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# *Tahrīr al-bayān*

Sa‘īd al-Dīn Farghānī on the Psychology of *Dhikr*

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In January 1979, right before the revolution, my wife and I left Iran after several years of PhD and post-doctoral research. We waited in Istanbul for six months to see what would happen and spent practically every day in the reading room of the Süleymaniye Library, immersed in Arabic and Persian manuscripts related to Ibn ‘Arabī and his school of thought. Before too long I came across several copies of the treatise translated here, *Tahrīr al-bayān fī taqrīr shu‘ab al-īmān wa rutab al-ihsān*, often in collections of works by Ibn ‘Arabī and/or Şadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 1274). The treatise is so perfectly in line with Qūnawī’s style and teachings that I was convinced he must be the author. In those days it was almost impossible to acquire microfilms, not to speak of scans, so my wife copied one of the manuscripts by hand and I collated it against several others, finding only minor discrepancies.<sup>1</sup> I was hoping to publish the text, but I returned to America and other occupations got in the way.

Forty years passed before a lull in my schedule made me sit down and translate the text along with its companion, *Marātib al-taqwā*. I was still fairly sure that the two treatises were written by Qūnawī, even though Richard Todd attributes them to Sa‘īd al-Dīn Farghānī (d. 1299) on the basis of a Berlin manuscript.<sup>2</sup> Then Stephen Hirtenstein of the Ibn ‘Arabi Society kindly sent me a manuscript of *Tahrīr* (Veliyuddin 1800) copied sixteen years after Farghānī’s death, which also attributes it to him. When I looked carefully

1. The manuscripts I used were Carullah 2054/9, Fatih 1394/2, Fatih 2630/1, Şehid Ali Paşa 1340/2, Halet Ef. İlavesi 66/6. I also collated questionable readings with Şehid Ali Paşa 1382/7, Carullah 1001/4, Feyzullah 2163/13, and Topkapı E.H. 546/3. Thanks to Stephen Hirtenstein and the Ibn ‘Arabi Society, I also consulted Veliyuddin 1800 and Manisa 2989 (this last was apparently copied in 678/1279, though it is not without errors).

2. *The Sufi Doctrine of Man* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 185.

at *Muntaha'l-madārik*, Farghānī's Arabic commentary on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's 750-verse *Poem of the Way*, it became clear that the style and terminology of *Tahrīr* are closer to it than to anything written by Qūnawī.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, some portions of the text are simplifications of Farghānī's extensive and complicated arguments about the stations of the path to God (toward the end of the book's long introduction). It seems to me that only the author could have composed such a fluent and solid simplification, though it is also possible that Farghānī wrote *Tahrīr* before *Muntaha'l-madārik*.

As is well known, Qūnawī was Ibn al-'Arabī's stepson and the author of a number of important books on what he called *madhhab al-tahqīq*, 'the path of verification' or of 'realization.' Farghānī in turn was Qūnawī's student. He traveled with him and a group of scholars to Cairo in the year 1245 on a trip during which Qūnawī lectured on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Poem of the Way*, lectures that he continued when they returned to Konya. According to one of the attendees, he used to begin by lecturing on Hadith in Arabic. Then, toward the end of the session, he would switch to Persian and explain one line of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem. Farghānī put together his notes on the sessions, wrote an introduction, and presented the result to his shaykh for approval. Qūnawī wrote a one-page foreword, praising his accomplishment and mentioning that other students had also taken notes with the intention of composing a book, but no one else had succeeded in doing so.<sup>4</sup> The name of Farghānī's 650-page Persian book is *Mashāriq al-darārī* (*The Rising Places of the Pearls*). Subsequently he rewrote the text in Arabic, adding a good deal to its length and calling it *Muntaha'l-madārik* (*The Furthest Goal of the Perceptive Faculties*). Both the Persian and the Arabic texts played important roles in disseminating Qūnawī's teachings, which in turn are systematic versions of Ibn al-'Arabī's inspired

3. Brockelmann says that Farghānī attributes the book to Qūnawī (*History of the Arabic Written Tradition*, Vol. 1, p.511 – my thanks to Julian Cook for this reference). If this is true, it may simply mean that the student is showing humility before the teacher.

4. See Chittick, 'Farghānī on Oneness and Manyness,' in Chittick, *In Search of the Lost Heart* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), Chapter 12; earlier version as 'Spectrums of Islamic Thought: Sa'īd al-Dīn Farghānī on the Implications of Oneness and Manyness,' available at [williamcchittick.com](http://williamcchittick.com).

works.<sup>5</sup> I am now fairly confident that we can add *Tahrīr al-bayān* and *Marātib al-taqwā* to the list of Farghānī's compositions.

*Tahrīr al-bayān* has recently been published, first in Damascus on the basis of two manuscripts and then in Baghdad on the basis of one manuscript. Both editors attribute the work to Ibn 'Arabī, a mistake that would not be made by anyone familiar with his writings and those of his immediate followers. The first edition is better, but it still has a number of bad readings.<sup>6</sup>

Farghānī's treatise is an overview of the path to God in terms of the three basic levels of the religion: Submission (*islām*), faith (*īmān*), and beautiful-doing (*ihsān*), a triad set down by the Prophet in the famous Hadith of Gabriel and often discussed by Sufi teachers. The stated purpose of the treatise is to explicate the 'branches of faith,' whose number is mentioned in a hadith as 'seventy-some.' Farghānī dedicates the first part of the text to defining terms and to describing an enumeration of the branches of faith by Rāghib Iṣfahānī (d. 1108–9), a scholar who wrote many books on ethical issues as well as a well-known dictionary of the Quran. He explains Rāghib's rationale for counting the branches as seventy-two and then explains why he thinks seventy-eight is a better number. He describes the branches of faith in general terms and spends a good deal of the text explaining why saying *No god but God* is the most excellent branch. In the process he offers a rare analysis of spiritual psychology, that is, the hierarchical structure of the human self, in relation to the practice of remembrance (*dhikr*).

5. Farghānī also wrote a 200-page book in Persian called *Manāhij al-'ibād ila'l-ma'ād* (*The Pathways of the Servants to the Place of Return*), which has a short first section on belief, a much longer second section on the daily prayer, and a final section on the proper comportment (*ādāb*) of aspirants on the Sufi path. The book makes no suggestion, explicitly or implicitly, that it is based on the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī and Qūnawī. It was published without mentioning an editor's name in Istanbul by Hakikat Kitabevi in 1988.

6. The first edition is by Muḥammad Adīb al-Jādir (Damascus: Maktaba Dār al-Daqqāq, 2015). One manuscript is based on a *majmū'a* dated 1197 and provided by our friend Mahmud Kiliç, fellow of the Ibn Arabi Society; the other is from the Zahirīyya Library in Cairo (# 6487). The second edition is by Muḥammad Fārūq Ṣāliḥ al-Badrī (Baghdad: Dār Suṭūr, 2017) on the basis of one manuscript from the Maktabat al-Awqāf al-'Āmma in Baghdad (# 4887/4). My thanks to Mohammed Rustom, who provided me with the printed texts of both of these works.

Readers of Ibn ‘Arabī will be familiar with many of Farghānī’s discussions. Prominent, for example, is the notion of comprehensiveness (*jam‘*), which is the main theme of the first chapter of the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. The name God (Allāh) is the all-comprehensive name (*al-ism al-jāmi‘*) because its meaning comprehends the meanings of all divine names and realities. When God said ‘Be!’ (*kun*) to Adam, the result was a being (*kawn*) that comprehended all divine attributes. It follows that Adam and the Adamites are ‘the all-comprehensive being’ (*al-kawn al-jāmi‘*). This is to say that God as designated by the all-comprehensive name Allāh created Adam in His own form. Both Farghānī and Qūnawī also commonly use the adjective *ijtimā‘ī*, a word not found in the *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*. It is derived from the eighth verbal form of *jam‘*. I translate it as ‘combinational,’ as in the expression *hay’a ijtimā‘iyya*, ‘combinational guise.’ *Hay’a* is more or less synonymous with *ṣūra* (form), *shakl* (shape), and *ḥāl* (state). A ‘combinational guise’ is then a state of the soul in which the divine attributes are combined and comprehended in balance and equilibrium (*i’tidāl*). Deviation (*inḥirāf*) from this equilibrium is a cause of misguidance.

