to protect His friends. He addressed to the companions of His beloved Muhammad (peace be upon him):

أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ

"Ah! Verily, the help of Allah is (always) near!" (Q 2:214), and,

أَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ

"but those who reject Allah have no protector." (Q 47:11).

When unbelievers have no protector and helper, it implies that Allah is the protector and helper of believers. He helps them and their intellect and perception seek proofs from the signs and symbols of nature and realities are revealed to their hearts. The signs and proofs unveil themselves to them inwardly and He helps them also in their being refrain from passions and evils of *nafs* (lower soul). He protects them from following the *Satan* and *nafs* (lower soul), and also keeps them away from the place of enmity by choosing them to His friendship, as He hath said, "يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحْيِيهِمْ" whom He will love as they will love Him," (Q 5:54).

So they love Him because of His friendship and they turn away from mankind. This makes Him to be their *Wali* ولي (friend) and they become His *Auliya* اولياء (friends) and then He may confer on one *walayat* ولايت (guardianship) that enables him to persevere in obedience to Him, and refrain from disobeying Him and not allow any satanic thought to pass through his mind. And He may confer His *walayat* ولايت on another one in such a way that He empowers him with full authority, and makes his prayers answered and his aspirations effectual. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

رَبِّ اشْعَثْ اغْبِرْذِي طَمْرِينَ لَا يَعْبَاءُ بِهِ لَوْ اقْسَمَ عَلَيَّ اللَّهُ لَا يَبْرُهُ قِسْمُهُ

"There are many men with dirty hair and clad in dust-stained old garments, which people never pay any heed but if they were to swear by Allah, Allah honors their words."

It is a well known incident that during the rule of Caliph Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) the river Nile, in accordance with its regular routine got dry. In the time of Paganism there was a tradition to throw a maiden into the river every year as a sacrifice so the river might continue its flow. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) wrote on a piece of paper, "O water, if you have dried up at your own, be remain as but if your act is command of Allah Umar bids you to flow." When this paper was thrown in the Nile, it resumed its course. And this was the real saintship.

My purpose in discussing saintship and affirming its reality is to make you understand that the name *wali* ولي (saint) is properly applied to those in whom the above mentioned qualities are actually present. The matter of Umar (may blessings of Allah be on him) referred above speaks of his *hal* حال (state) which was not merely a *qal* قال (repute).

The Sheikhs of the Path have formerly written a lot on this subject. I too had their writings but unfortunately these have been lost by a friend. Therefore, now I will entrust to you the explanation given by Abu Abdullah Hakim Tirmidhi, the venerable spiritual director who is the author of the doctrine – for my own belief in him is greater – in order that much instruction may be gained, not only by yourself, but also by every seeker of the Path who may have the good fortune to read this book.

You must know that the word *wali* ولي is current among the people, and Quran and *Sunnah* (the Prophet's Traditions) are also witness and speak of it. Allah hath said:

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

"Behold! verily, on the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve; (Q 10:62), and

نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ

"We are your protectors in this life and in the Hereafter: (Q 41:38), and

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

"Allah is the protector of those who have faith:" (Q 2:257).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: