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Al-Ghāzālī's forty principles of religion

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The American University in Cairo
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

AL-GHAZALĪ'S FORTY PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION
AN ANNOTATED ORIGINAL TRANSLATION OF PARTS I AND II OF
ḤUJJAT AL-ISLĀM AL-IMĀM ABŪ ḤĀMĪD AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S
Kitāb al-Arbāʿīn fī Uṣūl al-Dīn

A Thesis Submitted to
THE DEPARTMENT OF ARABIC STUDIES

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

By
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Under the Supervision of Professor Joseph E.B. Lumbard

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ABSTRACT

Al-Ghazālī's Forty Principles of Religion: an annotated and introduced original translation of Parts I and II of Ḥujjat al-Islām al-Imām Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*, a thesis by Matthew B. Ingalls (BA Tufts University) submitted to the American University in Cairo's department of Arabic Studies, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, written under the supervision of Professor Joseph E.B. Lombard (PhD Yale University).

The subject of our study, Imām al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) hitherto untranslated *Forty Principles of Religion (Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn fī Uṣūl al-Dīn)*, is in essence a précis of the author's monumental *Revival of the Religious Sciences (Iḥyā' ʿUlūm al-Dīn)*. As such, it represents an endeavor to condense the most salient features of one of the most influential texts in Islamic intellectual history by the pen of the same author, himself one of the most revered personalities in Islam.

Beyond representing a precise translation, the thesis seeks to examine the historical and philosophical context of the work, while additionally examining the theological issues and mystical dimensions addressed by the author. We have presented our analysis and research in the form of detailed footnotes in addition to a general introduction.

AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S FORTY PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION

Kitāb al-Arbāʿīn fī Uṣūl al-Dīn

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Every few hundred years a thinker emerges who possesses the remarkable ability to transcend the technical and societal constraints of his time, thereby arriving at perceptions so visionary and perennial in nature that they retain practicality for millions of souls over several millennia. By way of illustration, one can safely posit that more people have read and benefited from the works of Aristotle in the past hundred years than in the entire 2,200-year period before that; and while this is no doubt a result of several extraneous factors, it nonetheless bares strong testimony to the perdurability of the author's insights. The Islamic civilization boasts several such intellectual luminaries, arguably the most influential of whom is "The Proof of Islam (*ḥujjat al-islām*)," Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (450/1058 – 505/1111), the subject of this study. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh describes a sentiment common among al-Ghazālī's contemporary enthusiasts in her *Studies in al-Ghazzali*:

His ideas about religion, faith, and the relationship between God and man and between man and man have always seemed extremely "modern" to me and are expressed so convincingly that they cross the barriers of time and religion, and lend deeper meanings to any research into his writings.¹

In a similar vein, W. Montgomery Watt writes in his *Muslim Intellectual* concerning al-Ghazālī, "His outlook, too, is closer to that of many Muslims to the outlook of modern Europe and America, so that he is more easily comprehensible to us."² Perhaps it is ow-

¹ Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies in al-Ghazzali*, 3.

² Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, vii.

ing to al-Ghazālī’s literary ability to “cross the barriers of time and religion” that English translations of his works have proliferated within the past decade, while people of all faiths and factions constitute their intended market. Despite the swelling demand, the only English translation worth mentioning of the author’s most influential and celebrated work, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences (Iḥyā’ ʿUlūm al-Dīn)*, is the Islamic Texts Society’s rendering,³ which, although impressive in its detailed annotations and religious fidelity to the original Arabic, is incomplete and will likely remain so for the next several years. The subject of our present study, al-Ghazālī’s hitherto untranslated *Forty Principles of Religion (Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn fī Uṣūl al-Dīn)* is in essence a précis of the *Revival*. As such, it represents an endeavor to condense the most salient features of one of the most influential texts in Islamic intellectual history by the pen of the same author, himself one of the most revered personalities in Islam. Its importance cannot be overstated. We shall return to the *Revival*, the *Forty Principles*, and the relationship between them both presently.

A BRIEF NOTE ON THE LIFE OF AL-GHAZĀLĪ

The secondary literature alone on the life of al-Ghazālī deserves several months’ research,⁴ and it is not the aim of this study to map new ground in his biography. On the other hand, any research into the author or his works must necessarily include a brief sketch of his life in order to depict his scholarly legitimacy and demonstrate the momen-

³ Maulana Fazlu’l-Karim’s abridged English rendering of the *Revival*, though noteworthy as an individual endeavor, pales in comparison to that of the partial translation by the Islamic Texts Society, and has thus not been mentioned.

⁴ While al-Subkī’s recension of al-Ṣafadī’s brief biography in the former’s *Ṭabaqāt al-Shafīya* (Vol. IV, 101-182) is admittedly plagued by partisanship, interested readers should also refer to the biographical accounts of Abū ‘I-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī (*Saviors of Islamic Spirit*, Vol. I), D.B. Macdonald (“The Life of al-Ghazzālī” in *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*), W. Montgomery Watt (*Muslim Intellectual*), and that of *The Encyclopedia of Islam*.

tous nature of his “conversion” to Sufism toward the latter half of his life. With this in mind, we have endeavored to reconstruct the most noteworthy events of al-Ghazālī’s biography:

Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī al-Ṭūsī was born in Tabiran, near the city of Ṭūs in northeast corner of present-day Iran, in 450/1058, three years after the advent of the Seljuk dynasty in Baghdad.⁵ In a calculated effort to garner public support, the Seljuk rulers were open-handed in patronizing Islamic scholarship, and within little time, state-sponsored *madrāsas* (colleges) became a welcome opportunity for many a poor or orphaned child to receive both free lodging and board in addition to a first-rate education. Al-Ghazālī’s father passed away while his son was still a child, and on his deathbed, he instructed a friend to see that the young Muḥammad and his brother Aḥmad were given the best education that his modest means could afford.⁶ When his father’s money ran out, al-Ghazālī was enrolled in a local *madrasa*, and before long, his natural aptitude for learning became evident. The Seljuk state was the champion of Sunni Islam according to the Ashʿarite theological school and the Shafʿite school of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). As such, al-Ghazālī began his studies in both theology and jurisprudence perhaps at the early age of eleven, learning the latter science from Aḥmad al-Rādhkānī in his hometown *madrasa*, after which he continued his studies in Jurjān under the tutelage of Abū Naṣr Ismaʿīlī.⁷

In his early twenties, al-Ghazālī traveled to Nīshāpūr to study with the great theo-

⁵ Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, 19.

⁶ Some have suggested that al-Ghazālī’s father was a spinner of wool, as can be deduced from the name al-Ghazālī should the “z” be doubled. Since this is not the case especially in the earlier sources, Watt dismisses the theory, suggesting rather that the family may hail from an obscure village bearing the name. For a detailed discussion of the debate, see *ibid.*, 181-183.

⁷ Nadwī, *Saviors of Islamic Spirit*, 112.

gian and jurist who was to become his mentor, the “Imam of the Two Sanctuaries” ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAbdullah al-Juwaynī.⁸ Only a few years prior to this, Niẓām al-Mulk, vizier to the Seljuk king Malikshāh, build two “Niẓāmīya” academies for the two greatest scholars of the time to teach in: the first in Baghdad in honor of Abū Ishḥāq al-Shirāzī, and the second in Nīshāpūr in honor of al-Juwaynī. It was in the Nīshāpūr academy that al-Ghazālī studied jurisprudence, theology, and principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) with al-Juwaynī until the latter’s death in 478/1085, soon after which time, al-Ghazālī traveled to the camp-court (*muʿaskar*) of Niẓām al-Mulk, who appointed him to write theological treatises against Faṭimid/Bāṭinite polemics and propaganda that were viewed as an insidious threat to the Abbasid Caliphate. Struck by scholar’s polemical brilliance, the vizier appointed him as the chair of Shafʿite law in the Baghdad Niẓāmīya Academy.⁹ Though no older than 34, al-Ghazālī had attained the most coveted academic position in the entire Islamic world.

Word of al-Ghazālī’s brilliance spread quickly throughout Baghdad, and before long nobles and chiefs were competing with his 300 students for space in his lectures. It was during his first period of teaching in Baghdad that al-Ghazālī composed three of the most influential texts in Islamic intellectual history. The first, *The Intentions of the Philosophers* (*Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa*)¹⁰ summarized the philosophical views of al-Kindī, al-Farābī, and Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) in such perspicuous language that the Christian scholastics of

⁸ Author of, among many other works, *Nihāyat al-Maṭlab fī Dirāyat al-Madhhab*, which “no one in the field of Islamic law had ever produced the like of.” Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller*, 1066.

⁹ Hourani, “A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī’s Writings,” 290.

¹⁰ The text is essentially an Arabic translation of the Persian *Dānesh Nāmeḥ-i ʿAlālī* (*The Book of Science Dedicated to ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla*) by Ibn Sīnā. Marmura, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, xvii.

the 13th century considered the author himself to be a peripatetic philosopher of Ibn Sīnā's caliber. The *Intentions* particularized the philosophical framework that al-Ghazālī would raze with the monumental second book of his trilogy, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* (*Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*), in which he conclusively¹¹ rebuts twenty philosophical doctrines of the Muslim peripatetics, three of which directly contravene the Islamic catechism thereby taking the philosophers outside the fold of Islam according to the author. Finally, in an attempt to reconstruct the orthodox Sunni catechism upon the smoldering ashes of Islamic Aristotelianism, al-Ghazālī wrote *The Middle Course in Catechism* (*Al-Iqtisād fī 'l-ʿtiqād*) in approximately 488/1095,¹² which he describes in the *Forty Principles* as:

A self-contained text that encompasses the quintessence of the science of the speculative theologians (*mutakallimūn*), though it is more precise and nearer to rapping at the doors of true knowledge than the affected speech that one encounters in the books of the theologians, which stems from speculative catechism and not true knowledge.¹³

In a fashion novel to theology, al-Ghazālī employs Aristotelian logic in the text, particularly the syllogism, in order to substantiate traditional claims. Remarkably, the *Middle Course* was written during a profoundly troublesome phase of the author's life: a phase that he would ultimately overcome through the teachings and exercises detailed in our present work.

While al-Ghazālī's rebuttals of the philosophers' and Bāṭinites' doctrines earned him tremendous academic prestige throughout the Islamic world, his research led him to ra-

¹¹ Ibn Rushd (Averroës) would write his famous *The Incoherence of the Incoherence* (*Tahāfut al- Tahāfut*) as a rebuttal to al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence* a few decades later. While arguably the text had a profound effect upon Western philosophy, al-Ghazālī's decisive blow to the Eastern peripatetics would overshadow its influence within Islamic philosophy. As such, Ibn Rushd's mention is often relegated to the footnotes.

¹² Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings," 294.

¹³ See the "Concluding Section" of Part I of our present work for the context of the quote.

tionalize the very foundations of his own Islamic paradigm. As he details in his autobiography *The Deliverer from Error (al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl)*, his proclivity for rational deconstruction brought into question his very perception of reality and all its a priori assumptions.¹⁴ This “lesser crisis,” in due course, drew him toward the subjective understanding of the Sufis who “tasted” truth through a sapient understanding of God (*dhawq*) by shunning the very vices that had all but engulfed al-Ghazālī: scholasticism, love of prestige, and insincerity, among others. In the *Deliverer*, the author describes his dissonance after logically accepting the way of the Sufis:

After that, I considered my circumstances: I was immersed in attachments that had encompassed me from all sides. I considered my activities – the best of them being instructing and teaching: I was devoting myself to unimportant sciences that were useless on the path to the hereafter. Then I reflected upon my intention in teaching: it was not purely for the sake of God; rather, it was instigated and motivated by the quest for prestige and widespread celebrity. I thus became certain that I was on the brink of an eroding sandbank,¹⁵ and was already on the verge of the Hellfire if I did not set about mending my ways.¹⁶

Al-Ghazālī’s spiritual schizophrenia began to impair his physical health until he could no longer teach. The doctors recognized that his illness was psychological, and they were powerless to treat him until the heavy weight upon his heart was lifted. Realizing that his indecision would ultimately kill him, al-Ghazālī secretly resolved to abandon his prestigious teaching post in order to devote the remainder of his life to the rectification of his soul. Under the pretense of leaving for Mecca, he retreated to the Levant, determined never to return to Baghdad again.

For the next eleven years of his life, al-Ghazālī lived in seclusion, primarily in Da-

¹⁴ The logic of René Descartes “First Meditation” parallels that of al-Ghazālī’s autobiography in an almost suspicious manner.