In explaining how seekers of God can establish an all-comprehensive equilibrium, Farghānī discusses the two basic tendencies of the human self or soul (*nafs*), tendencies that are often called simply ‘soul’ and ‘spirit.’ He designates the two as the animal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ḥayawāniyya*), which is the ‘outward’ (*zāhir*) of the soul; and the spiritual spirit (*al-rūḥ al-rūḥāniyya*), which is the ‘inward’ (*bāṭin*) of the soul. Perfect equilibrium between the two can be established only in the ‘heart’ (*qalb*), to which a good deal of the text is dedicated. If the goal of human existence is to reach our true being by actualizing the realities of all the divine names, this demands the establishment of combinational guises and equilibrious (*i’tidālī*) forms on every level of our souls. Farghānī also explains that this self-realization depends upon the divine love that brings the universe into existence and becomes the means to achieve the goal in what Ibn ‘Arabī calls ‘the religion of love,’ that is, following in the footsteps of Muhammad.<sup>7</sup>

7. See Chittick, ‘The Religion of Love Revisited,’ *JMIAS* 54 (2013), pp.37–59.

As becomes clear in the text, Farghānī considers the practice of *dhikr*, specifically remembering and invoking the formula *No god but God*, to be the supreme means of actualizing true Adamic nature on every level.

## DRAFTING THE CLARIFICATION

### Establishing the Branches of Faith and the Levels of Beautiful-Doing

The praise belongs to God, who illumined the hidden thoughts of the lords of the religion with the lights of submission, faith, and guidance and who gave to the insights of the companions of certainty the seeing of the secrets of beneficence, beautiful-doing, and protection [*walāya*]; who unveiled the curtains of the soul from their hearts and gave eminence to the precincts of holiness with their eyes. So they were *upon insight* [Quran 12:108] from their Lord, and the open and the secret had equal standing in their kernels.<sup>8</sup>

And God's blessings and peace be upon the rising place of His lights and the fountainhead of His secrets, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, and upon his folk, his companions, and his helpers.

**Now to begin:** This is a hasty note to lift the mask from the faces of the virgin meanings and secrets that are veiled by the beautiful utterances of the Prophet and the all-comprehensive words [*jawāmi' kalimāt*] of Muṣṭafā in his saying, 'Faith is seventy-some branches, the most excellent of which is saying *No god but God* and the least of which is removing harm from the road; and shame is a branch of faith.' I bring it forth in the hope that those who are worthy of realizing the realities of faith and the levels of beautiful-doing will be given an overview of the beings [*al-akwān*] as well as knowledge by recognition [*'irfān*], for they are the ones who are

8. Kernel (*lubb*) is the opposite of shell (*qishr*). Quran translators usually translate it as 'mind.' On Ibn 'Arabī's understanding of the Quranic expression, 'possessors of the kernels,' see Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 230 and 238–39.

designated for realizing the disclosure of the beauty of these brides and who are distinguished by winning the likes of these rarities. O God, give success to the completion of this intention and give realization to the arrangement of this hope, by Your favor and auspiciousness!

Know that faith consists of a light obtained from the side of the Real. It is entified [*ta'ayyun*] from the Presence of the names Ever-Merciful, Guide, and Faithful so as to eliminate the darkness of caprice [*hawā*] and nature [*ṭab'*]; it is receptive to everything of the religion, the Shari'a, and the like that come from Him. Those who carry it by means of this reception [*qabūl*] are worthy of security [*amān*] from the anger of the All-Merciful. By this attribute and specific property it is called 'faith' [*īmān*] and 'truth-acknowledgment' [*taṣḍīq*]. The verified truth is that it is the first thing to be considered knowledge. It is connected to the religion and the Shari'a but unitary in description [*waḥdānī al-na't*], for no confirmation by evidence or proof – whether intellectual, heard [*sam'ī*], or unveiled – is taken into account. Once it is confirmed by something of that, it becomes knowledge [*ilm*] and certainty [*īqān*] and ceases being faith.

The locus of this light is diverse in keeping with the thinness and thickness of the veils of habit [*'āda*] and nature that prevent the soul and heart from receiving the religion and the Shari'a. When the veils are thin and translucent, this light arrives during the report-giving of a truthful person reporting about the Real and what comes from Him, mostly by way of hearing, and it is delivered over to the heart. The heart accepts it with reception, and this is exactly truth-acknowledgment, whose locus is the heart. The evidence that it is a light is the words of the Prophet, 'So that is their likeness; and the likeness of what they received from this is light.' This is at the end of a hadith that likens the Jews, Christians, and Muslims to a man who hires a group 'from morning to night for a known wage.' They leave the work at noon and nullify the hiring and the wage. Others [are hired] until night at that amount, and they leave and nullify the hiring in the afternoon; then others until night, and they complete the work and take the full wage.<sup>9</sup>

9. Hadith from Bukhari.

As for the evidence that it arrives in the heart, that is His words, *He wrote faith in their hearts and confirmed them with a spirit from Him* [Q.58:22]. After the arrival of this light in their hearts He confirms them only by strengthening the attributes of the spiritual spirit, which are purity [*tahāra*], equilibrium of character traits [*akhlāq*] and attributes, and incomparability [*nazāha*] with the properties of deficiency [*naqṣ*] and deviation [*inhirāf*]. The heart and its traces become manifest and distinct by means of these spiritual, unitary, equilibrrious attributes after it had been submerged, curtained, and subjugated by the ruling authority of the soul and its traces – as will soon become clear, God willing.

Then, after its arrival, its trace flows forth from the inward and the heart to the outward of the soul as far as its bodily form with all its faculties and members. So the soul acquiesces [*inqiyād*], surrenders [*istislām*], and softens after the dilation of the breast, both for it and for its outward and inward properties, just as He has said: *Then their skins and their hearts soften to the remembrance of God* [Q.39:23]. It is at this point that this light – by virtue of its flowing forth into the outward and softening it, and by the outward's acquiescence to it and its properties – is named a 'submission.' He says, *What of him whose breast God has dilated for the submission, so he is upon a light from his Lord?* [Q.39:22].

The reality of the breast [*ṣadr*] is that which is suited for properties [*aḥkām*] to issue forth [*ṣadr*] from it and for traces [*āthār*] to be designated by it; in the same way the person from whom commands and prohibitions issue forth is called the 'foreman' [*ṣadr*]; and that of a house by which the properties of right and left and farther and nearer are designated is called the 'forefront' [*ṣadr*]. So also man's chest is called a *ṣadr* because the properties of his right and left sides are designated in terms of it. Thus the outward of the human substance, which is connected with his animal spirit, is called a breast in respect of what issues forth from it – both the spiritual properties such as knowledges and beautiful, equilibrrious character traits; and the corporeal properties and attributes when they dominate over it, such as wrath [*ghaḍab*], appetite [*shahwa*], and deviated, vicious character traits.

Its 'dilation' is its being open, unstitched, and brought out from being concealed by the properties of satanic caprice [*hawā*] and

natural, animal darkness after it and the animal spirit, along with all the properties and attributes of these two, were sewn up and indistinct. Or rather, its properties were curtailed, dominated by, and mixed with their properties. Then, by means of the mentioned dilation and unstitching, its traces became manifest. Hence the soul becomes manifest as ‘blaming’ [*lawwāma*]. Or, it dominates over their traces and becomes ‘serene’ [*muṭma’inna*] after it had been dominated by animality and ‘commanding to ugliness’ [*ammāra bi’l-sū’*].<sup>10</sup>

From here will be recognized one of the meanings and some of what is understood from His words, *Have not those who disbelieve seen that the heavens and the earth were all sewn up, so We unstitched the two; and from water We made every living thing?* [Q.21:30]. *The heavens* alludes to that whose level is high, which is the spiritual spirit. *The earth* alludes to what is low, which is the animal spirit. The two being *sewn up* is their being mixed without any distinction [*tamayyuz*] of their properties. Their being *unstitched* is what we mentioned. *Water* alludes to knowledge, for by it things live and from it they become manifest and entified with the attribute of innate life, for they praise and glorify their Lord and Existence-Giver. If they did not sense Him innately, they would not praise Him or glorify Him.<sup>11</sup>

This mentioned dilation and unstitching receives the flowing forth of the light of faith. Then [the person] senses that he has a Creator, from whom is his origin and to whom is his return and final end, so he must acquiesce to His commands and restraints so that he may be worthy of the return to Him. The soul acquiesces and surrenders outwardly and inwardly, in longing for Him or for what is with Him.

The allusion to what we said – that the breast and its dilation pertain to meaning [*ma’<sup>c</sup>nā*]<sup>12</sup> – is found in what has come in the hadith of

10. These three levels of soul, designated by terms derived from the Quran, are of course much discussed in Sufi literature. Farghāni has more to say about them as he goes along.

11. Reference to the Quranic refrain, *Everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies God*, often discussed by Ibn ‘Arabī.

12. Meaning is an important technical term throughout the Islamic sciences. It is typically used in connection with two terms: *lafz*, word or articulation; and *ṣūra*,

the *mi‘rāj*: ‘Gabriel descended and cleaved open my breast. Then he washed it. Then he brought a basin full of faith and wisdom and emptied it into my breast.’<sup>13</sup> Given that faith and wisdom are not sensory [*maḥsūs*], their locus here pertains to meaning, not to the sensory.

The verification of this is what we explained. It is confirmed after the mention of the breast’s dilation in Sura 94 by the mention of ‘lifting the burden,’ the meaning of which is the elimination from him of the trace of deviation, one of the characteristics of Satan: *Did We not dilate thy breast [for thee and lift from thee thy burden]?*

If the veils have piled up, then during the mentioned reports this light will reach only the outward of the soul, unless the breast has dilated in the manner discussed. So the soul will accept it with a deceitful reception. It will acquiesce to it and to its outward, sensory properties with an eagerness [*raghba*] or a dread [*rahba*] attached to the outward, like sparing blood, or preserving property and honor. This light in this small amount of outward acquiescence is called a ‘submission.’ Since it does not reach the heart – because of the thickness of the veils and the utter failure to flow forth into the inward – the breast does not dilate for it, nor does it expand to receive it. Thus God says, *The Bedouins say, ‘We have faith.’ Say: ‘You do not have faith. Say rather, “We submit,” for faith has not entered your hearts’* [Q.49:14].

When the trace of outward reception flows forth to the inward, and when the property of the heart’s acceptance [flows forth] to the soul as a result of the subtilizing of the veils and the domination of the property of worship over the properties of habit, then the complete or partial dilation of the explained breast will be achieved. At this point the property of reception becomes general [*‘umūm*] in the heart and soul, and the attributes of these two – which are submission and faith – are unified [*ittihād*], just as God reports concerning the state of the faithful among the people of Lot with His words, *We brought forth from it those of the faithful who were in it, and We did not find therein other than one house of the submitters* [Q.51:36].

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form. Here, Farghānī contrasts it with sensory, *maḥsūs*, that which pertains to the forms that are perceptible by the five senses. Given that God is the ‘Form-Giver’ who created Adam in His own form and taught him all the names, the ‘meaning’ of Adam is God Himself.

13. Bukhari.

It follows that this light has an outward and an inward in keeping with its two loci, namely, the soul and the heart. Its outward is an acquiescence whose organs abide through the soul, namely, the faculties and the bodily members. It has three levels. The beginning level is the description of the hypocrites; this is before the dilation of the breast in the explained manner. It is the acquiescence of the soul commanding to ugliness with an eagerness or a dread pertaining to this world alone.

The middle level is the description of the pious [*al-abrār*] among the submitters. This is the acquiescence of the blaming soul, outwardly and inwardly, to the commands and prohibitions, but with an eagerness and a dread connected to the next world and to the full gratification of the shares [*ḥuḏūḏ*] of the soul in the Garden through sensory bliss and its degrees. This is in the midst of the dilation of the breast.

The final level is the attribute of the faithful who are sincere [*mukhlis*], proximate [*muqarrab*], and have certainty. This is the acquiescence of the serene soul outwardly and inwardly, purely and sincerely, without any contamination whatsoever by the soul's share of this world and the next world. This is what is meant by the words of the Bosom Friend [Abraham]: *When his Lord said to him, 'Submit!' he said, 'I have submitted to the Lord of the worlds'* [Q.2:131]. It is also [what is meant] by the words with which he counseled his sons and Jacob: *And do not die without being submitters* [Q.2:132]. This was after the completion of the dilation of the breast and the opening of the heart, which is the heart's manifestation [*zuhūr*] within the placenta of the soul or the spirit, as we will mention shortly, God willing.

In this respect of outwardness [*zāhiriyya*] and the mentioned generality of property and unification of attribute, this light of faith is also receptive to increase and decrease, for bodily deeds come from it, and the light increases with their increase and decreases with their decrease. But its inward and reality written in the heart is simply truth-acknowledgment; it is unitary in description and in this respect it does not receive increase and decrease. Its manifestation, however, may become stronger or weaker in keeping with the thinness and thickness of the veils. It may on occasion be confirmed and strengthened, so rays may come forth from it outwardly

and inwardly. But all strength, weakness, confirmation, manifestation, and rays pertain to its descriptions and attributes, not to parts or constituents of its reality. So know this!

The inward respect of truth-acknowledgment also has three degrees. The first of them is the faith of the common people. It is sound, unblemished belief [*i'tiqād*], which is the root of the Straight Path.

The middle degree is its pervading [*sarāya*] the soul and all of its faculties and bodily members and its accompanying them in every movement and stillness, in word and deed. The fruit of this is to perform all the commands and to desist from all the prohibitions, outwardly and inwardly. His saying, 'The fornicator who fornicates does not fornicate while having faith,'<sup>14</sup> pertains to this middle level of faith, for it negates faith from those whom faith does not accompany in all of their movements and stillnesses. Were it to accompany him in the state of fornication and theft through awareness of the Real and through clinging to His commands and prohibitions, he would not have done that. So the faith that is negated pertains to this middle level, not to the higher or the lower.

The highest level of faith is the manifestation of its universal roots driven into the spiritual spirit, the explanation, number, and some of the particulars of which will be forthcoming. The fruit of this is the equilibrium and alteration [*tabdīl*] of character traits; or, putting them to use in that which becomes manifest as beautiful and lovely in relation to these uses.<sup>15</sup> In this level the affair goes back to the elimination of all or most of the veils. The heart becomes manifest, so its heaven is cleared of the clouds of doubt and disquiet, and the signs of the Lord disclose themselves within it. Faith becomes beautiful-doing and turns into unveiling [*kashf*] and face-to-face vision [*'iyān*]. *Here the protection belongs to God, the Real* [Q.18:44].

Thereby he enters into the circle of the level of beautiful-doing. It also has three levels. The first, after the manifestation of the heart's

14. Bukhari and Muslim. The hadith also mentions theft and wine-drinking in the same pattern.

15. Ibn 'Arabī explains how ugly character traits can be put to Shari'ite use and transformed into beautiful character traits. See, for example, Chittick, *Sufi Path*, pp. 304–9.

reality, is the realization of the reality of ‘When I love him, I am for him hearing, eyesight, tongue, hand, and foot.’<sup>16</sup> Its fruit is vision within the outward of all things without distinction. Its tongue is ‘I have seen nothing without seeing God before it.’<sup>17</sup>

The middle level is realization of the reality of ‘God says on the tongue of His servant, “God hears him who praises Him.”’<sup>18</sup> Its fruit is vision within the inward of all things along with distinction. Its tongue is ‘I have seen nothing without seeing God after it,’ or ‘in it.’

Its final level is the realization of comprehending [*jamʿ*] the outward and the inward. *So he was two arcs’ length away* [Q.53:9]. Its fruit is the vicegerency, then perfection. Its tongue is ‘I have seen nothing without seeing God with it.’

As for the station of *Or Closer* [Q.53:9], it is specific to the possessor of *Glory be to Him who took His servant by night* [Q.17:1].<sup>19</sup> Its fruit is most-perfectness [*akmaliyya*]. Its tongue is ‘I saw God and I saw nothing other than Him.’ This is in the moment [*waqt*] specific to him in which he is not embraced by ‘any proximate angel or sent prophet.’<sup>20</sup> So know this! You will find guidance.