¹⁵ A reference to Q. IX:109, *Which then is best? - he that layeth his foundation on piety to God and His Good Pleasure? - or he that layeth his foundation on the brink of an eroding sandbank?*

¹⁶ This passage is based upon R.J. McCarthy’s translation of the *Deliverer* in his *Al-Ghazali’s Path to Sufism*, 53, with a few corrections and modifications.

mascus with a sojourn to Jerusalem, engaging himself in spiritual struggle (*mujāhada*) and constant remembrance of God. Though he had excelled the greatest minds in the speculative sciences, his crisis in Baghdad enabled him to recognize that religion is more than intellectualizing and rationalization; rather, its auspicious objective is to mold the soul into a form acceptable to its Maker, or moreover, to purify the soul to the extent that it reflects the Names of God, a phenomena that al-Ghazālī alludes to with the mirror analogy that reoccurs throughout his writings.¹⁷ Practical Sufism is thus “to assume God’s character traits as one’s own (*al-takhalluq bi akhlāq illāh*),”¹⁸ to use Ibn al-‘Arabī’s phrasing. With this ambition in mind, al-Ghazālī renounced the entirety of his worldly attainments much to the chagrin and confusion of his friends and colleagues.

Al-Ghazālī emerged from his seclusion to produce his greatest work *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*), which we will discuss in depth presently since it bears a strong correlation to our present work, the *Forty Principles*. In 499/1106, motivated by the same altruistic impetus that brought Moses down from Mount Sinai, al-Ghazālī returned to teaching in Nīshāpūr and later in Ṭūs. In touching language, the author explains the decision in his autobiography:

I know well that, even though I have returned to teaching, I have not really returned. For returning is coming back to what was. Formerly, I used to impart the knowledge through which prestige is gained, and to invite men to it by my words and deeds, and *that* was my aim and intention. But now, I invite men to the knowledge by which prestige is renounced and its lowly rank recognized. This is now my intention, my aim, my desire. God knows that to be true of me. I now earnestly desire to reform myself and others, but I do not know whether I shall attain my desire or be cut off by death short of my goal. Yet I believe with a faith as certain as direct vision that there is no might for me and no power save in God,

¹⁷ See for example the last paragraph of Part I of the present work, in addition to “The First Principle” and “The Tenth Principle” of Part II. See also the first chapter of al-Ghazālī’s *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, translated by David Buchman as *The Niche of Lights*.

¹⁸ Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 304.

the Exalted, the Sublime; and that it was not I who moved, but He moved me; and that I did not act, but He acted through me. I ask Him, then, to reform me first, then to use me as an instrument of reform; to guide me, then to use me as an instrument of guidance; to show me the true as true, and to grant me the grace to follow it; and to show me the false as false, and grant me the grace to eschew it!¹⁹

Until his death at the age of 55, al-Ghazālī continued his religious studies, obtaining an *ijāza* (license to transmit knowledge) in prophetic Traditions (*aḥādīth*) from the reputed Traditionist (*muḥaddith*) of his time, °Amr b. Abū Ḥasan al-Rawāsī.²⁰ Al-Ghazālī had never focused on Traditions throughout his education, and his detractors have always been keen to criticize his frequent usage of weak and spurious reports of the Prophet. It is interesting to note that his quest for knowledge continued unabated until his last breath, and he completed the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of both Muslim and al-Bukhārī²¹ under the aegis of his shaykh. On a Monday morning in 505/1111, according to the account of his brother Aḥmad,²² al-Ghazālī performed the dawn prayer with the congregation and asked that his shroud be brought to him. With the words “I submit to the command of my Master,” he kissed the shroud, pulled it over his face, and stretched out his legs while facing the direction of prayer. When the people gathered around him, he had already passed away.

THE REVIVAL AND THE FORTY PRINCIPLES

Islamic scholars have divided Islam into four distinct spheres: beliefs (*°aqā'id*), forms of worship (*°ibādāt*), dealings and transactions (*mu°āmalāt*), and ethics or excellence of character traits (*akhlāqīyāt*). As mentioned above, Sufism’s primary domain is the latter

¹⁹ McCarthy, *Al-Ghazali's Path to Sufism*, 72. I have made a few minor corrections. The concluding supplication is from a prophetic Tradition.

²⁰ Nadwī, *Saviors of Islamic Spirit*, 169.

²¹ Considered the two most scrupulous and reliable collections of Traditions.

²² The account is recorded in al-Zabīdī’s *Itḥāf al-Sāda*; we have relied upon the translation of it in Nadwī’s *Saviors of Islamic Spirit*, 170.

explains the wisdom behind cultic practices through a rationalized discourse, which frequently ends abruptly under the pretext that the reader is unqualified to receive the full brunt of the gnostics' esoteric knowledge; rather, he must taste the experience himself. In other words, al-Ghazālī sets an ideal practice upon the legitimacy of the Koran and prophetic Precedent (*sunna*), and then creates a spiritual dissonance within the reader through superhuman tales, arduous practical advise, and negative pedagogical reinforcement, thus motivating him to change.

The Revival of the Religious Sciences is arguably the single most influential book in Islamic intellectual history, since it, among other things, established scholarly legitimacy for the science of *taṣawwuf* (Sufism) through the patronage of its esteemed author. In the words of Montgomery Watt, the *Revival* “links up the details of the *Sharīʿa* with the insights of the Sufis.”²⁶ Al-Ghazālī's subsequent *Forty Principles*, the topic of our study, stands as a concise summary of contents of the *Revival*, mirroring the latter in substance, methodology, and style, albeit in an abridged format. The text was originally written as the third part of al-Ghazālī's *Jewels of the Koran* (*Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*), though the author himself approved of its being considered and used as a separate text. Both the *Revival* and the *Forty Principles* are similar in the content of their respective four main sections, each of which is subsequently divided into ten subsections. Thus, while the *Revival* comprises forty “books,” the *Forty Principles*, being a précis of the former, consists of forty principles of a relatively terse language. Al-Ghazālī strips the text of legal references, while relying upon fewer anecdotes, prophetic Traditions, and narratives of the righteous. The *Forty Principle's* Part I (i.e. the first 10 principles) corresponds closely to part I of the

²⁶ Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, 164.

Revival's "Book of Knowledge,"²⁷ in which the author elucidates the basic principles of Islamic creed through a sapient, non-dialectic language that demonstrates al-Ghazālī's eloquence, wisdom, and spiritual gnosis. The section diverts from the corresponding text of the *Revival* in two tangents: one in which the author explicates the subtleties of destiny and divine decree through several complex allegories,²⁸ and another in which he concludes the section with a discussion of the "secrets" of the creed, i.e. the larger metaphysical picture behind the dogma.²⁹ Additionally, the eschatological descriptions at the end of Part I appear to represent a brief synopsis of the last part of the *Revival*'s fortieth and final book, "The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife."

Part II of the *Forty Principles* is a selection of ten of the remaining nineteen books in the first two quarters of the *Revival*. Al-Ghazālī discards the books of etiquette that comprise a large portion of the *Revival*'s second quarter, and instead he focuses on the forms of worship and their "secrets" (*asrār al-`ibādāt*), in addition to matters of dealings between Muslims, such as enjoining right and forbidding wrong, upholding the rights of others, and seeking a lawful sustenance. He concludes both the second quarter of the *Revival* and the Part II of the *Forty Principles* with a discussion of the prophetic Precedent, and in the latter text, he attempts to vindicate rationally the superiority of following the Prophet in the mundane matters that he simply details in the *Revival*. Parts III and IV of the *Forty Principles* respectively cover purification of the soul of blameworthy character and beautifying it with praiseworthy character.³⁰ These twenty principles correspond closely to the last twenty books of the *Revival*. We shall confine our study, however, to

²⁷ Book I of the *Revival*.

²⁸ See "The Fifth Principle."

²⁹ See "A Concluding Section."

³⁰ For a thorough analysis of al-Ghazālī's treatment of ethics, see Mohamed Ahmed Sherif's *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue*.

the first two parts of the *Forty Principles* with the intention of finishing the book at a later juncture should circumstances permit.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION FROM THE TEXT

According to George Hourani's "Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings,"³¹ the *Forty Principles* was written before al-Ghazālī's return to Nīshāpūr in 499/1106 and, of course, after his completion of the *Revival*, which he began around 490/1097.³² Montgomery Watt uses the time interval between the two texts to explain the absence in the *Forty Principles* of certain theories expounded in the *Revival*, implying that the author reevaluated and revised some of his initial assertions. Specifically, Watt refers to a particular sentence in the *Revival* that "seems to suggest that immediate experience and academic (rational) study are parallel roads to the truth, leading to the same result." Thus, when al-Ghazālī fails to repeat this premise in the *Forty Principles*, it is surely a factor of his reassessing his original (false) beliefs.³³ Conveniently, Watt butchers his translation of the relevant sentence in the *Revival* to substantiate his claim, translating, for example, "learning and implementation (*ta'lim wa 'l-mumārasa*)" as "study and discipline." Neither translation, however, implies "academic (rational) study" any more than it implies subjective gnosis and spiritual exercises. Furthermore, the material that al-Ghazālī fails to reproduce in the *Forty Principles* can hardly be considered as forsaken theories; for one, the *Forty Principles* is a 300-page précis of a 1,500-large-page masterpiece. What we can safely posit, however, is that the *Forty Principles* is a summary of the most salient features of the *Revival* in the opinion of author himself: a how-to pamphlet, as it were, to

³¹ Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings," 299. While many have attempted to date to al-Ghazālī's works, George Hourani's 1984 revised chronology has benefited from the efforts of previous scholars and seems to be academically sound and well nigh conclusive.

³² *Ibid.*, 296.

³³ Watt, *The Muslim Intellectual*, 165.

spiritual depuration. With this in mind, it is interesting to note that the author dedicates the entire first part of the text to his rendition of the Islamic catechism devoid of all dialectic theology, with the exception of a few terse references to the Qadariyya, Jabriyya, and Muʿtazilites in “The Fifth Principle.” After decades of research and hundreds³⁴ of polemical treatises on the sciences of logic, theology, and philosophy, and after ten years of seclusion in the pursuit of gnosis through spiritual exercises, Part I of the *Forty Principles* stands as skeleton summary of al-Ghazālī’s finalized catechism. Owing to its brevity, it would be difficult to classify it as strictly Ashʿarite or otherwise,³⁵ and in fact the author intentionally leaves matters open, presumably to avoid alienating all but the most heretical of believers.

As has been mentioned above, “The Fifth Principle,” regarding God’s Will, is the single largest digression within Part I of the *Forty Principles* from the parallel text in the *Revival*. Based on our previous logic, this implies that the matter contained within the subsection is both important, as gathered from its inclusion, and revised, as gathered from its new and expanded presentation. After assertively stating the dogmatic facts concerning divine will, al-Ghazālī transitions into the subjective discourse, asserting that the matter will never be grasped through “study and argumentation.” Rather, “he who longs for knowledge of divine secrets must attend to God with love, sincerity, truthfulness, glorification, and modesty.” In other words, obedience to the Sacred Law (*sharīʿa*) both externally and internally will yield gnosis through a spiritual opening (*fatḥ*), allowing the aspiring seeker (*murīd*) to witness divine truths through a knowledge by presence (*al-ʿilm*

³⁴ Al-Ghazālī is believed to have authored over 200 texts and treatises. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, al-Ghazālī.

³⁵ Though we have tried to examine certain points of Part I in light of Ashʿarite theology.

al-ladunī).³⁶ In order to achieve gnosis of the divine will and moreover destiny in general, al-Ghazālī mentions practical advice for coping with the four permutations of God's decree, namely: the decrees of obedience, disobedience, blessings, and adversities. A seeker who reacts appropriately to the divine decree that he faces will advance in his understanding of God's Will. On the other hand, al-Ghazālī acknowledges that not all people share the same spiritual potential, and thus he permits naïve adherence (*taqlīd*) to the rulings of the theologians in complex matters as the nadir of spiritual aspiration (*himma*). Nevertheless, book knowledge and polemical debate have no bearing on true gnosis and understanding; rather, they will be an argument in the hereafter against the person who did not use them to gain true knowledge.

Al-Ghazālī's treatment of divine will and destiny, particularly his detailed description of the clepsydra that serves as an analogy for the complicated subject, could be viewed as an allusion to certain mystical doctrines that he expounds in his *Niche of Lights* (*Mishkāt al-Anwār*), which Ibn Rushd places chronologically after the *Forty Principles*.³⁷ Similar to the *Forty Principles*, the text addresses the complex web of causes and effects through practical analogies:

From God the secondary causes of existent things descend into the visible world, while the visible world is one of the effects of the world of dominion. The visible world comes forth from the world of dominion just as the shadow comes forth from the thing that throws it, the fruit comes forth from the tree, and the effect comes forth from the secondary cause.³⁸

Unlike in the *Forty Principles*, however, in the *Niche of Lights*, al-Ghazālī relates the hierarchy of causes and effects back to degrees of light that culminate in the Light of God. While doing so, the author employs a vocabulary and archetype reminiscent of that of the

³⁶ A term derived from Q. XVIII:65, *And We taught him knowledge from Our own Presence (min ladunnā)*.

³⁷ Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings," 299.

³⁸ Buchman, *The Niche of Lights*, 12.