Now let us return to what I am aiming to explain. I say: Know – God confirm you! – that the literal meaning of *īmān*, faith, is ‘to

16. *Ḥadīth qudsī* from Bukhari, constantly quoted by Ibn ‘Arabī and others to refer to the fruit of God’s love for those who follow prophetic guidance.

17. Ibn ‘Arabī frequently quotes this saying of Abū Bakr in the *Futūḥāt*. In one passage (4:83.21) he remarks about something he has just said, ‘This is the state of him who says, “I have seen nothing without seeing God with it,” and this is a higher state than that of him who says, “I have seen nothing without seeing God before it.”’ In another passage he contrasts Abū Bakr’s saying with the version of the saying that has ‘after it,’ remarking that the latter is the station of those who use rational arguments to prove the existence of the Maker. Then it means, ‘I have seen nothing without its being a proof of God for me’ (1:483.33).

18. Hadith found in Muslim.

19. Farghānī will have more to say about the two arcs and the station of *Or Closer*. For some of Ibn ‘Arabī’s explanations, see Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), pp. 233–37.

20. The hadith reads, ‘I have a moment with God embraced by no proximate angel, nor any sent prophet.’

give security.’ In this meaning it takes an object by itself. Thus it is said, *āmantuhu*, ‘I gave him security.’

When it implies the meaning of truth-acknowledgment and inner admission, it takes an object with *bā’*, as in His words, *they have faith in the Unseen* [Q.2:3]. This is its inward, which is connected to the heart, and this is the root.

When it implies the meaning of the acquiescence and surrender that are connected to the soul, it takes an object with *lām*, as in His words, *Do you wish that they would have faith in you?* [Q.2:75].

The secret in this is that *bā’* is the first level of manifestation and duality, just as *hamza*, which is the voweled *alif*, is the first level of the unitary breath, which has the property of the origination [*mabda’iyya*] of speech. Do you not see that the *bā’* is the origin of the attribute of the Quranic speech once it has become distinct from Him to whom it is attributed by taking form and becoming clothed in the garment of sounds and letters? ‘*In the name of God*’: The manifestation of the *bā’*’s form is singled out for the form of the vertical specific to the *alif* in *In the name of God* at the origin of the Speech so that it may stand in *alif*’s station in the property of origination; this is one confirmation of what we mentioned.<sup>21</sup>

So also, given that simple truth-acknowledgment is an origin for the manifestation of this light of faith in the heart, next in the soul, and then in the soul’s instruments and loci of manifestation, it is appropriate for it to take an object only with *bā’*, which belongs to the origination of manifestation, to its instrument, and to its joining the inward to the outward and the outward to the inward.

As for *lām*, it gives news of the manyness [*kathra*] of the cosmos, but inasmuch as it is pervaded by the property of oneness [*waḥda*] and witness [*ma’iyya*].<sup>22</sup> This is why it pertains to the ownership [*mulk*] that is tied to owned things and to the causality [*’illiyya*] that gives news of caused things.<sup>23</sup> Both report about manyness, for each of the two intertwined things depends on the other in both

21. Allusion to the fact that the vertical form of the *alif* pertaining to the word ‘name’ (*ism*) disappears in writing ‘*in the name*.’

22. Witness (*ma’iyya*) is God’s presence in all things. The term is derived from the verse, *He is with you wherever you are* (Q.57:4).

23. Reference to the meaning of the particle (preposition) *lām*, which is used to designate both possession (*li kitāb*, ‘I have a book’) and ‘because.’

intellection and existence. Do you not see that when the *lām* comes together with the consonantal *alif* – which is a form of the unseen at first and at last – it turns toward it when it is opened up as a vowel and demands the negative [i.e., the word *lā*, ‘no’]? In the same way when the microcosm, whose reality is the root of the macrocosm, turns toward its origin, which is its entity [*‘ayn*] in reality, its turning by means of opening demands negation [*nafy*] and annihilation [*fanā’*].<sup>24</sup> Imam Abu’l-Qāsim Junayd alluded to this when he said, ‘When the newly arrived [*muḥdath*] is linked to the Eternal [*qadīm*], no trace of it subsists.’

In the same way, this light of faith becomes manifest in the outward level of submission only in the form of the manyness of the soul’s acquiescence, its faculties, and its bodily members, so it is appropriate that the word take an object only with the *lām* that gives news of manyness. That of this light which receives branching, division, increase, and decrease is only the outward that takes an object with *lām* and is the reality of submission. It is not the inward that takes an object with *bā’* and is the root from which the stems and branches mentioned in this hadith branch out.



In his *Dhari‘a* Imam Abu’l-Qāsim al-Rāghib mentioned some words concerning the meaning of the branching of faith that is mentioned in this hadith and he calculated its branches as seventy-two.<sup>25</sup> The gist of his words is that faith is two things: Truth-acknowledgment and deeds. Truth-acknowledgment has three levels. The highest is what is meant by His words, *Those who have faith in God and His messenger, then do not doubt* [Q.49:15]. The middle is conjecture near to certainty because of a strong indication, as God says: *They conjecture that they will encounter their Lord* [Q.2:46]. The lowest is sheer imitation [*taqlīd*].

24. Notice the use of the word *fath*, a synonym of the word *futūḥ* (as in the title, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*) to designate the opening of the soul after it has been knocking at God’s door; the fruit of this opening is the annihilation of the created and the subsistence of the Eternal.

25. *al-Dhari‘a ilā makārim al-shari‘a*, edited by Abu’l-Yazīd Abū Zayd al-‘Ajāmī (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2007), pp. 163–65.

Deeds are also three: The vicegerency designated by His words, *He will make you vicegerents in the earth* [Q.7:129]; the worship meant by His words, *[I have not created jinn and men] except to worship Me* [Q.51:56]; and inhabiting the earth, as in His words, *and has given you to inhabit it* [Q.11:61].

Thus we have six. Each of them emerges either from eagerness or from dread, so this is twelve. In each case the person of faith will be at its beginning, or its middle, or its end, for no virtue [*faḍīla*] or vice [*radhīla*] will be separate from it. As for virtue, that is in His words, *There is no fault in those who have faith and do wholesome deeds in what they may eat, if they are godwary, have faith, and do wholesome deeds, and then are godwary and have faith, and then are godwary and do the beautiful; God loves the beautiful-doers* [Q.5:93]. And as for vice, it is in His words, *Those who have faith, then disbelieve, then have faith, then disbelieve and increase in disbelief* [Q.4:137].

Twelve times three yields thirty-six. Then each of them will come about either by a bestowed chosenness or by an earned guidance. Thus they become seventy-two branches without increase or decrease. This is the gist of the words of al-Rāghib – God have mercy upon him!

He did well in this calculation and classification, but he took the word ‘some’ – which is an unknown number – to mean two. People disagree as to whether two is one of the numbers, and most people say that ‘some’ applies only to an unknown number from three to nine. So al-Rāghib designated and chose something upon which there is disagreement. Moreover, according to what he explained, the branch is more excellent and higher than the root. And God knows best.

This servant says: Another way has shone forth to me in making this calculation and classification, one that corresponds to the great excellence of this saying and takes the word ‘some’ in the conventional sense. It is that, as we just explained, the reality of faith inwardly is a unitary thing not receptive to partition, division, and branching. It becomes divided only in respect to its outward and its outward attributes and descriptions. This is ‘submission,’ and it takes an object with *lām*, as we clarified.

I have seen that some of the great men of knowledge and unveiling have taken into account the numerical value of letters while

extracting judgments from the words of the Book and the Sunna. This is like what was extracted by the Imam Abu'l-Ḥakam ibn Barrajan from the word *alif-lām-mīm* in the Sura al-Rūm [Q.30]. He judged that Jerusalem would be conquered in the year 583 [1187], and that happened as he had judged.<sup>26</sup>

I took that into account and calculated the letters of 'some' [*biḍ'*], and this came out as 873. Then I reduced it according to the conventional rule, and what remained was eight. Hence I saw that the word 'some' designates the number eight more intensely and strongly than it designates any other number. So here I took it to mean that. Then I calculated the branches of the outward of faith and divided them into seventy-eight.

The manner of this is as follows: Everything that emerges from the outward of the human soul in respect of the faculties and members to which deeds based on intention [*niyya*] may properly be attributed becomes configured from the root of faith and its quiddity. Because it is pervaded by this intention, what emerges becomes susceptible to recompense according to the Shari'a. It can be divided into three sorts: One sort is entirely verbal, like saying *No god but God*. The second is entirely practical, like jihad and alms tax. The third is compounded of the two, like the prayer.

The practical either combines the faculties and members or it uses each faculty and member alone in a practice specific to it. Thus there are three sorts: The verbal by itself, that which is compounded of it and the practical, and that which is compounded of practices.

There remain the practices specific to each of the individual faculties and members. These are of two sorts. The goal and aim of the first sort is nothing but knowledge and perception. This is confined to five varieties, which are the five senses: Hearing, eyesight, smell, taste, and touch. The second sort is that which does not have

26. According to Yousef Casewit, who translated Ibn Barrajan's famous prediction and analyzed it in detail, Ibn 'Arabi seems to be the source for the idea that the prediction was based simply on a numerical calculation of letters. See *The Mystics of al-Andalus: Ibn Barrajan and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp.294–310, specifically p.297. In the first of Ibn 'Arabi's two mentions of the prediction in the *Futūḥāt* (1.60.2 and 4.240.32) he acknowledges that it was based on several factors. In these two passages he also takes 'some' to mean eight, though he provides a different rationale.

knowledge and perception as its goal. Rather, its goal is confined to two things. One is obtaining benefit or pleasure, which is by means of the faculty of appetite. The other is fending off harm and pain, which is by means of the faculty of wrath.

The members and loci of manifestation for these two faculties are also five. One of them is the hand, upon which is built the elevation of the Real's word by striking the necks of His opponents. The second is the foot, by which one hurries to carry out the command *So hasten to the remembrance of God* [Q.62:9]. The third is the head, by which one gains nearness to God through the command *Prostrate and come near!* [Q.96:19]. The fourth is the stomach, by which the individual's subsistence abides when he undertakes the command *Eat [of what is in the earth, lawful and goodly]!* [Q.2:168]. The fifth is the pudendum to which is connected the subsistence of the species by means of compliance with the command 'Marry!'<sup>27</sup>

Other than what we have listed, there are simply no outward faculties and members by which one acts and comes near to God. So these ten along with the three just mentioned become thirteen. Then each of them is divided into two sorts: One is to be practiced as described. The other is by avoidance, such as fasting and everything demanded by the shame that will soon be clarified. Thus they become twenty-six. Each of these then issues forth either by seeking God's approval purely for His face and in no way contaminated by any soulish cause, or it may be contaminated by a cause. Soulsh causes are of two sorts – eagerness and dread – as demanded by and in keeping with the two faculties of appetite and wrath. So these three multiplied by twenty-six become seventy-eight.

Thus have I classified the branches of the outward of faith – the most excellent of which is saying *No god but God* – in terms of its root, which is the aim and intention arising from the inward, root, and fountainhead of faith and pervading seventy-eight branches. And God gives success!

It is also plausible to count the unitary inwardness of faith among its outward branches by naming the root and essence by the name of the branch and attribute. Then the branches become seventy-nine, and 'some' will be taken to mean the most it can mean in

27. Hadith found in various sources, but usually considered weak.

number, just as al-Rāghib took it to mean the least number in a certain respect. And God – high indeed is He! – knows best.

★

As for the taproots<sup>28</sup> of this tree of faith, which are anchored and established in the space of the heart and driven into the spiritual spirit, their roots and universals are the branches of repentance [*tawba*], renunciation [*zuhd*], godwariness [*taqwā*], holding fast [*i'tiṣām*], trust [*tawakkul*], approval [*riḍā*], and love [*maḥabba*], which are the universal levels of certainty. Here certainty is the establishment of the light of faith and its manifestation and mastery over the heart. The highest of these levels is love. Each of them has small branches that are like species in relation to these genera, but this is not the place to enumerate them. It may be that we will dedicate a book to them in order to enumerate them in detail, if God apportions that and makes it feasible.

As for shame [*ḥayā'*], its reality is constraining and constricting the soul or the spirit or the heart in its manifestation of and in its making manifest the ugly. Hence its root is one of the branches of godwariness, but its trace and goal connected to the outward is avoiding ugly things. So in respect of its goal and trace it is counted among the branches of the outward of faith, and all acts of avoidance are its requisites and concomitants; and in respect of its root and reality, it is one of the branches of the root of faith and one of its inward traces and attributes.

As for the fact that saying *No god but God* is the most excellent, this goes back to several meanings. Among them is that saying this is the first thing that makes the property of this light manifest outwardly, thus necessitating that the remaining branches be required. It is the precondition for the Real to demand the other branches from those for whom the Law is prescribed.

Among them is that it is sufficient for worthiness to enter the Garden because of his words – God bless him and give him peace! – ‘When someone says, *No god but God*, he will enter the Garden.’<sup>29</sup>

28. ‘Taproot’ translates *‘irq*, a synonym for *aṣl*, ‘root.’

29. The hadith is well-known and has several slightly differing versions.

Among them is that it requires sparing blood and protecting property because of the hadith, ‘When they say it, their blood and their property are protected from me.’<sup>30</sup> None of the other branches have these characteristics and traces.

Among them is that the relation of this saying to the soul and the heart, which two are the locus where this luminous tree of faith is planted, is more intense and stronger than the relation of any of the other twigs and branches.

The reason for the strength of its relation to the soul is that the soul is carried by a foggy vapor that branches out from the inwardness of the pineal heart, which is deposited in the left side of the human body. The soul is described by the attribute of life and qualified by the trace of the rational soul and spiritual spirit. By this qualification it is different from the other animal spirits ascribed to the rest of the animals.<sup>31</sup> It is an all-comprehensive form [*ṣūra jam‘iyya*] and a combinational guise [*hay‘a ijtimā‘iyya*] between the two. When the properties of animality dominate over it such that the property and description of the trace of the rational soul and spiritual spirit are subjugated, the soul is ‘commanding to ugliness.’ When the situation is the reverse of this, it is ‘serene,’ returning to its Lord. The state of being dominating over from time to time is ‘blaming.’

As for the reality of the heart, it is curtained, latent, and enwrapped within the soul, just as fire is latent within stone and iron, blackness nonmanifest in vitriol and gallnuts,<sup>32</sup> and the reality of equilibrium enwrapped by constitutions [*mizājāt*].

It is by means of the reality of the heart’s equilibrium that this mentioned combinational guise carries the secret of the oneness of knowledge, or that of unitary existence – say whichever you like – which is the requisite of this combinational guise because of the

30. This sound hadith comes in several versions and begins with the sentence, ‘I have been commanded to fight the people until they say (or “until they bear witness”), “No god but God.”’

31. Compare Farghānī’s much more detailed but similar explanation of the reality of the soul in *Muntaha’l-madārik*, edited by ‘Āṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī (2 vols., Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2007; [https://archive.org/details/ali95\\_1\\_20161017\\_0536](https://archive.org/details/ali95_1_20161017_0536)), Vol. 1, pp. 124–25.

32. Green vitriol (sulfate of iron) is combined with gall nuts to make black ink. Qūnawī often uses the same analogy.

general witness designated by His words, *He is with you* [Q.57:4]. It carries the literal form of this meaning without any supposition of indwelling [*hulūl*].

Also, in respect of the fact that the words *No god but God* carry the property of the oneness actualized between the negation [*nafy*] and the affirmation [*ithbāt*], its locus is only a breath and a vapor that arises from inside the formal, pineal heart, qualified and shaped by the levels of the places of articulation such that it becomes manifest in the form of the guise that is a combination of shapings and qualifications, so it is an utterance and a word that carries the meaning of *tawhīd*. Hence there is a complete correspondence [*munāsaba*] between the soul and this specific breath, I mean saying *No god but God*. This is why diligence in the remembrance of *No god but God* has a more intense effect in eliminating the veils of habit and nature from the soul than any of the other deeds, acts of worship, and formulae of remembrance.