Arab Neoplatonists. As he insinuates in the abovementioned quote, the visible world is like a shadow when compared to the world of dominion, and in this manner, the world of dominion is a shadow in comparison to the world above it, and so on until the ontological chain reaches God Himself, who is sheer light. To ascribe individual light to things is strictly metaphorical (*majāzī*), for the brilliance of God's sheer light is the singular underlying reality of the cosmos. Al-Ghazālī explains:

The name "light" for things other than the First Light is a sheer metaphor, since everything other than that Light, when viewed in itself, has no light of its own in respect to its own self. On the contrary, its luminosity is borrowed from another, and this borrowed luminosity is not supported by itself, but rather by another. To attribute a borrowed thing to the one who has borrowed it is sheer metaphor.³⁹

A century later, Ibn al-^cArabi⁴⁰ would employ the allegory of light to explain the hierarchy and reality of existence (*wujūd*). Light, he says, is analogous to existence, while differentiated things are analogous to differentiated colors of refracted light. The light is the sole source of the refracted colors such that their existence depends entirely on the existence of the light. Just as the existence of the colors of the spectrum is fundamentally bound to the existence of the light, so is the existence of things inextricably bound to God's sheer existence. Individual colors are unified in their luminous substance but differentiated in their specific realities.⁴¹ Each color is the light but the light remains incomparable with the individual colors and their sum total. From one perspective, the colors are the light, since there exists nothing else for them to be; in another perspective, they are darkness because they are not identical with the light. Furthermore, if it were not for shadows or alterations in the intensity of light (allegories to which God's existence is not

³⁹ Buchman, *The Niche of Lights*, 15.

⁴⁰ Muḥī al-Dīn Ibn al-^cArabi (d. 638/1240) of Andalusia. He died with a copy of al-Ghazālī's *Revival* on his lap. Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller*, 1082.

⁴¹ William Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al-^cArabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity*, 16.

susceptible), the sheer manifest nature of the light would make it too obvious to perceive. The human mind would recognize the illuminated things but the illuminating light would lay just beyond its grasp, for one can sense light only by its contrast with darkness – the absence of light that does not possess existence in and of itself. Pure, undiluted light is invisible and something that annihilates all other things. Similarly, God’s existence encompasses all, while remaining subtly beyond perception. All things are identical with existence and yet unlike it at the same time. We see nothing but existence, though differentiation is not annihilated because of created things that adulterate and veil pure existence.

In a similar vein, the ontological position of light synchronizes with that of existence further on in the *Niche of Lights*, and thus al-Ghazālī’s theory closely mirrors that of Ibn al-^cArabī:

When the essence of anything other than He is considered in respect of its own essence, it is sheer nonexistence. But when it is viewed in respect of the “face” to which existence flows forth from the First, the Real, then it is seen as existing not in itself but through the face adjacent to its Giver of Existence. Hence, the only existent is the Face of God.⁴²

Hence, while Ibn al-^cArabī utilizes light in an allegorical sense to elucidate the gradation of existence, al-Ghazālī uses light and existence interchangeably. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that Ibn al-^cArabī would accede to their synonymy, for *God is the Light of the heavens and the earth*,⁴³ just as much as God is existence (*wujūd*). It would be the Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) school, under the aegis of Suhrawardī “The Slain” (*al-Maqtūl*),⁴⁴ that would arguably serve as the temporal and philosophical bridge between the two thinkers.

⁴² Buchman, *The Niche of Lights*, 16.

⁴³ Q. XXIV:35. Al-Ghazālī refers to this verse in the *Forty Principles* during his discussion of divine will.

⁴⁴ (d. 590/1195). The Illuminationist school viewed reality as a gradation of light; Ibn al-^cArabī would exchange existence (*wujūd*) for light in this equation. See chapter II of Seyyed Hossein Nasr’s *Three Muslims Sages*.

Contrasting with the myriad of unstated intricacies in al-Ghazālī's exposition of the Islamic catechism, Part II of the *Forty Principles* represents a lucid, straightforward presentation of heuristic techniques for rectifying one's external worship (*ʿibādāt*) and communal dealings (*muʿāmalāt*). As has been stated previously, the *Forty Principle*'s overall economy of language and practical arrangement makes it accessible to people of all intellects and spiritual stations, much more so than the *Revival*, whose sheer size may prove overwhelming to the layperson. Al-Ghazālī's language, therefore, is shaped to accommodate every possible audience, since the author seeks to advance the faith and practice of each reader irrespective of his relative starting point. Throughout the *Forty Principles*, and within the *Revival* as well, the author typically addresses three distinct audiences, the specific name of each one varies within the text. The lowest level is that of the common man, or "the masses" (*al-ʿawāmm*). The spiritual advancement of this group is hindered by "naive following" (*taqlīd*) of the precepts of the religion as established by the scholars. They are typically seen to fulfill no more than the minimum requirements placed upon them, while they remain fixated upon the external forms of the religion, such as their naive adherence to the external meanings of the Koran that al-Ghazālī takes them to task for in "The Fifth Principle." They have no "knowledge by experience," and as such, al-Ghazālī admits in several places that much of his discourse falls beyond their understanding and must not be misinterpreted by the impudent among them. While his language may seem elitist at times, he nevertheless gives due attention to this spiritual class, addressing them in the matter of charity for instance:

I do not see you capable of the first and second categories, but do strive until you pass beyond the third level and into the lowest part of the level of the intermediate, middle-runners. Thus, you supplement the requisite amount, even if it be with

something trivial, for surely the mere requisite is the terminus of misers.⁴⁵

As mentioned above, al-Ghazālī frequently employs negative reinforcement to motivate his audience, and the above quote is designed to wound the ego of the reader, while subsequently offering him sensible advice to advance beyond the spiritual dissonance that he now feels.

The second spiritual class addressed by al-Ghazālī is both that of the “elect,” or spiritually inclined, and that of the scholars. This level comprises the sincere travelers of the spiritual path (*sālikūn*) who have not attained the station of the gnostics because they are yet struggling with their four enemies: the soul (*nafs*), the caprice (*hawā*), worldly enchantments (*al-dunyā*), and the devil (*al-shayṭān*). Al-Ghazālī’s spiritual mentoring is thus rigorous and uncompromising, for he sees in them aspiration (*himma*) and preparedness (*istiḍād*) to overcome the difficult obstacles that lay in their path. The scholars inhabit the same spiritual class by their neither being of the masses nor of the gnostics, as al-Ghazālī elucidates in Part I:

The theologian goes beyond the common man in his knowing [the truth], while the common man [merely] believes it. What’s more, he is also a believer who, along with his basic beliefs, knows the evidences of the catechism in order to corroborate it, reinforce it, and safeguard it from the obfuscations of the heretical innovators – though not to unravel the quandaries of the creed in order to unbosom true knowledge.⁴⁶

Aware that knowledge of religion itself can pose as a spiritual impediment, Al-Ghazālī warns the Islamic scholars in “The Seventh Principle” of Part II of the potential dangers of “assiduous piety” (*waraʿ*) when it is misplaced. Furthermore, he rationally expounds the perils of devilish whisperings (*waswās*) that often afflict those with knowledge of the

⁴⁵ See “The Second Principle” of Part II for the context of this quote.

⁴⁶ See “A Concluding Section” of Part I for the context of this quote.

external forms of religion, showing that a man's heart is illumined and obfuscated by way of his interpretation of reality and not by reality itself.

The third and most auspicious spiritual tier is that of the gnostics, the “knowers of God” (*‘arifūn*), or the “elect of the elect.” They are those who have arrived at their destination, though their subsequent states vary significantly from “immersion” in God (*istighrāq*), annihilation (*fanā’*) before Him, or simply being with their Beloved in presence of heart. Al-Ghazālī primarily mentions this spiritual elite as an exemplary for those treading the path to God, and rarely does he address them as a distinct audience. A noteworthy exception to this, however, occurs regarding the proper prioritizing of good works for those of spiritual excellence, as al-Ghazālī explains:

If you are enraptured (*wālih*) with God and immersed in Him, you are in no need of sequencing your goodly endeavors; rather, your endeavor is one, and that is adhering to the remembrance of God.

Similarly, in “The Sixth Principle,” he draws a clear distinction between those “in need of refinement of character and procuring knowledge,” for whom “the Koran is foremost,” and the traveler to God, for whom in some states, remembrance of God and litanies are preferred over the Koran. Al-Ghazālī explains that for those who are fully enraptured with God Himself, the Koranic descriptions of Paradise and Hell will prove a distraction. Nevertheless, the demarcation between the two spiritual stations is extremely subtle and requires the expertise of a spiritual guide (*murshid*). In this regard, the *Forty Principles* is not always a text for the layman.

A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION

As providence would have it, a new critical edition of the Arabic text of the *Forty Principles* was published only a few months ago by Dār al-Qalam Press, Damascus

(2003). The editors, °Abdullah °Abd al-Ḥamīd °Urwānī and Dr. Muḥammad Bashīr al-Shaqfa, have weeded out the numerous typos and mistakes that plagued the previous two printing,⁴⁷ corroborated the text against a photocopy of an additional Tunisian manuscript,⁴⁸ and provided some details of the previous manuscripts used in the earlier editions. Additionally, they have provided the *takhrīj* (classification and sourcing) of the hundred-odd prophetic Traditions that intersperse the text. With the help of Wensinck's *Handbook* and the IHSAN Network's online ḥadīth database,⁴⁹ I have attempted to provide the book and reference number for the Traditions found in the six canonical collections. Furthermore, the editors have differentiated Koranic verses from non-Koranic text using a specialized font, thereby solving a difficulty that I was having with the earlier printing. While the editors missed many of the shorter Koranic references that intersperse the author's sentences, I nonetheless owe them a huge debt of gratitude. For the sake of consistency, I have relied primarily upon the Abdullah Yusuf Ali's *The Holy Qur-ān: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*.

In order to facilitate revision and future technical corrections, I have synchronized my paragraphing with that of the critical edition. I have *attempted* to remain consistent in my use of technical terms, though I have no doubt fallen far short of perfect consistency. Finally, I have struggled to maintain structural fidelity to the original Arabic to the best of my ability, but where the two disparate languages fail to reconcile, I have opted for eloquence of English. And it is God alone Who confers success (*wa 'llāhu walīy al-tawfīq*).

⁴⁷ That is, the 1980 *Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda* printing (Beirut), and the 1925 *Istiḳāma* Press printing (Cairo), which the former is presumably based upon. It was compiled from six different manuscripts and marked the second publication of the text, the first being sixteen years prior and based upon four manuscripts.

⁴⁸ From the Jāmi° Zaytūna library.

⁴⁹ www.ihsanetwork.org. See bibliography for more details.

AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S FORTY PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION

Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn fī Uṣūl al-Dīn

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the Name of God, Most Compassionate and Merciful

All praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, and blessings and salutations be invoked upon Muhammad and upon his family, one and all.

To proceed: perhaps you say that these verses that I cited in the second section¹ comprise various types of knowledge and deeds. Is it thus possible to single out their implications and explain their components (*jumal*) both in detail and pragmatically? Man could reflect upon each of them individually that he may know the details of the doors to eternal felicity, of knowledge and action, while facilitating for him the procuring of their keys through striving and contemplation.

To which I say, yes this is possible. Clearly all of their implications can be divided into knowledge and actions. The actions can be divided into the outward and the inward, while the inward can be divided into spiritual purification and beautification. Thus they are four parts:

- 1- Outward knowledge,
- 2- Outward actions,
- 3- Blameworthy character of which one must purify himself,
- 4- Praiseworthy character with which one must beautify himself.

¹ The reference here is to the second part of al-Ghazālī's *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān wa Duraruh* (*The Jewels and Pearls of the Koran*) in which the author mentions 763 Koranic verses related to knowledge of God (the "jewels" of the Koran) and 741 verses related to righteous practice (the "pearls" of the Koran), see Abul Quasem, *The Jewels of the Qur'ān*, 89-224.

Each part springs from ten principals, and the name of this section is *The Forty Principles of Religion*. Whoever wishes to write it as a separate book, let him, for surely it comprises the sum and substance of the Koranic sciences.

PART ONE²

The Sum of the Sciences and Their Principles

THE CATECHISM

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE: Regarding the Essence

We say: All praise be to God Who made Himself known to His servants through His revealed Book, upon the tongue of His delivered Prophet, in that He is singular in His essence with no partner, unique with no equivalent, absolute (*ṣamad*), no opposite has He, alone without peer. He is timeless without predecessor, pretemporal with no beginning, perpetual of being without end, everlasting, no terminus has He, singularly sustaining everything without stop, permanent with no elapse. He was, is, and will always be possessed of all attributes of majesty. He is not subject to surcease or cessation, or to the elapsing of spans or the passing of interims; rather *He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward; and He is all knowing of everything.*³

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE: Regarding Transcendence⁴

He is not a body with form, nor a confined, quantifiable substance.⁵ He does not re-

² The first part of the *Forty Principles* corresponds closely to Book II, part I of the *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* in which the author elucidates the basic principles of Islamic creed. It diverts from the corresponding text of the *Iḥyā'* in two places: one in which the author explicates the subtleties of destiny and divine decree through several allegories (see “The Fifth Principle”), and another in which he concludes the section with practical research advice on how to achieve the larger metaphysical picture behind the dogma (see “A Concluding Section” at the end of Part One). See introduction, pp. 13-15.

³ Q. LVII:3.

⁴ The word *al-taqdīs* is more accurately translated as “The Hallowing” but transcendence is clearly the intended meaning. The language of this section echoes that of the speculative theologians more than any other. Perhaps this is because establishing the transcendence of God draws heavily upon the art of exculpation (*naḥī*), a technique at which the theologians excelled.

semble bodies in quantifiability or divisibility. He is not a substance, nor do substances qualify Him. He is not an accident,⁶ nor do accidents qualify Him (*taḥalluh*).⁷ Rather He does not resemble any existent, nor does any existent resemble Him. *There is absolutely nothing like unto Him*,⁸ nor is He like anything. Measures do not confine Him, spaces do not contain Him, directions do not encompass Him, and the heavens do not surround Him. He is established⁹ upon the Throne in the manner that He says, by the meaning that He intends, an establishment unencumbered by tangency, settling, fixity, alteration,¹⁰ or conveyance.¹¹

The Throne does not bear Him; rather the Throne and its bearers¹² are borne by the subtlety of His omnipotence and are resistless in His grasp. He is above the Throne and above everything until the farthest reaches of the empyrean (*al-tharā*): an aboveness that

⁵ As these two doctrines are in line with classical Muʿtazilite theology, the author is most likely reiterating the conclusions of his earlier *Tahāfut* in which he takes the philosophers to task for, among many other things, classifying God as a substance (*jawhar*). See discussions 3, 5, and 7 of the *Tahāfut*.

⁶ Since an accident may possibly be non-existent, it follows that if God were an accident, then either He is not eternal, or accidents are eternal. Both of these statements are impossibilities. For a detailed account of the Muʿtazilite reasoning behind this doctrine and many other pertinent ones, see Peters, *God's Created Speech*, 248-265.

⁷ *Ḥulūl* implies taking place or residing inside something – a definition difficult to apply to a being beyond physical space. I have adopted Sheikh Nuh Ha Mim Keller's translation of the sentence, since it remains truer to the dialectical tone of the previous sentences. See Keller, *Reliance of the Traveler*, 817. The noun of place (*ism makān*) of the word is *maḥall*, which has typically been translated as substrate. In order for a thing to be a substrate for the occurrence of substances or accidents, it must be spatial (*mutaḥayyiz*), which is impossible for the Creator of spatiality.

⁸ Q. XLII:11.

⁹ A reference to Q. XX:5: *The Most Gracious is firmly established on the Throne*, among other verses.

¹⁰ The critical edition of the text replaces the 1988 printing's *taḥawwul*, which I have translated here as alteration, with *Ḥulūl* (see above footnote 7). *Taḥawwul* seems to suit the remainder of the sentence better, for the author is negating potential heretical beliefs concerning the divine "establishment" on the Throne, an act in which incarnation is not a feasible misinterpretation while alteration of place or being certainly is. Nonetheless, the text of the *Iḥyā'* corroborates the modification of the critical edition.

¹¹ When left unqualified, change (*intiḳāl*) here can refer to that of place, state, or even time.

¹² A reference to the angels that bear the Throne, as it comes in a prophetic Tradition, "I have been permitted to mention an angel of God's angels that bear the Throne..." See *Sunan Abī Dawūd, Kitāb al-Sunna* #4729.

does not increase His nearness to the Throne and the heavens; rather He is exalted many degrees¹³ beyond the Throne just as He is exalted many degrees beyond the empyrean.

Notwithstanding, He is near to every existent, and He is nearer to the servant than his jugular vein.¹⁴ To all things He is witness. His nearness no more resembles the nearness of bodies one to another than His essence resembles the essences of bodies.

He is not incarnated in anything, nor does anything dwell in Him. He is too sublime that space should contain Him, as He is too hallowed that time should restrict Him; rather He was, before He created time and space, and He is now as He was always.

He is separate from His creation by His attributes; there is nothing in His essence other than Him, nor is His essence in something other than Him. He is transcendently beyond (*muqaddas*) change and conveyance; events do not occur within Him, nor do accidents befall Him; rather He remains in His qualities of majesty, untouched by abatement, and in His qualities of perfection with no need of increase.

He, in His Essence, is known to exist by way of the intellects; His Essence is beheld by the eyesight of the righteous in the hereafter as a blessing and a grace, in order to complete all favors with the gaze¹⁵ at His Noble Countenance.

THE THIRD PRINCIPLE: Regarding Omnipotence

He is living, almighty, irresistible, overpowering; deficiency does not affect Him nor

¹³ *Rafī' al-darajāt*: A reference to Q. XL:15: *Exalted is He so many degrees!*

¹⁴ A reference to Q. L:16: *For We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.*

¹⁵ *Nazar* is used here to conform with Q. LXXV:23. The concept produced volumes of dialectical treatises and polemics under the rubric *Ru'yat Allāh* (the vision of God). The author undoubtedly follows al-Ash'arī's reasoning that visibility applies to all existent things, of which God is one, and is not restricted to substances and accidents. See al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 213-17.

does impotence. *No slumber can seize Him nor sleep.*¹⁶ Extinction and death do not work against Him. He is possessed of sovereignty and dominion, might and irresistible cogency; to Him is all power, authority, and force; His is creation and command. The heavens are enfolded in His right hand, and all creation is resistless in His grasp.

He is matchless in creating and originating, solitary in instauration and innovation. He creates all beings and their acts, and measures out their sustenance and spans.¹⁷ No determination (*maqdūr*) eludes His grasp, while the permutations of all affairs never escape His Omnipotence. His determinations cannot be enumerated, and His knowledge is boundless.

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding Knowledge

He knows all things knowable, encompassing all that transpires between the depths of the earths to the ends of the universe. Nothing of an atom's weight in the earth and the heavens escapes His knowledge; rather He knows the creeping of a black ant across solid stone in the lightless night. He perceives the movement of the particles in windy weather. He knows what is secret and what is more hidden. He presides over the qualms of the conscience, the movements of the thoughts, and the recondite nuances of the psyche (*sarā'ir*), with a beginningless, eternal knowledge that He has always been attributed with since pretemporality, and not with an amendable knowledge that occurs within Him through incarnation¹⁸ or conveyance.

¹⁶ Q. II:255.

¹⁷ For a straightforward discussion of the Islamic concept of *qadar*, "measuring out," see Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 104-117.

¹⁸ Again the critical edition changes the earlier printing's *taḥawwul* (change) with *ḥulūl* (incarnation). The latter may better suit the context, though certainly change cannot affect the knowledge of God.

THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding Will

He is the willer of all that exists, and He is the orchestrator of all that occurs. Nothing occurs in the kingdom or the dominion, be it minimal or abundant, small or large, good or evil, beneficial or harmful, of faith or infidelity, knowledge or ignorance, triumph or ruin, increase or decrease, obedience or recalcitrance, except by His decree, foreordainment, command, and volition. What He wills is, and what He does not will is not.

Neither a darting glance nor a momentary thought lie outside His will. Rather He is the Originator and the Replicator;¹⁹ *the Doer of whatsoever He intends.*²⁰ There is absolutely none to repel His command, and none to amend His decree. A servant has no escape from disobeying Him except through His conferred success²¹ and mercy; he has no power to obey Him except through His assistance and will. If all of mankind, jinn, angels, and devils united together to move or retard a single atom in the universe without His will and volition, they would be unable to do so.

His will exists with His essence with the entirety of His attributes,²² and He is always possessed of it. He has eternally willed the existence of all things at the times that He has foreordained for them. Thus, they exist in their times as He willed eternally, without de-

¹⁹ A reference to God's recreating of living, animate beings on the Day of Judgment.

²⁰ Q. LXXXV:16.

²¹ *Tawfīq*, meaning, in this sense, a divinely-inspired predisposition toward righteousness. The root of the word literally implies an agreement between the divine will and the human will in the form of good deeds. Its opposite is *khadhlan*, meaning a withdrawal of divine grace. See *E.I.*, vol X, 386b.

²² This statement could be construed as an attack on the Mu'tazilite list of "essential qualities of God," of which will is not one because, they contend, it depends on an external qualifier. The Ash'arites are more liberal in their list of essential qualities, which are based upon the original list of Abū Maṣū'ir al-Baḡhdādī. See Gimaret, *Les Noms Divins en Islam*, 107-113, and Peters, *God's Created Speech*, 250. The phrase *qā'imat^m biḡhātih* that I have translated as "with His essence" could also be rendered "independently," and the author's true intention makes all the difference in the world. It should be noted that official Ash'arite doctrine holds the divine qualities to be additional to the divine essence and not identical with it, but then again, al-Ghazālī can never be pigeonholed as an intransigent Ash'arite.

lay or prematurity. Rather they occur in exact accordance with His knowledge and will, without substitution or alteration.

He orchestrates all affairs without a sequence of reflection, nor by waiting for a particular time, and consequently He (Glorified and Exalted is He!) is never distracted by one matter over another.

Know that this station is a place where feet slip – and surely the feet of many have slipped! – because a perfect realization of Him derives from a current of an immense sea beyond the sea of divine unity (*tawhīd*), while many seek Him through study and argumentation. Surely the Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace) has said, “No people deviate after guidance except those given [to] argumentation.”²³ They seek recourse in an allegorical interpretation of the Koranic verses, though they be not qualified to interpret allegorically, even if everyone of them has achieved the “rank of allegorical interpretation.”²⁴ Whereas, the Prophet said, supplicating for Ibn ʿAbbās, “O God! Edify him in the religion and teach him allegorical interpretation.”²⁵ And as Jacob said to Joseph, *Thus will thy Lord choose thee and teach thee the interpretation of stories.*²⁶ The writer of *al-Kashshāf*²⁷ states in his exegesis, “The meaning denotes the

²³ Reported by Ibn Mājah and al-Tirmidhī with a rigorously authenticated (*ṣaḥīḥ*) chain of transmission. See *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* #3562.

²⁴ This may be a condescending reference to an official title among the Bāṭinites. It is difficult to imagine the speculative theologians assigning such a rank to their members, rather the tone is more Sufī or Ismāʿīlī, and noting the author’s clear disdain, the later interpretation seems more reasonable. For al-Ghazālī’s official attack on the Bāṭinites, see A. Badawī’s edition of al-Ghazālī’s *Faḍāʾih al-Bāṭiniyya*.

²⁵ This particular wording is reported by Aḥmad (*Kitāb Min Musnad Banī Hāshim*) with a rigorously authenticated chain of transmission. ʿAbdullah Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68/687): The cousin of the Prophet famous for his Koranic exegesis. Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller*, 1052.

²⁶ Q. XXII:6.

²⁷ He is Abū ʿI-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), a Muʿtazilite grammarian, exegete, theologian, and man of letters, whose celebrated *Kitāb al-Mufaṣṣal fi ʿl-Naḥw* stands as an innovative

books of God and the precedents of the prophets, and that you will interpret and explain the purposes and objectives of them that are obscure and ambiguous to the people. You will lead them to the wisdoms therein.”²⁸

The feet of many have slipped at this station merely because they follow those who follow *the part thereof that is not entirely clear, seeking discord and searching for its interpretation; but no one knows its true meaning except God, and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge,*²⁹ yet they are not firmly grounded in it. Rather, they are incompetent and impuissant: their inadequacies could not bear to behold the true nature of this matter. As such, they silence the other incompetents concerning matters into whose torrents they could not bear to wade, saying to them, “Silence! You were not created for this. *He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs).*”³⁰ Abū Hurayra³¹ said, “The Messenger of God came upon us while we were disputing destiny (*qadar*), to which he became angry until his noble face reddened. He said, ‘To this did I order you? Or for this was I sent to you? Those who were before you were destroyed but for disputing this matter. I adjure you to cease disputing this matter!’”³²

Abū Jaʿfar³³ said, “I said to Yūnus ibn ʿUbayd,³⁴ ‘I passed by a people who were

and highly-influential compendium of Arabic grammar that has to date merited 24 commentaries. The exegesis referenced by al-Ghazālī, *al-Kashshāf*, stands as one of the most famous Muʿtazilite *tafsīrs*, and has historically met with a surprisingly-high degree of tolerance from non-Muʿtazilite Muslim scholars and exegetes. See Mijinyawa, *al-Zamakhsharī’s Defense of the Muʿtazilite Principles in al-Kashshāf*.

²⁸ For the context of this quote, see al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol II, 445.

²⁹ Q. III:7.

³⁰ Q. XXI:23.

³¹ (d. 58/677): The most prolific Companion in narrating Traditions. Abū Hurayra was renowned for his austerity and memory. Winter, *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires*, 210.