As for the strength of the relation of this saying – I mean the remembrance *No god but God* – to the heart, it is because this saying carries the property of *tawhīd* and comprehends [*jamʿ*] the negation of being<sup>33</sup> and the affirmation of the Real. In the same way the heart is the locus of disclosure [*majlā*] for the Real's oneness and the locus of manifestation [*mazhar*] for His all-comprehensiveness [*jamʿiyya*], as the Prophet reported narrating from the Real: 'My earth and My heaven do not embrace Me, but the heart of My god-wary, undefiled servant with faith does embrace Me.'<sup>34</sup>

So also the heart comprehends the traces of the negated being and the lights of the affirmed Real. In the respect of the fact that the heart's property is to be the locus of *tawhīd* and oneness that are affirmed by these two [i.e., the saying and the heart], by their all-comprehensiveness, and by their negation of manyness and their affirmation of oneness, the interrelation between the two has the utmost intensity and strength. This is why perseverance and constancy in this saying has the most penetrating influence

33. Being (*kawn*) is the entirety of the realm that results from the creative word 'Be!' In other words, it is identical with *al-ʿālam*, the cosmos or universe, which is defined as 'everything other than God.'

34. Ghazālī cites this as a *ḥadīth qudsī* in the *Ihyāʾ*, but the Hadith experts say that it cannot be traced back to the Prophet.

in eliminating from it the veils of light and darkness. What then becomes manifest is its entity and the trace of its receptivity [*qābiliyya*] toward the manifestation within it of every form of the Lord's luminosity and of the being's darkness, disclosing this to the gaze of the persevering rememberer.

**An Explanation.** Know that the real heart consists of an equilibrinous form comprehending all levels of the forms of equilibrium, both of the Lord and of being. The latter are divided into the spiritual, the imaginal, and the sensory, the last of which includes the forms of the mineral, vegetal, and animal equilibriums.

Each of the universal divine names – the contrapositional [*mutaqābil*] names like the Guide and the Misguide, and the non-contrapositional like the Alive and the Knowing – has an all-comprehensive form that is equilibrinous in relation to the particular names incorporated within it and that unifies their relative manyness and their differentiations [*tafāṣīl*], as for example the Presences of the All-Merciful and God, both of which include all.

In the same way, each of the universal, subordinated realities of being has an all-comprehensive form that is equilibrinous in relation to the subordinates and particulars incorporated within it and that unifies their real manyness and their particular differentiations, as for example the cosmos and the human, both of which comprehend all realities.

So also the spiritual and angelic forms have an all-comprehensive, equilibrinous form that unifies their manyness and their differentiations, like *the Spirit* in the property of its all-comprehensiveness and undifferentiation [*ijmāl*] and *the angels* in virtue of their differentiations, which *stand in a row* [Q.78:38]. In the tongue of the Shari'a this is expressed as 'the Guarded Tablet,' in some other tongues as 'the Universal Soul,' and in some others as 'the Greatest Spirit.'

In the same way the form of nature [*ṭabī'a*] is an equilibrinous, all-comprehensive form. From it is configured all the imaginal forms seen in dreams and visions and also in the configuration [*nash'a*] of the Isthmus [*barzakh*] that occurs between this world and the next; yes, and also most of the next-worldly forms, like the forms of deeds and words, which are non-subsistent accidents in this world's

configuration but assume forms in the next world's configuration. This is according to the report narrated from God's Messenger in which he said, 'On the night I was taken on my journey I passed by Abraham. He said, "O Muḥammad, greet your community from me, and report to them that the Garden has goodly earth and sweet water and that it is plains, so they should plant much in them." It was said, "What are its plants?" He said, "*Glory be to God, the praise belongs to God, no god but God, and God is greater.*"<sup>35</sup> These sayings are accidents in this world's configuration but will have visible, fixed forms in the next world.

In the same way the Greatest Element [*al-ʿunṣur al-aʿẓam*] is an undifferentiated form and an all-comprehensive, equilibrrious guise that includes all sensory forms and constitutions; it is the root of the heavens, the earth, and what is between the two and the root of their pillars and their matter. In some tongues it is named 'The Solitary Substance' and in others 'The Hyle.'

The reality of the human heart is an all-comprehensive, equilibrrious form that includes the property of all these forms, their levels, and their realities. It is the form of the Isthmus-reality [*barzakhīyya*], which is the demarcating line and all-comprehensive limit between the arc of oneness and the arc of manyness; or say, between the arc of necessity and the arc of possibility; or say, between the arc of existence and the arc of knowledge connected to the possible known things. Indeed, *Or Closer* [Q.53:9] than all of that, between the exclusive-unity [*aḥadiyya*] that eliminates all the standpoints incorporated in oneness and the inclusive-unity [*wāḥidiyya*] that affirms them all. The human equilibrium is its locus and the scales of its descent.

It – I mean the reality of the human heart along with the all-inclusiveness [*shumūl*] just described – pervades every human individual along with the form of his humanness. It is latent, inward, and enwrapped just as oneness is latent in each of the many numbers. In its attribute of all-inclusiveness, however, it is veiled by the angelic, celestial, elemental, inanimate, vegetal, and animal characteristics with which the existence effused upon this human individual becomes clothed as it descends and passes over

35. The hadith is found in Tirmidhi's *Sunan*.

the mentioned levels. So these properties dominate over the reality of the heart and veil it from the attribute of its all-inclusiveness, diverting it from the middle path of manifestation in the form of equilibrium – especially the properties of the level of sense perception and nature, which are dominated by the property of manyness and deviation.<sup>36</sup>

Or rather, the traces of this heart-reality are effaced in relation to some individuals by the properties [aḥkām] of these dominations [ghalabāt] and the dominations of these properties, just as humanness is effaced in the form of those of the Children of Israel who were transformed into *apes and swine* [Q.5:60]. His words, *Then your hearts were hardened [thereafter and were like stones or more intense in hardness]* to the end of the verse [Q.2:74], allude to the levels of these properties in respect of deep-rootedness and the intensity, weakness, thinness, and disappearance of the veiling. *Or more intense in hardness* alludes to deep-rootedness along with the negation of receptivity from them. *Like stones* [alludes] to the strength of the veiling along with the subsistence of the property of receptivity within them. The rest of the verse alludes to the levels of the manifestation of the trace of receptivity and the influence of wayfaring [sulūk] upon it by means of remembrance, emptying [tafrīgh, i.e., the heart], attentiveness [tawajjuh], the weakness and thinness of the properties, their elimination, the manifestation of the attribute of the heart's equilibrium, and its receptivity and all-inclusiveness.<sup>37</sup>

Whenever the precedent solicitude [‘ināya] expressed by His words, *They have a foot of truthfulness at their Lord* [Q.10:2], overtakes a human individual, and his preparedness [isti‘dād] assists him in the elimination of the darkness of the veils mentioned at first, he is then *upon a light from his Lord* [Q.39:22] because of the arrival in his heart of this light of faith, which was latent in his soul and kernel. At this point his original, universal taproot, which is

36. Qūnawī provides a detailed analysis of all these veils and the manner in which they need to be discarded successively in the process of ascending to God. See Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, pp. 109ff.; also Chittick, ‘Qunawi, Neoplatonism, and the Circle of Ascent,’ in *Search*, Chapter 11; earlier version as ‘The Circle of Spiritual Ascent,’ williamcchittick.com.

37. Farghānī gives a similar interpretation of this verse in *Muntahā* 1:125.

love – which is the form of the divine love and desire expressed by ‘I loved to be recognized’<sup>38</sup> – will be driven forth from the heart and will extend into his spiritual spirit, which is qualified by the attribute of the oneness and incomparability of the soul’s inward. So [the spirit’s] trace will become manifest in the visible world in the form of *No god but God* by virtue of the property of correspondence with all-comprehensiveness, negation of manyness, and affirmation of oneness. By way of obligation [*ilzām*] and prescription [*taklīf*] this will demand the following of the remaining branches, which are prayer, fasting, alms-tax, jihad, hajj, and so on. This is because of the strength of the veiling specific to the level of submission, not by way of seeing-disclosure [*istijlā’*] and tasting [*dhawq*], which are specific to the levels of faith and beautiful-doing.