³² Reported by al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Kitāb al-Qadar* #2280.

³³ Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī (d. 114/732): father of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and the 5th Shīʿite Imām. Winter, *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, 302.

quarrelling over destiny,’ so he said, ‘If they concerned themselves with their sins they would not quarrel over destiny, and the niches of some of them would fill with a light taken from the Light of God. Their oil would be so pure that it would *well-nigh illumine though fire scarce touched it*, then would ignite *light upon light*,³⁵ so that the realms of the dominion (*malakūt*) would illuminate before them by the Light of its Lord. Then, they would realize matters as they truly are.’ So it was said to them, ‘Refine your conduct with godly propriety and be silent, and when destiny is mentioned, abstain. For likewise ‘Umar³⁶ abstained when he was asked about destiny, saying to the questioner, “A deep sea, don’t wade into it.” When the question was repeated, he said, “A dark path, don’t travel it.” When it was asked for a third time, he said, “God’s secret has remained hidden from you, so don’t go searching for it.””

He who wants knowledge of royal secrets must attend to the kings with love, sincerity, and truthfulness, and must oppose their enemies, implement their orders, and strive in whatever pleases them. Similarly, he who longs for knowledge of divine secrets must attend to God with love, sincerity, truthfulness, glorification, and modesty, and by implementing His orders, stopping disobedience, struggling and concerning himself with the utmost aspiration (*himmā*), striving in what pleases Him,³⁷ and capitalizing on His peri-

³⁴ (d. 139/756): A Traditionist (*muḥaddith*) and student of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Nakamura, *Invocations and Supplications*, 113.

³⁵ Q. XXIV:35. For al-Ghazālī’s own thoughts and exegesis of this verse, see his treatise *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, chap. 2, translated by David Buchman as *The Niche of Lights*, Provo: BYU Press, 1998.

³⁶ ‘Umar ibn l’-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644): The second, rightly-guided (*rāshid*) Caliph of Islam.

³⁷ “Striving in what pleases Him” should be last in the order but we have rearranged it to suit the flow of the English.

ods of bounty,³⁸ in accordance with the Prophet’s saying, “Indeed, throughout the days of your lives your Lord has periods of extra bounty, hence be certain to take advantage of them.”³⁹

If he cannot persist in that, then during the course of his quest he must believe in what Abū Ḥanīfa⁴⁰ and his partisans have said, “The creation of capability in the servant is the act of God, while the using of this created capability is the act of the servant, literally speaking not figuratively.”⁴¹

The Qadariyya⁴² deny God’s decree, seeing all good and evil as coming from themselves. They intend thereby to absolve God of iniquity and ignoble acts. However, they unwittingly went astray by implicitly ascribing inability to God.

The Jabriyya⁴³ fall back on divine decree, seeing all good and evil as coming from

³⁸ *Nafaḥāt*: “effusions” of extra divine benevolence and favors, such as the last third of the night of every day, Friday of every week, and Ramadan of every year. It could also apply to periods of divine grace and spiritual opening (*faḥ*). Stemming from the same root as “a gently blowing breeze,” the concept could be conceptualized like a cool breeze in a hot day, which serves as an unmerited source of relief and benefit. See Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, entries n-f-ḥ, and °-r-ḍ.

³⁹ This particular wording has been reported by al-Tirmidhī in his book of uncommon Traditions (*al-Nawādir*). A similarly-worded Tradition that confirms its meaning has been reported with a well-authenticated (*ḥasan*) chain of transmission by Ibn Abī ‘l-Dunyā.

⁴⁰ Al-Nu‘man ibn Thābit (d. 150/765): eponym to the first and currently largest school of Muslim jurisprudence, the constituents of which were historically known as “the people of juridical opinion” (*ahl al-ra’y*). Imam Abū Ḥanīfa was occasionally known to address theological disputes as the above quote demonstrates. See Abū Zahra, *The Four Imams*, 113-255.

⁴¹ Abū Ḥanīfa’s statement closely resembles the Ash‘arite doctrine of “acquisition” (*kasb*), which states that God is the creator of all actions, but the human agent acquires accountability for them by willing them prior to their creation. See McCarthy, *The Theology of al-Ash‘arī*, and Burrell, *Causality and Necessity in Islamic Thought*.

⁴² Originally a broad term used to describe theologians with a stronger disposition toward a universe governed by free will in an attempt to exonerate God of the creating of evil. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī still catalogs them as orthodox close to their appearance at around 70/690. Qadariyya theology would radicalize with the passage of time, reaching its nadir two centuries after its advent with the Shabībiyya sect that denied aspects of God’s knowledge of the future. Al-Ghazālī is clearly targeting the more extreme elements of the school. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Qadariyya.

⁴³ A name often used by heresiographers to describe a group of fatalist sects within Islam, though based on the next paragraph, al-Ghazālī seems to have in mind a specific faction of his time. While the Jabriyya ide-

God and not from themselves at all, nor from inanimate bodies. They intend thereby to absolve God of inability, while they go astray by implicitly ascribing iniquity to Him. So they mislead their ignorant masses. They defy God and they ascribe to God, while they declare themselves free of censure and reproach, similar to Satan when he said, *Because Thou hast thrown me out, lo! I will lie in wait for them on Thy straight way.*⁴⁴

Thus in short, the Qadariyya assert the servant's complete free will in all his acts, and they wholly deny God's decree and destiny in acts of free will. The Jabriyya wholly reject free will in the acts of mankind, and they rely solely on divine decree and destiny. Their students are encouraged to beat themselves, tear their clothes and turbans, scratch their faces, pluck out their hair, mustaches, and beards, and assert the same defense that these fools do in all of their repugnant acts, which in fact emanate from themselves.

The Mu'tazilites ascribe evil alone to themselves, while they assert complete free will, cautious not to ascribe ignoble acts and iniquity to God.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, by upholding this, they unwittingly ascribe inability to God. And high is God, greatly exalted above all that!

As for the people of orthodoxy,⁴⁶ they seek the middle path between them. They neither totally relieve themselves of free will, nor do they totally relieve God of decree and

ology was ubiquitous within the Islamic world as early as the Umayyad dynasty, the origin of the group remain enigmatic, though some attribute it to al-Jahm ibn Ṣafwān. See Abū Zahra, *The Four Imams*, 201-202.

⁴⁴ Q. VII:16.

⁴⁵ This doctrine is derived from the third of Abū Hudhayl's (d. 227/841) "five principles" of Mu'tazilite creed, namely God's justice (*al-'adl*). See Imam Mānkdim Shashdīw's recreation of 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamṣa*.

⁴⁶ Literally: "the people of the Precedent and the community." A term used antithetically to "the people of heretical innovation" (*ahl al-bid'ā*), the definition of which varies according to an author's doctrinal sympathies.

(favors) unto you .⁵¹

And when He decrees adversity, then he must receive it with patience and acceptance in order that He may bestow upon him honor in the Hereafter, in accordance with His saying, *And God loves those who are firm and steadfast*,⁵² and He says, *Those who patiently preserve will truly receive a reward without measure*.⁵³

The eminent Imam, our patron ‘Alā’ al-Dīn⁵⁴ mentions in his explanation of the *Maṣābīḥ*,⁵⁵ “The difference between divine decree and destiny is that divine decree is the existence in the Well-Preserved Tablet of all things in existence, on the whole and not in detail, while destiny is the detailing of His previous decree through the creation [of the things] in the external substances one after another.” It is said that divine decree is the pretemporal will, or the decreed divine providence for the arrangement of existent things upon a particular sequence. Destiny is the linking of this will with things in their specific timings.

For that reason, the Muslims are of different opinions concerning destiny. Some of them hold the view that everything that occurs in the universe – be it good or evil, actions or speech – is through God’s decree and destiny, and the servant has no free will in it. This group is called the Jabriyya. *Jabr* means coercion by force, thus they say, “God compels (‘*ajbara*) His servants to their speech and actions, without their free will in the matter. They claim that ascribing these actions to them is to ascribe them to inanimate

⁵¹ Q. XIV:7.

⁵² Q. III:146.

⁵³ Q. XXXIX:10.

⁵⁴ Because al-Ghazālī mentions only the author’s agnomen, it is difficult to identify him.

⁵⁵ The book could be a lesser-known theological text from the *madrasas*. It certainly could not be al-Baghawī’s *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunna* which was written only a few years before al-Ghazālī’s death, while the text in question is old enough to have an explanatory text (*sharḥ*).

objects, like when we say: the millstone turned or the sewer flowed. This school of thought is invalid because by saying this, they relieve themselves of accountability, thereby likening themselves to children and madmen in their unaccountability,⁵⁶ thus they have disbelieved, since their school leads to an invalidation of the scriptures and prophets. If they say that this is in order to extol God and degrade themselves and their inability to repel God's decree, then they are heretics through their contravention of scholarly consensus.

Others hold the view that everything that emanates from the servants is a lesser consequence of their intent and will and is, in actuality, through their capacity and free will: God's omnipotence and will are not specifically linked to it. They are called the Qadariyya due to their rejection of destiny (*qadar*) and not because of any reaffirmation on their part. This school of thought is similarly invalid, since if they say this believing it permissible to ascribe inadequacy of preordainment to God, then they are disbelievers – and high is God, greatly exalted above all that! Whereas if they say this through the error of their legal reasoning, and to absolve the Truth of preordaining and creating their ignoble acts, then they are heretics through their contravention of scholarly consensus. And among this group are those who say, “Good is by God's preordainment, but evil is not.”⁵⁷

While the true school of thought holds that the actor is a combination of two powers: the omnipotence of God and the potency of the servants. Thus all acts emanating from the

⁵⁶ The Arabic literally reads, “In that sentences are not passed upon them.” It is akin to the phrase “The pens do not move for them” (*‘adm jarayān al-aqlām bihim*), which a reference to the recording angels that log the deeds of every human. Their pens are lifted for those divested of discernment or rationality, be it temporarily or permanently, as it comes in the Tradition, “The pen has been lifted from three: the sleeper until he awakens, the child until his first wet dream, and the insane person until he can reason.” *Sunan Abī Dāūd, Kitāb al-Ḥudūd* #4405.

⁵⁷ A reference, and perhaps oversimplification, of the Mu‘tazilite doctrine. See above no. 45.

servants are by God's decree and destiny, though the servants have free will [in the matter]; so preordainment is from God, and attainment is from the servants. This school of thought lies in the middle between fatalistic compulsion and autonomous volition, and the people of orthodoxy espouse it. Its discussion has finished.

In the book *The Utmost Objective*,⁵⁸ we mentioned orchestration of all affairs by the Lord of lords and the Causer of causes; [that is], the basis for laying down causes in order to yield effects, is His command. His setting up of comprehensive, foundational, invariable, and established causes that neither abate nor change, like the earth, the seven heavens, the planets, the constellations, along with their corresponding and perpetual movements that neither alter nor cease until the Book reaches its appointed span, is His decree; as He says, *So He completed them as seven firmaments in two days, and He assigned to each heaven its duty and command.*⁵⁹

His directing of these causes, with their apposite, determinate, preordained, and calculated movements unto effects that occur thereby moment after moment, is His destiny. Hence, the divine command is the first and overall orchestration: the pretemporal mandate that is *as the twinkling of an eye.*⁶⁰

Divine decree is the overall laying down of comprehensive and permanent causes.

Destiny is the directing of the comprehensive causes from their predetermined and calculated movements to their quantifiable and determinate effects, which are of a fixed

⁵⁸ *Al-Maqṣad al-Aqsā*: This is either a misprint that was not corrected in the critical edition or a variant title for al-Ghazālī's *Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā*, see Burrell and Daher's *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*, 86-91 for the reference above. Hourani, *A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings*, 298.

⁵⁹ Q. XLI:12.

⁶⁰ Q. XVI:77.

quantity, neither more nor less. Consequently, nothing exists outside of His decree and destiny.⁶¹

You will not understand this except by way of an allegory: Perhaps you have observed the clepsydra⁶² through which you ascertain the prayer times. If you have not observed it, then briefly stated it necessarily comprises of a cylindrical apparatus containing a fixed measure of water. Another hollowed-out device is placed inside it above the water to which is attached a tautly-drawn thread, the other end of which is affixed to the bottom of a small vessel placed above the device. Inside [the vessel] is a ball and below it is a metal cup, such that if the ball falls, it lands in the cup with a ping. The bottom of the cylindrical apparatus is pierced precisely such that water drips from it little by little. Thus when the water level lowers, the hollowed-out device placed on the water's surface lowers, and the tautly-drawn thread is stretched, moving the vessel in which lies the ball steadily until it inverts. Thereupon the ball rolls out and falls in the cup with a ping. With the elapsing of every hour,⁶³ one ball falls. The separation between two fallings is determined by the measure of the outflow and lowering of the water, which is a factor of the width of the outlet through which the water escapes. And that is known by way of calculation. Hence, the outflow of water is according to a determined measure because the width of the outlet is calibrated to a determined measure. The surface of the water lowers

⁶¹ The English rendering above is no more complicated than the original Arabic, as will attest the footnotes in the critical edition that explain the grammatical constructs of the author's abovementioned sentences.

⁶² For helpful diagrams and explanations of these long-forgotten waterclocks, see Rees, *Ree's Clocks, Watches, and Chronometers (1819-20)*; the clepsydra section is available online on "Gordon T. Uber's Home Page," www.ubr.com/clocks/pub/clep/clep/html.

⁶³ While the Arabic "hour" (*sā'a*) has taken the meaning of an astronomical hour (60 minutes) within the past two centuries, Lane defines the classical definition as, "A time; a while; a space or period; an indefinite [short] time; and a little while; a [short or] little portion or division of the night and of the day." See Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, entry *s-w*.^c

by that measure and is thereby determined. The lowering of the hollowed-out device, the subsequent pulling of the tautly-drawn thread, and the resultant movement of the vessel in which the ball lies – all of this is determined by way of it, with neither increase nor decrease. Perhaps the ball's falling in the cup could be made to cause another contingency, and that contingency might cause a third contingency, and so on, until an amazing, albeit quantifiable, array of contingencies is generated. Their original cause is [still] the outflow of water according to a determined measure.

When you conceptualize this image, know that the inventor of it requires three things:

THE FIRST OF THEM: Orchestration – his command, that is to say, which instruments, means, and movements must necessarily exist in order to achieve what must be achieved? That is the command.

THE SECOND: Furnishing the instruments that are fundamental – the cylindrical apparatus to hold the water, the hollowed-out device to be placed on the surface of the water, its tautly-drawn thread, the vessel in which the ball lies, and the cup in which it falls. That is the decree.

THE THIRD: Setting up a cause that induces a preordained, calculated, and determinate action. It is the piercing of the bottom of the apparatus: the piercing being of a calibrated width, thereby effecting the draining of the water. The movement of the water leads to the movement of the water's surface through its lowering, and thereupon to the movement of the hollowed-out device situated on the water's surface through its lowering, then to the movement of the thread, then to the movement of the vessel in which lies the ball, then to the movement of the ball, then to the collision with the cup (when it falls), then to the resultant ping, then to the alerting of those present and listening, then to their actions

in attending to the prayers and other deeds upon their cognition of the passing of the hour. All of this is according to a determined measure and a decreed scope because it is all decreed according to the measure of the first movement – the movement of the water.

Thus when you have understood that the instruments are fundamentals necessary for the movement, and that the movement must necessarily be determined in order to determine what proceeds thereby, then likewise understand the occurrence of decreed events from which nothing is advanced nor postponed, *when their term expires*,⁶⁴ that is when their causes are at hand. And all of this is according to a determined measure, *For God will surely accomplish His purpose: Verily for all things has God appointed a due proportion*.⁶⁵

Thus the heavens, stars, planets, earth, sea, wind, and the massive bodies of the universe are like these instruments. The causative drive behind the stars, planets, sun, and moon is according to a determined calculation, similar to the hole that effectuates the draining of the water according to a determined measure. The movement of the sun, moon, and planets' leading to the occurrence of events on earth is like the water's movement leading to the occurrence of the consequential movements and [ultimately] to the falling of the ball, signaling the elapsing of an hour. The pattern of association between the motions of the heavens and the changes of the earth is that the sun, with its movement,⁶⁶ when it rises in the East, it illuminates the world and facilitates peoples' visual

⁶⁴ Q. XXXV:45.

⁶⁵ Q. LXV:3.

⁶⁶ The author's skepticism of the sun's actual movement can be seen in his work *Mishkāt al-Anwār* (The Niche of Lights), in which he mentions the Tradition: "The Prophet said to Gabriel, 'Does the sun move?' He answered, 'No—Yes!' The Prophet then said, 'How is that?' Gabriel replied, 'From the time I said "no" to the time I said "yes," it moved a journey of five hundred years'" (Buchman, *The Niche of Lights*, 8). Whether the Tradition is sound or spurious, al-Ghazālī's mentioning it in his text attests to his doubt in

perception, and thus going out to work is made easy for them. Then when it sets in the West, this becomes difficult for them, so they return home. When it approaches the middle of the sky, and the chiefs of the regions convene, the winds warm, the midsummer heat intensifies, and the fruits ripen. When it becomes distant, winter occurs and the cold intensifies. When it falls between the two, the equinox occurs and spring appears, and the earth sprouts green.

Correlate this with things common that you know in addition to things alien and unknown. Thus, the variation of all of the seasons is decreed according to a determined measure because they are dependent on the motions of the sun and the moon: *The sun and the moon follow calculated courses*,⁶⁷ that is, their motion is according to a determined calculation. This is the setting of destiny (*taqdīr*). The laying down of the aggregate causes is divine decree, and the primary orchestration that *is as the twinkling of an eye*⁶⁸ is the divine command.

In the same way that the movement of the apparatus, the thread, and the ball is never beyond the volition of the device's inventor, rather it is what he intended by inventing the device, similarly every event that transpires in the universe, both evil and good, beneficial and harmful, is never beyond the volition of God, rather that is the intention of God, for the sake of which He orchestrates His causes. Elucidating matters divine with conventional allegories is difficult; nevertheless, the intent behind allegories is to alert. So leave

what was historically seen as a manifest truth. Living almost four and a half centuries later, Nicolas Copernicus would shock the Western world with his radical notion of the earth's circling a stationary sun.

⁶⁷ Q. LV:5.

⁶⁸ Q. XVI:77.

the allegory and be mindful of the objective, and be wary of conceptual representation and anthropomorphization.

THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding Hearing and Sight

He (Exalted is He!) is all-hearing and all-seeing. He hears and He sees: no sound escapes His hearing however faint, and no sight is hidden from His vision however infinitesimal. Distance does not bedim His hearing; darkness does not befog His vision. He sees without pupil or eyelids, and He hears without duct or ears, just as He knows without heart, seizes without appendage, and creates without instrument. As such, His attributes no more resemble the attributes of creation than His essence resembles the essence of creation.

THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding Speech⁶⁹

He speaks, commands, interdicts, promises, and threatens with a pretemporal, eternal speech that abides with His essence. His speech does not resemble the speech of creation to the extent that His essence does not resemble the essences of creation. It is not of a sound originating through passage of air or striking of bodies, nor of a letter issued by closing of lips or moving a tongue.

The Koran, Torah, Gospel, and Psalms are His books, revealed to His messengers. The Koran is recited with tongues, written in volumes, and memorized in hearts, and de-

⁶⁹ Al-Ghazālī's seventh principle is a direct attack on Mu'tazilite speculative theology, as it has been masterfully encapsulated in °Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī's (d. 415/1024) *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawḥīd wa al-°Adl*. Section VII of the twenty-volume work is primarily concerned with the Mu'tazilite doctrine of the createdness of the Koran; see Bouman, "The Doctrine of °Abd al-Jabbār on the Koran as the Created Word of Allah," 67-86. Al-Ghazālī appears to be condemning what Jan Peters labels the a posteriori argument for a created Koran; see Peters, 330-384.

spite this it is eternal, abiding with God's essence, not subject to secession or separation through transmission to hearts and pages.

Moses heard the speech of God without sound or letter in the same way that the righteous see the essence of God in the hereafter without substance, form, color, or accident. By virtue of these qualities being His, He is living, omniscient, omnipotent, willing, hearing, seeing, and speaking – by way of [His] life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, sight, and speech, not merely by way of [His] essence.⁷⁰

THE EIGHTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding Acts

There is absolutely no existent other than Him except that occurring through His action, and emanating⁷¹ from His justice in the best, fullest, most perfect, and equitable manner.

He is wise in His actions; just in His decrees. His justice cannot be compared to the justice of His servants; since oppression can be conceived of the servant in his disposal of the property of others, while oppression cannot be conceived of God, as possession does not truly befall other than Him in order for His disposal thereof to be oppressive.⁷²

All that is other than Him, of human, jinn, devil, angel, heaven, earth, animal, plant, substance, accident, mental cognition, and sensibilia, is a contingent that He originated and created by His power after its nonexistence – after it was nothing – as He was solely

⁷⁰ See above no. 22.

⁷¹ Emanation (*fayḍ*) is a neoplatonic cosmological principle, and it is not coincidental that the author chooses to employ it in this context. The concept of creation emanating as a product of God's infinite justice, mercy, knowledge, power, etc., in order to complement the very same justice, mercy, and knowledge carries deeply profound ontological implications. Al-Ghazālī arguably delves into this discussion in his best form in the first two sections of the *Mishkāt*. Also see Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*.

⁷² I have opted for the literal translation of this sentence in order to reflect the contrasting tones of the author that often alternate between Sufism and scholasticism.

existent in pretemporality, and nothing other than Him was with Him. Thus, He effected creation to manifest His omnipotence, and to actualize His prior will and the truth of His pretemporal word, that is His saying, “I was a hidden treasure, so I longed to be known,”⁷³ not due to His need or exigency toward it.

He is munificent in His creating, originating, and entrusting, not obliged thereof; gracious in His bestowing and redressing, not bound by necessity. To Him belong all benevolence, goodness, bounty, and magnanimity; for He is able to pour upon His servants torments of every nature and try them with an array of agonies and maladies, and were He to do so, it would be just on His part, not ignoble or oppressive.⁷⁴

He rewards His servants for their acts of obedience by way of His magnanimity and justice not by way of [their] merit or any obligation upon Him; for no action is obligatory upon Him, nor is oppression conceivable of Him, nor is any right, of necessity, due of Him to another.

His rights, the acts of obedience, are obligatory upon [rational] creation as established by the speech of His prophets, not by merely the intellect.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, He has sent the prophets and evinced their veracity through unmistakable miracles. Thus, they have conveyed His commands and prohibitions, promises and threats, and consequently it is obligatory upon the creation to believe in that with which they came.

⁷³ While it has been claimed as a prophetic utterance, the Traditionists are agreed that it is not, though its meaning is nonetheless sound. The statement is not found in the Tunisian manuscript.

⁷⁴ In the Tunisian manuscript the wording reads: “By His right (Exalted is He!), this would not be ignoble or oppressive.” This is a stark contrast with the Mu^tazilites’ definition of God’s justice; see above no. 45.

⁷⁵ The author here affirms the Ash^oarite doctrine of accountability before God being a direct product of prophetic conveyance, as has been deduced from Q. XVII:15: *And We do not punish until We send a messenger*. See Khallaf, *Ilm Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, 96-98. The Ash^oarite position on the matter stands in direct contradiction to that of the Mu^tazilites (and the Ḥanbalites), who link accountability to the natural human ability to rationally reach an awareness of God.

THE NINTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding the Last Day

He (Exalted is He!) sunders souls from bodies by way of death, and then returns them together at the concourse and resurrection,⁷⁶ bringing forth the inhabitants of the graves and making known what their breasts conceal.⁷⁷ Hence, every person accountable sees before him what he did of both good and evil, and encounters the most subtle and the most conspicuous of that, recorded in a book, [*which*] *leaves out nothing small or great, but takes account thereof.*⁷⁸ Every person is apprised of the measure of his deeds, both the good thereof and the evil, according to a truthful gauge, as averred by the divine scale. And the scale of deeds no more equals the scale of dense bodies than the astrolabe, the scale of times, the ruler, the scale of spaces, and prosody, the scale of poetics, equal all other scales.

He then calls them to account for their actions and words, innermost thoughts and qualms, intentions and beliefs, all that they have made public and concealed. Thus they segregate into those who are scrutinized in their reckoning, those who are pardoned, and those who enter paradise without reckoning.

[Next] they are driven to the Traverse (*al-ṣirāṭ*), a bridge spanning between the dwelling of the wretched and the dwelling of the prosperous, which is sharper than a sword and finer than a hair. Its burden is lightened upon he who was upright upon the

⁷⁶ For more on the concourse and resurrection (*al-ḥaṣhr wa 'l-nushūr*) and all subsequent eschatological events, see the last half of the book XL of the *Iḥyā'*.

⁷⁷ The phraseology of the author is a reference to Q. C:9-10, *Does he not know, when that which is in the graves is scattered abroad, and that which is locked in human breasts is made manifest.*

⁷⁸ Q. XVIII:49.

straight way⁷⁹ in the earthly realm, conforming to [its dictates] both secretly and meticulously. Who deviated from the straight way stumbles and struggles upon it, save him pardoned by the decree of munificence.

In this state they are questioned. God questions whom He wills of the prophets about their conveying of His message; He questions whom He wills of the disbelievers about their denying of His messengers; He questions whom He wills of the heretical innovators about the prophetic Precedent; He questions whom He wills of the Muslims about their deeds; and He questions the faithful about their veracity and the hypocrites about their insincerity.