The trace of this love will then rise up from his inward by virtue of the mentioned precedent. It will become manifest in the form of desire and inclination toward him in whom has been perfected the manifestation of the property of its root, which is the divine love, and the form of its fruit, which is the perfection of recognizing the path and the goal. This object of desire [*murād*] is the rightly-guiding [*murshid*] shaykh. So he will give over his soul, delegate his affair, and insert all of his goals and desires into what the shaykh desires for him. The shaykh will command him to persevere in the mentioned remembrance. He will impart [*talqīn*] it to him such that his remembrance will have the description of the shaykh’s remembrance – illuminated and void of the darkness of caprice and nature. Then its effect in illuminating, voiding, emptying the locus, and eliminating veils will be stronger and more intense. The more he is diligent in remembering *No god but God* with presence [*ḥuḍūr*], comprehensiveness of aspiration [*jam‘iyyat al-hamm*], and negation of thought [*nafy al-khāṭir*] – even thought of the Real by imagining Him in his imagination and mind, for negating this is also important – and with an attentiveness unobstructed by delimiting beliefs, or rather, in accordance with the belief of the shaykh and what the Real Himself teaches him in his soul, the more this light of faith will increase in strength and manifestation because

38. Reference to the famous divine saying, ‘I was a hidden treasure and loved to be recognized, so I created creation that I might be recognized.’

the light of remembrance and the strength of its luminosity will be added to it by the mentioned impartation. That original taproot, which is love, will become dominant, confirmed, and strengthened. Its trace will pervade the taproots of the character traits and attributes by beautifying them and [it will pervade] the aspiration, words, and deeds by putting them into equilibrium. It will confirm and strengthen all the other taproots, so they will be delineated, confirmed, and strengthened.

Then the wayfarer's soul, or his spirit, or his secret core [*sirr*], will turn away from seeking first immediate shares, second deferred shares, and finally everything other than his Lord and Remembered Object [*madhkūr*]. Here the taproot of repentance will become manifest.

Then by leaving aside and turning away first from outward and second from inward accidents and motivations, which are outside his own essence, and finally by poverty and being void of everything other [than God], the taproot of renunciation will become delineated.

Then by guarding against the properties of all deviation in word, deed, and state, outwardly and inwardly, in creation and the Real, the taproot of godwariness will become clear.

Then, in all of this, by attachment to and confidence first in God's cord [*ḥabl*], second in God's might [*ḥawl*], and finally in God alone, the taproot of holding fast will become completely manifest.

Then by seeing first the trusteeship [*wikāla*] of Him whom he is remembering in everything that he must have from Him; by seeing second His guaranty [*kifāla*] in all aims and goals in which are found his wholesomeness [*ṣalāḥ*] in this world and the religion by tasting and state [*ḥāl*], not by hearsay [*samāʿ*] and belief; and by reliance finally upon this trusteeship and guaranty by the disengagement [*tajarrud*] of the act of the Trustee [*wakīl*] and Guarantor [*kaḥīl*] in all affairs and occasions, the taproot of trust will be confirmed.

Then by the coinciding of his desire with everything that occurs in existence by the decree of his Remembered Object or at the requirement of his Desired Object's approval, the taproot of approval will become strong.

With the assistance of the water of truth-acknowledgment and certainty in keeping with the manifestation and strength of the properties of these taproots, in the branches will become manifest subtlety,

radiance, beauty, and sweetness. Cheerfulness in deeds and softness in limbs will come as traces of this subtlety, beauty, and radiance.

The final issue of this affair will be that in the midst of perseverance in this remembrance both meaning-related [*maʿnawī*] and sensory [*maḥsūs*] rays and lights will appear. They will shine like a lamp, then like a candle, then like a star, then like the moon, and then like the sun, such that the room of his retreat will become illuminated outwardly in sense perception. These [lights] that are shown are nothing but the traces of the clashes actualized from the two lights – that of faith and that of remembrance – because of the strength of the attentiveness and the intensity of the seeking and yearning, like the clashing that happens between stone and iron because of an outside strength.

Once the taproots are consolidated and confirmed, the mentioned veils – which are the properties of those dominations and the dominations of those properties – will become thin. The properties of every level that had been dominated over by the properties of another level – which had ruling power, authority, and domination over it – will become manifest. Inside the essence of this traveling rememberer these will become distinct from those. Among them are those to which activity [*fāʿiliyya*] is ascribed. These are the properties of the Lordly Oneness and of that whose relation to these properties is stronger, namely, the spiritual spirit. Among them are those to which passivity [*infīʿāl*] is ascribed. These are the properties of being and of that whose relation to these properties is more intense, namely, the soul.<sup>39</sup>

Then the trace of the dominating love will pervade the rememberer, coming forth from his inward to the spirit and the soul. It will put the two into movement and incline each of them to seek the perfection enwrapped by the other. The spiritual spirit, with all the properties of activity enwrapped within it, will long for and incline to the soul, just as the male inclines to the female and the pious spouse longs for the pious spouse. By virtue of the soul's realization of the attribute of serenity along with the passive properties of being that it comprises, it will long for and incline toward the

39. For a discussion parallel to this and the following two paragraphs, see Farghāni, *Muntahā* 1:133–34.

spiritual spirit because of the mentioned pervasion, just as the conforming spouse longs for the conforming spouse. They will combine and mix in another manner, with a second combination and mixture, by means of all the unitary, equilibrrious properties and traces ascribed to each of them.

Then the mentioned reality of the heart will become manifest. It will emerge from the placenta of the soul in the form of a rightly guided son, with filial piety [*bārr*] toward its parents. This heart will become the mirror and locus of disclosure for the unitary self-disclosure entified from the presence of the name Outward. It will envelop all his outward faculties – hearing, seeing, tongue, hand, and foot – as has been clarified explicitly in the well-known sound report.

This then is the first voyage and journey, that which pertains to the lover, in respect of the outward and the soul. It is perfecting the soul for the sake of realizing the name Outward along with all His names that suggest the assertion of similarity [*tashbīh*], like Hearing and Seeing; and for the sake of seeing oneness in manyness itself.<sup>40</sup>

Then, when he throws down the staff of his voyaging in this journey by realizing all the universals comprised by the name Outward, he will begin the second voyage and journey in respect of the inward and the spirit. It is perfecting the soul for the sake of realizing the name Inward, which comprehends all the names that give news of the assertion of incomparability [*tanzīh*], like Peace, Holy, and Exalted; and for the sake of seeing manyness in oneness itself. This can only come about by the unstitching of the spirit and by bringing forth the properties of manyness latent in its inwardness.

This is the reverse of the first case, which occurs in the first voyage and journey. For the inward of the soul's manyness and outward faculties along with their loci of manifestation is the oneness of the outward of existence [*waḥda zāhir al-wujūd*]. The inwardness of the spirit's oneness is the manyness of the tasks [*kathrat al-shu'ūn*] specific to the forms of being's realities found in the beginningless knowledge.<sup>41</sup> So know this!

40. This and the next three paragraphs run parallel to *Muntahā* 1:137–38.

41. In other passages in both *Muntahā* and *Mashāriq*, Farghānī contrasts these two as *waḥdat al-wujūd*, the oneness of [the Real's] being, and *kathrat al-ʿilm*, the oneness of [the Real's] knowledge. See Chittick, 'A History of the Term *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*,' in *Search*, Chapter 8, pp. 79–80; earlier version as 'Rūmī and

Once the spirit is unstitched, a child of the heart facing the mentioned self-disclosure of the Inward is born, emerging from its placenta. When the universals of the name Inward are realized, the second voyage and journey, that which pertains to the beloved, comes to an end.

It may happen in relation to some journeyers that this second journey pertaining to the beloved comes before the first journey pertaining to the lover, because their attraction [*jadhba*] comes before their wayfaring [*sulūk*] and their subsistence [*baqā'*] before their annihilation [*fanā'*].<sup>42</sup> In the manner mentioned first, the wayfaring comes before the attraction and the annihilation before the subsistence.

After this, with the assistance of preparedness, he will set out briskly in the third voyage and journey for the sake of realizing the self-disclosure of the Essence that comprehends the Outward and the Inward, the First and the Last. This comes to be actualized and entified from the outward of the level of the Divinity, which comprehends the outward and inward names. This takes place by exerting effort and struggle in eliminating the bond of delimitation by either of the two properties of the Outward and the Inward and by negating any mutual impeding by their traces. Then, between the properties of these two, an oceanic heart [*qalb mutabaḥḥir*] will be born, not delimited and not delimiting, but rather comprehending the two sides of the Outward and the Inward. This is what is called the station of *Two Arcs' Length Away* [Q.53:9] and 'the Comprehending of the Comprehending' [*jam' al-jam'*]. Within it is disclosed the all-comprehensive self-disclosure of perfection. This is the final end of the journeys of all the prophets, messengers, and proximate ones among the ancients and the later folk.<sup>43</sup>

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*Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, williamcchittick.com.

42. The first journey, pertaining to the lover (*muḥibbī*), is the full actualization of the Quranic verse, *they love Him* (Q.5:54). The second journey, pertaining to the beloved (*maḥbūbī*), is the actualization of the verse, *He loves them* (Q.5:54). Some earlier authors make a similar point by saying that the seeker of God is first the *murād*, 'the desirer,' that is, he who desires God and is occupied with wayfaring. Later he may become the *murād*, 'the desired,' that is, he who is desired by God and overcome by attraction. See, for example, Maybudī, *Kashf al-asrār*, translated by W. Chittick (<http://altafsir.com/Books/kashf.pdf>), pp. 42–43, 245–46, 264.

43. For a detailed discussion of the third and fourth levels, see *Muntahā* 1:139–41.

As for the fourth journey to the station of *Or Closer* [Q.53:9], the rank of *Surely unto thy Lord is the final end* [Q.53:42], and the level of the Divinity, this is specific to our master and patron, the Seal of the Prophets – God’s blessings be upon him and all of them!

Then know that it may happen for some of the wayfarers, or rather for most of them, that the mentioned properties are not appropriately eliminated because of a deficiency in their receptivity, a defect in their preparedness, and the establishment of their wayfaring on a corrupt foundation without the right-guidance of a right-guider, a knower, someone sound in right-guidance. For them the properties of the spirit do not become distinct from the properties of the soul. Rather the properties of the soul may become weakened and the properties of the spirit strengthened and dominant because of devotion to acts of discipline [*riyādāt*], struggle [*mujāhadāt*], and endurance [*mukābadāt*]. Hence the lights of their spirituality [*rūḥāniyya*] will shine, and angelic, correct thoughts will enter in upon them, but the specificities and traces of these things will not penetrate into them. They will report about events and unseen things, they will listen and gaze from behind the curtain of walls and at long distances, and they will act by means of aspiration. Their supplications will be answered, they will walk upon air and water, and they will not be burned by fire, because they will have entered the gate of the Lower Sovereignty [*al-malakūt al-adnā*], for their spirituality has become dominant. With all of this they do not become lords of the hearts and possessors of self-disclosures. Rather, they smell no whiff whatsoever of the heart and they do not enter any of the gates of the Higher Sovereignty [*al-malakūt al-a‘lā*], which is the World of the All-Compellingness [*jabarūt*] and the Presence of the Divine Names and Attributes. Nor are they moistened with a splash from the oceans of protection [*walāya*]. In making manifest all the traces and miracles that we mentioned, there is no difference between them and monks, other than the saying *No god but God, Muḥammad is God’s Messenger*, the performance of the rightful dues of the Muhammadan Shari‘a, undertaking its rulings, and their entrance because of this into the ranks of the pious and the faithful, those who are worthy of entering the Garden, gaining its bliss and its degrees, and attaining to

the delimited encounter with their Lord. So understand, for one of the gates of recognition and discernment has been opened for you!

As for his words, ‘the least of which is removing harm from the road,’ removing harm [*imāṭat al-adhā*] in the tongue of the station I have mentioned is to eliminate the mentioned ‘properties of the dominations and dominations of the properties’ from the road of the heart, but not in the mentioned manner, for diligence in remembering *No god but God* eliminates veiling by those properties and dominations in a time shorter and swifter than any other good deeds.

It may happen that someone will be opened up [*infitāḥ*] by that remembrance in a forty-day retreat, or somewhat less or more. But when the wayfarer undertakes to eliminate harm in a manner other than the mentioned remembrance, such as prayer and its like, and by changing character traits and attributes and putting them into equilibrium, the path may become long for him, so he will need many struggles, hard deeds, and specific attentiveness to the elimination of each character trait and attribute. It may be that long stretches of life will not be sufficient to realize this. While one is occupied, however, with constant remembrance, truthful aim, unified resoluteness, sincerity of intention, and the negation of every notion and thought, the goal may be gained swiftly because of the close and fixed correspondence between the heart and the mentioned remembrance and the fact that it branches off from the taproot of love, or rather, it is its locus of manifestation and its trace, as we clarified.

And this – I mean the taproot of love – is the root of all other taproots, both the universal and the particular. ‘All game is in the belly of the onager.’<sup>44</sup> Do you not see that the manifestation of its trace brings about the attraction that is equivalent to the deeds of jinn and men?<sup>45</sup> In the same way, it has come in a report, ‘When I love him, I am his hearing, seeing,’ and so on. Because of this meaning, saying *No god but God* and persevering in it is more excellent and higher than removing harm from the road by any other path.

44. Arabic proverb meaning that everything is found in this one thing.

45. Allusion to the Sufi saying, ‘One attraction of the Real is equivalent to all the deeds of jinn and men.’

What I have established is the meaning and inward of removing harm from the road in accordance with what was already explained concerning what is demanded by the station of beautiful-doing. As for its form and some of the details of removing the veils in keeping with the stations of faith and submission, ‘harm’ is of two sorts. One sort is something that is harmful outwardly and by nature in this world; the second [sort is harmful] inwardly and by the Shari‘a in the afterworld. The ‘road’ is the path of stepping forth, either in form, the locus of which is the earth; or in meaning, the locus of which is the religion or the intellect.

Each of these two affairs – harm and road – has many forms and modes, and removal accords with them. Among the modes of meaning-related harm on the meaning-related path is the wrongdoing and constriction that occur for people in seeking livelihoods through interactions. This is because they make impositions and demands that are neither justified nor Shari‘ite. So the meaning is that emptying oneself [*tafarrugh*] for the sake of the remembrance of *No god but God* is more excellent than mixing with people with the intention of repelling wrong from them and relieving them from constricting things. This is because the first is for the sake of seeking the station of the proximate, and the second is for the sake of seeking the station of the pious and wholesome, and there is an obvious difference between these two stations.

Meaning-related harm also includes innovations, caprices, and vile opinions, those that are not straight and that protest against the meaning-related, religious road. These are of two sorts. First is deviated belief, which is inclining toward the side of going too far and exaggeration or toward the side of falling short and inadequacy. The removal of this sort belongs to the realizing knowers by means of a sufficient, healing clarification and to others by means of imitating a knower who is lordly, godwary, truth-affirming, and realizing.

The second sort is words and deeds opposed to the outward of the Shari‘a and the Sunna. The removal of this sort of harm is by opposition to caprice and the soul’s appetite, avoidance of nature, and going back to following the outward of the Shari‘a, the Sunna, and the community, then by the observance of commanding the honorable [*al-amr bi’l-ma‘rūf*] and forbidding the improper

[*al-nahy 'an al-munkar*]. And even though these are among the required important things, saying *No god but God* is more important, more excellent, and more appropriate because everything that we have mentioned is built upon it; and the incumbency, soundness, and acceptance of those things are attributed to it.

As for formal harm, it is of two sorts. One sort is connected to the outward of the person of faith, and another sort is disconnected and outside of him. As for that which is connected, it is like natural things that are disliked and deemed ugly and that abide through the individual and harm the sense perception of others or his own sense perception. This is like alteration of the teeth; removing this from the road of remembrance, speech, and recitation is with the tooth-stick mandated by the Shari'a. So also are long nails, the removal of whose harm by paring is part of the Sunna. So also is the length of the mustache, the removal of whose harm is by clipping; and the length of the armpit hair that brings about the harm of odor, the plucking of which is mandated by the Shari'a. And so on.

As for the disconnected, it is like thorns, stones, filth, scorpions, or serpents that obstruct the path of people and harm them. The removal of this sort is by eliminating it in any way possible.

All that we have detailed is simply the forms of deviations actualized from the properties of those dominations that are harmful outwardly and inwardly. Our saying that 'removal' is the elimination of 'the properties of the dominations and the dominations of the properties' includes everything and comprehends all. *And God speaks the truth, and He guides on the road* [Q.33:4].

This is the end of the book *Drafting the Clarification: Establishing the Branches of Faith and the Levels of Beautiful-Doing*.