Thereupon the prosperous ones will be driven unto the Most Compassionate as a delegation and the wrongdoers to hell like a herd of thirsty cattle.⁸⁰ The removal of the divine unifiers⁸¹ from the fire will then be ordered after retribution until there remains none in the fire with even an atom's weight of faith in his heart. Some will be removed before full punishment and retribution can be carried out by way of the intercession of prophets, righteous scholars, martyrs, and those of high station.

Thereafter the fortunate ones will abide in ease and plenty in the garden forever and ever, enchanted with gazing at the countenance of God.

The wretched will abide in the fire, repeatedly subject to countless types of chastisement, forever estranged and veiled from the glance at the countenance of God, the One possessed of all majesty and bounty!

⁷⁹ A reference to Q. I:6: *Show us the straight way*, which is then defined by the subsequent verse: *The way of those on whom Thou has bestowed Thy grace, those whose portion is not wrath. And who go not astray.*

⁸⁰ A reference to Q. XIX:85-86, *The day We shall gather the righteous to the Most Gracious, like a delegation, and We shall drive the sinners to hell like thirsty cattle.*

⁸¹ *Muwaḥḥidūn*: literally, "those who make God one."

And all praises be to God for guiding and leading to faith, and for making manifest His most beautiful names and august attributes; and blessings and abundant peace be upon Muhammad, the chosen one, seal of prophets, and upon his folk and companions.

A CONCLUDING SECTION: Regarding an Exhortation as to the Books in Which You Seek the Reality of This Creed

Know that what we have mentioned thus far is derived from the Koranic sciences, by which I mean all thereof that is connected to God and the Last Day. It is a treatment of the creed that every Muslim heart must necessarily embrace, that is, he must believe in it and attest to it with resolve. And underneath this outward creed lie two stations:

THE FIRST: Knowledge of the evidences of this outward creed without delving into its secrets.

THE SECOND: Knowledge of its secrets, the kernels of its inner meanings, and the reality of its manifestations.

These two degrees, when taken together, are not obligatory upon all of the general public. That is, their salvation in the hereafter is not contingent upon them, nor is their ultimate success. All that is contingent upon them is the perfection of felicity. By salvation I mean deliverance from punishment, by ultimate success I mean obtaining the rudiments of heavenly bliss, and by felicity I mean attaining the paramount of heavenly bliss.

For when a ruler forcibly conquers and occupies a land, then the one whom he neither kills nor makes to suffer is saved, even if he expels him from the land. The one whom he does not make to suffer and additionally furnishes with a position in his land, together with his family and means of livelihood, then he is successful in his salvation. And the one upon whom he confers a partnership role in his dominion and makes vicar in his

kingdom and emirate, then with his salvation and success, he is delightedly prosperous. After that, the additional stages of prosperity continue unabated.

Know that created [rational] beings are divided into these categories in the hereafter, or even into more categories than these. We have explained all that was possible to explain of this in “The Book of Repentance” in *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, so search for it there.⁸⁴

The first station of the two, that is, the knowledge of the evidences of the creed, we have laid down in twenty pages in *The Jerusalem Epistle*,⁸⁵ which is one of the sections of “The Book of the Foundations of Belief” in the *Revival*.⁸⁶

As for the evidences with further substantiation, precision, and thoroughness in presenting the issues and intricacies, we have laid them down in one hundred pages in the book *The Middle Course in Catechism*.⁸⁷ It is a self-contained text that encompasses the quintessence of the science of the speculative theologians, though it is more precise and nearer to rapping at the doors of true knowledge than the affected speech that one encounters in the books of the theologians, which stems from speculative catechism and not true knowledge; for the theologian goes beyond the common man in his knowing [the truth], while the common man [merely] believes it. What’s more, he is also a believer who, along with his basic beliefs, knows the evidences of the catechism in order to cor-

⁸⁴ *Kitāb al-Tawba*, book XXVIII of the *Iḥyā’*.

⁸⁵ *Al-Risāla al-Qudsiyya*, written as a separate treatise, before the *Iḥyā’*, between 488/1095 and 489/1096 (Hourani, *A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī’s Writings*, 295-296). See Tibawi’s *Al-Ghazālī’s Tract on Dogmatic Theology*.

⁸⁶ That is, part three of *Kitāb Qawā’id al-‘Aqā’id*, book II of the *Iḥyā’*.

⁸⁷ *Al-Iqtisād fī ‘l-Ftiqād*, considered to be the third part to al-Ghazālī’s *Maqāṣid* and *Tahāfut*, in which he constructs the correct Islamic catechism upon the smoldering ashes of the philosophers’ doctrines. It was written around 488/1095 according to Hourani. See introduction, p. 5.

roborate it, reinforce it, and safeguard it from the obfuscations of the heretical innovators – though not to unravel the quandaries of the creed in order to unbosom true knowledge.

Then if you desire to sniff out something of the fragrances of true knowledge, you will come across an uncomplicated portion of it interspersing “The Book of Patience and Gratitude,” “The Book of Love,” and the chapter on divine unity (*tawhīd*) at the beginning of “The Book of Divine Reliance,” all of which are in the *Revival*.⁸⁸ You will also come across a useful portion of it, explaining how to rap at the door of true knowledge, in the book *The Most Brilliant Purport in the Meanings of the Most Beautiful Names of God*,⁸⁹ especially in the divine names that are derived from divine actions.

If you desire sheer knowledge through the metaphysical truths behind this creed without incoherence or censorship, then you will not find it save in some of our books that we have withheld from those uninitiated.⁹⁰ And dare you not be self-deluded and convince yourself that you are qualified! As you crane your neck in search of it, exposing yourself to a brusque retort... unless you embody three qualities:

THE FIRST: Self-sufficiency in the external sciences,⁹¹ having attained the rank of Imam in these.

⁸⁸ Books XXIX, XXXVI, and XXXV of the *Iḥyā'* respectively, for an English rendering of the latter, see David Burrell's *Faith in Divine Unity and Trust in Divine Providence*.

⁸⁹ *Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā*, see Burrell and Daher's *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*.

⁹⁰ The Arabic of the last part of this sentence closely resembles the title of another text attributed to al-Ghazālī, namely *Al-Maḍnūn Bihi 'Alā Ghayr Ahlih*, with the only difference being a feminine pronoun that refers back to “our books.” Regardless, there is strong evidence to suggest that *Al-Maḍnūn* is spurious, though Ibn Rushd considers it to be an authentic work of al-Ghazālī. See Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies in al-Ghazālī*, 251-253.

⁹¹ The author is referring to knowledge of Sacred Law, or jurisprudence, mastery of which assumes a full working knowledge of the Arabic sciences, Koranic exegesis, prophetic Traditions, logic, and the principles of deriving jurisprudential edicts (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), among others.

PART TWO

The Outward Actions

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE: Regarding the Prayer

God (Exalted is He!) says, *And establish regular prayer for My remembrance*;¹ and the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) said, “The prayer is the pillar of the religion.”² Know that in your prayer you are in private discourse with your Lord, so consider how you pray and guard three things in it so you can be among the “vigilant guardians” and the “establishers” of the prayer, for surely God orders simply for the establishment [of prayer], saying, *And establish regular prayer*.³ He does not say, “Pray!” though He commends the vigilant guardians of the prayer, saying, *Those who believe in the hereafter believe in this (Book), and they are constant in guarding their prayers*.⁴

THE FIRST THING: Vigilance in ritual purity. That is to perfect the pre-prayer ablutions by performing all commendable supererogatory acts⁵ therein and [by reciting] all Prophetically-relayed invocations and supplications during each part of it. One is also cautious of the purity of his garment, his body, and the water with which he makes the ablution, though his caution must not open the door of devilish whisperings, for no doubt Sa-

¹ Q. XX:19.

² Reported by al-Bayhaqī on the authority of Ibn ʿUmar with a weak chain of narration. It is also reported by al-Ḥabārānī and al-Daylamī.

³ Al-Ghazālī mentions two similar verses (*ibid.* and Q. II:43) in which the subject of the imperative “establish” is singular in the first and plural in the second. It is difficult to reflect this difference in English, so I have only mentioned one of the verses. The Arabic shows that the command for the establishment of prayer applies on both a personal and communal level.

⁴ Q. VI:92.

⁵ *Sunan* (sing. *sunna*): In a more general sense, the word denotes the prophetic Precedent, but in this case the author is using it in its jurisprudential context as a synonym of *mustahabb* or *mandūb*, an action whose performance is rewarded but whose omission is not punished. See Keller, *The Reliance of the Traveler*, 30, 34-35.

tan does his whisperings during the ritual purifications and wastes a great portion of the time for worship.⁶

Know that the purpose of purifying the garment (the outer covering) and the body (the nearest covering) is to purify the heart, the inner kernel.

Purifying the heart of the filth of blameworthy character is the most important form of purification, as we will discuss in the third part.

Nonetheless, it is not unlikely that purification of the exterior will also have a positive impact by radiating its light on the heart. For if you perfect your ablutions and recognize the purity of your exterior, you find in your heart serenity and clarity that you did not find before. This owes to the secret of the connection between the visible world and the dominion, since the exterior of the body is of the visible world, while the heart is of the dominion when in its primordial nature. Its dropping into the visible world is foreign to its nature.

Just as effects from the cognitions of the heart flow down to the limbs, so too do lights from the states of the limbs rise up to the heart. As such, they have been ordered with prayer in the form of movements of the limbs, which are part of the visible world. Similarly, the Messenger of God made the prayer both in the world and among the worldly desires, saying, “Three things have been made beloved to me in this world of yours....”⁷ Thus it is not inconceivable that an effect emanates from purification of the exterior unto the interior. For in creation God has fashioned more wondrous things than this!

⁶ The Tunisian manuscript reads, “[He] wastes the time of most worshippers.”

⁷ The Tradition continues, “... Perfume, women, while the coolness of my eyes is the prayer.” A closely worded Tradition has been reported by al-Nasā’ī with a good chain of narration. *Sunan al-Nasā’ī, Kitāb ‘Ishrat ‘l-Nisā’* # 3956, 3957.

It has become known by experience that for a man engaged in love-making, if he is obsessed with gazing at radiant whiteness or vivid redness until such an image gets the better of him, the color of the baby will tend toward that color. The appearance of the fetus – that is, the first thing to move in the womb – will tend toward beauty whenever its mother observes a beautiful image in such a state and it gets the better of her. As such, the Messenger of God instructed the one engaged in love-making to have the intention of making a perfect baby in his heart. He is to supplicate God for that, by saying, “O God! Safeguard us from Satan, and safeguard from Satan what you provide for us hereof,”⁸ so that God may pour forth the rudiments of righteousness upon the spirit that He creates through the joining of the seed with the tilth by way of making righteousness prevail in the heart of the tiller, just as God pours forth light through the mirror that fronts the sun upon some bodies that front the mirror.

With that, we are now knocking on an immense door of knowledge concerning the wonders that God has fashioned in the kingdom and the dominion. The secret of intercession in the hereafter derives from a similar realm, so let us move on.

Our purpose now is to mention good works while disregarding gnosis. We have given you a whiff of something straightforward from the mysteries of outward purification. If you [still] don’t find anything of the clarity that we described after purification and perfecting of ablutions, then know that the filth that has accrued on your heart is from the turbidities of worldly passions and preoccupations. Weariness has claimed the heart’s perception and it can no longer sense recondite subtleties or things hidden and elusive. Nothing remains of its faculty save the perception of uncontested truths, if even that!

⁸ Reported by Bukharī and Muslim on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās with a rigorously authenticated (*ṣaḥīḥ*) chain of transmission. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Wuḍʿī* # 141.

Thus, occupy yourself with polishing and purifying your heart – that is more incumbent upon you than anything else.

THE SECOND THING: That you vigilantly uphold the meritorious supererogatory parts of the prayer and its outward motions, liturgies, and glorifications, such that you perform all commendable acts, etiquette, and externalities, such as those we have compiled in the book *The Advent of Guidance*.⁹ No doubt for each one of these is a secret – an influence on the heart like that of purification that we indicated, only it is stronger and more profound – though elucidating this will take too long. As for you, if you perform these you will benefit, even if you don't know their secrets, just as the one who takes medicine benefits from his elixir even if he doesn't know the nature of its composition or the manner by which it suits his disease.

Know that the prayer is a representation fashioned by the Lord of lords, just as He fashioned animals, for instance. Thus, its spirit is [correct] intention, sincerity, and presence of heart, while its body is the outward motions. Its essential limbs are the requisite integrals, and its supplementary limbs are the main commendable acts. Hence, sincerity and correct intention are analogous to the spirit; standing and sitting are analogous to the body; bowing and prostrating are analogous to the head, the hand, and the leg; melioration of bowing and prostrating through repose and perfection of the externalities is analogous to excellence of the limbs, their shape and color; the liturgies and glorifications contained therein are analogous to the sensory organs contained in the head and limbs such as the eyes and ears and others; while cognizance of the meanings of the liturgies and presence of heart during them are analogous to the strength of each sense that is con-

⁹ *Bidāyat al-Hidāya*: Written after the *Revival*, according to Hourani. "A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings," 298.

tained in each sensory organ, such as the power of hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch in their respective domains.

Know that your gaining proximity [to God] through prayer is similar to some of the subordinates' of the Sultan presenting him with a servant girl. Then know that deficiency of correct intention and sincerity in prayer is akin to deficiency of life in the servant girl; and the one who presents a dead corpse to the Sultan mockingly is more deserving of bloodshed.

Deficiency in the bowing and prostrating is analogous to her lacking limbs, while deficiency in the liturgies is analogous to the girl's lacking eyes and having her nose and ears severed. Lack of presence of heart or heedlessness in understanding the meanings of the Koran and the liturgies is akin to her being deaf and blind while her pupils and ears remain intact. You know very well what will be the standing in the eyes of the Sultan of one who presents him with a servant girl of this description!

Know that the jurist's statement about the prayer that lacks the supererogatory words and actions, "It is still sound!" is akin to the doctor's statement about the servant girl who lacks her limbs, "She is still living and is not dead!" Thus, if she is sufficient to gain proximity to the Sultan and to earn his favor, then know that the deficient prayer is also suitable to gain proximity to God and to earn his favor.

If it is more likely that she will be returned to the gift giver and he is upbraided, then the same can most likely be said about the prayer – it may surely be thrown back upon the worshipper like a tattered rag, as it comes in the narration.¹⁰

¹⁰ The actual Tradition reads, "Whoever is not punctual with his prayer, does not perfect the ablutions, and is not complete in bowing, prostration, and devotion, the prayer rises up in a back, shadowy form saying, 'May God ruin you as you have ruined me!' Then it is flung back like a tattered rag at the face of the person." It has been reported by al-Ṭabarānī with a weak chain of transmission.

Know that the underpinning of prayer is exaltation and reverence [of God], while neglecting the etiquette of prayer diminishes exaltation and reverence.

THE THIRD THING: That you vigilantly uphold the spirit of the prayer, that is, sincerity and presence of heart throughout the prayer, and that the heart be immediately marked by the implications thereof. Hence, you do not prostrate or bow except that your heart is meek and humbled in accordance with your exterior, for surely the intent is submissiveness of heart and not [only] that of body. Do not say, “God is greatest,”¹¹ while in your heart is something greater than God. Do not say, “I turn my face...,”¹² except that your heart is fully immersion in God and has renounced everything other than Him. Do not say, *All praise be to God*,¹³ except that your heart is overflowing with gratitude for His blessings upon you, and it is delighted and rejoicing in Him. Do not say, *And Thine aid we seek*,¹⁴ except that you recognize your frailty and inability, while recognizing that He owes neither you nor anybody else anything in the matter. The same [principles] apply to all of the liturgies and motions, though explaining that will take too long. We have explained it in the *Revival*, so struggle against your lower self to reestablish your heart in the prayer such that you are not heedless of God from its start to its end. For surely, nothing of the prayer is recorded for a man except for what he was conscious of therein. Thus if presence of mind is difficult for you – and I see that it is! – then think: if the extent of your heedlessness is equal to two bowings of the prayer, do not repeat the prayer, but realize that supererogatory prayers repair the requisite ones, so pray supererogatory prayers

¹¹ The pronouncement used to initiate the prayer, also known as the *takbīr al-iḥrām*

¹² The first two words of the opening supplication (*istiftāh*) of the prayer after its commence.

¹³ Q. I:2: This chapter of the Koran is a necessary integral (*rukṅ*) of the prayer.

¹⁴ Q. I:5.

to the equivalent of two bowings¹⁵ with presence of heart. Then whenever your heedlessness increases, step up your supererogatory prayers until you have presence of heart. For instance, ten bowings becomes the equivalent of four [actual] bowings, which is the measure of your obligatory prayer; and it is of God's mercy to you that He allows you to repair your obligatory prayers with supererogatory ones. These are the essentials of vigilantly guarding the prayer.

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE: Regarding the Alms Tax and Charity

God (Glorified is He!) says, *The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of God is that of a grain of corn: it groweth seven ears, and each ear hath a hundred grains. God giveth manifold increase to whom He pleaseth;*¹⁶ and the Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace) said, "The wealthy are destroyed, save him who says with his money to others, 'Here you are! Here you are!'"¹⁷

Then know that spending money in good works is one of the pillars of the religion, and the secret of being charged with this responsibility is but a quantity, namely, the quantity of the state and public exigencies that are directly bound to it, along with all defrayment of poverty and privation thereof. For surely wealth is loved by all created [rational] beings, while they are ordered to love God and they claim love [for Him] with this same faith. Thus, He has made the spending of wealth a gauge of their love for Him – a

¹⁵ A "bowing" (*rak'at*) is followed by two prostrations in the Muslim ritual prayer and is often used as a unit of dividing the prayer, such that each of the five requisite daily prayers can be described as two, three, or four "bowings."

¹⁶ Q. II:261

¹⁷ The particularly wording of this Tradition is reported by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (*Bāqī Musnad al-Mukthirīn*), but a very closely worded tradition appears in the collections of Bukharī and Muslim that helps to elucidate its meaning: "...The rich, except those of them who spend on their right and on their left, in front of them and behind their backs, but such of them are rare." See Kaandhlawi, *Faḍā'il Ṣadaqāt*, 174-175. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-Zakā*, #2347.

test of the veracity of their claims. No doubt, all things loved are spent for the sake of the dominant love of the heart, and regarding this, created beings are divided into three categories:

THE FIRST CATEGORY: Those of strong faith. They are those who spend all that they possess, setting aside nothing for themselves. They have fulfilled their covenant with God of their love, just as Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq¹⁸ did when he came with all his wealth, and the Messenger of God asked him, “What did you leave for yourself?” To which he said, “God and His Messenger.” Then he asked ʿUmar, “What did you leave for yourself?” He answered, “A similar amount,” that is, similar to what he brought with him, to which he said, “The gulf between you both is like the variance in your replies.”¹⁹

THE SECOND CATEGORY: Those of intermediate faith. They are those who are not able to empty their hands of their wealth in one go, rather they hold onto it, not to live a life of luxury, but to spend it whenever one in need of it appears before them. Regarding their own rights, they are content with what will strengthen them for worship. When a needy person turns up, they hasten to allay his indigence and want, and they do not restrict themselves [in spending] to the requisite amount of the yearly alms tax. Their most obvious intent in their holding onto their wealth is to meet others’ needs.

THE THIRD CATEGORY: Those of weak faith. They restrict themselves to fulfilling the requisite yearly alms tax, neither more nor less. Such are their stations – each spending according to his love for God! I do not see you capable of the first and second categories, but do strive until you pass beyond the third level and into the lowest part of the level of

¹⁸ (d. 13/634): One of the earliest Muslims and the first Caliph of Islam, he is considered the most pious non-Prophet in Sunni Islam. Winter, *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires*, 210.

¹⁹ This Tradition has been reported by al-Ḥākim with a rigorously authenticated chain of transmission, though without the sentence, “The gulf between you both is like the variance in your replies.”

the intermediate, middle-runners. Thus, you supplement the requisite amount, even if it be with something trivial, for surely the mere requisite is the terminus of misers. God says, *If He were to ask for all of [your possessions], and press you, ye would covetously withhold,*²⁰ that is, if He exhausted you [in asking], you would withhold your wealth. So strive that time does not pass you by but that you give in charity something beyond the requisite amount, though it may be only a crust of bread, so that you may rise above the station of misers by way of that. If you possess nothing, then charity is not merely of wealth, but rather it is every pleasant word; [it is] interceding and assisting in a need, visiting the sick, attending funeral prayers, and in essence, expending of what you are capable of dignity, ego, and speech in order to placate the heart of a Muslim. All of this is recorded for you as charity.

Vigilantly guard five things in your alms, prayers, and charity:

THE FIRST: Secrecy. It comes in a narration, “Charity in secret extinguishes the anger of your Lord;”²¹ while the one who gives charity with his right hand such that his left hand knows naught of it is “one of the seven [types of] people in God’s shade on the day when there is no shade save His.”²² God has said, *But if ye conceal [acts of charity], and make them reach those (really) in need, that is best for you.*²³ In this manner, you purify yourself of ostentation, which clearly dominates the soul and is ruinous, transforming in the heart (when man is placed in his grave) into the shape of a serpent. In other words, he is tormented with the agony of a serpent [bite], while niggardliness transforms into the shape of a scorpion. The objective of every form of spending is to purify oneself of the

²⁰ Q. XLVII: 37.

²¹ Reported by al-Tirmidhī with a good chain of transmission. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Zakā* #666.

²² Reported by Bukhārī and Muslim with a rigorously authenticated chain of transmission. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Zakā* # 1444.

²³ Q. II: 271.

vice of niggardliness, thus when one has mixed it with ostentation, it is as if he has made the scorpion the nourishment of the serpent. He has not purified himself from the scorpion, but rather he has increased the strength of the serpent, since for each of the ruinous qualities of the heart, its nourishment and strength is but its acquiescing to its preconditions.

THE SECOND: That you beware of recounting your favors, the true face of which is that you see yourself as benefiting and doing a favor for the poor person. The sign of this is that you expect gratitude from him, or that you loath his disregard for your rights or his partiality toward your enemies with a loathing that increases upon what it was before giving the charity. All this suggests that you see yourself superior to him. Its cure is to realize that he is doing you the favor by accepting God's right from you. No doubt, one of the esoteric mysteries of the alms tax is depuration of the heart – purifying it of the vice of niggardliness and the evil of avarice. As such, the alms tax is a detergent, since cleanliness is attained with it. It is as if [this money] is impure wash-water, and for that reason, the Messenger of God and the people of his lineage have been dignified above accepting the alms tax. He has said, "Surely it is the filthiest of the people's money."²⁴ Thus, when the poor person takes from you that which thereby purifies you, he is doing you the favor. Don't you see that if the phlebotomist bleeds you without charge, removing from inside you the blood whose harm you fear in the worldly realm, would the favor be yours or his? Hence, the one who removes from inside you both the vice of avarice and its harm in the hereafter is more deserving of being seen as the one graciously disposed.

THE THIRD: That you take it from the best part of your wealth. God says, *They assign*

²⁴ Muslim has reported the Tradition, "[Charity] is but the peoples' filth." *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-Zakā* #2530.

to God what they hate (for themselves);²⁵ and God says, *Do not aim at anything which is bad, out of it ye may give away something, when ye yourselves would not receive it.*²⁶ The Prophet said, “Verily God does not accept save what is good,”²⁷ that is, the lawful. Then of course, the intention behind this is to make manifest the degree of one’s love [for God]. Man cherishes his beloved with the most precious of things, not the vilest of them.

THE FOURTH: That you give with a bright, cheerful face, while you are delighted in giving it, and not resentful. The Messenger of God said, “A single dirham surpassed a hundred thousand,”²⁸ while he simply meant [a dirham] given with a smile and in good spirits from the most precious and best part of one’s wealth – for that is better than a hundred thousand given with disgust.

THE FIFTH: That you choose for your charity a place in which charity multiplies, namely, the god-fearing scholar who will avail himself of it in the obedience and fear of God, or the righteous breadwinner with many familial relations. If these qualities do not coalesce [in a single person], then charity multiplies with each of them taken individually as well. The crux of these matters is to safeguard righteousness. The world is no more than a bare sufficiency and a provision for the servants of God until the hereafter; thus, let it be spent on the travelers thereto – those who take this worldly realm as [merely] a way station among many along the road. The Messenger of God said, “Do not eat except the food of the god-fearing, and let none but the god-fearing partake of your food.”²⁹

²⁵ Q. XVI:62.

²⁶ Q. II:267.

²⁷ Al-Tirmidhī has reported a Tradition with the wording, “Verily God is good and love the good.” *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Adab* #3029.

²⁸ This has been reported by al-Nasā’ī on the authority of Abū Hurayra. *Sunan al-Nisā’ī, Kitāb al-Zakā* #2539.

²⁹ Abū Dāūd and al-Tirmidhī have reported this Tradition with a good chain of transmission. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Zuhd* #2574.

THE THIRD PRINCIPLE: Regarding the Fast

The Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace) said, “God says, ‘Every good deed is multiplied from ten to seven hundred times [in reward] except fasting, for it is for Me and I alone will compensate for it!’”³⁰ And he said, “Everything has a door, and the door of worship is fasting.”³¹

Fasting was but singled out with these merits for two reasons:

THE FIRST: It derives from “spiritual girding”, that is, a secret deed that no one knows of except God, unlike the prayer, alms tax, and their like.

THE SECOND: It is a subdual of the enemy of God. For surely Satan is the enemy, and nothing will strengthen the enemy save by way of the carnal appetites. Hunger breaks all of the carnal appetites, which are the instruments of Satan. As such, the Prophet said, “Verily Satan courses with the blood in the sons of Adam, thus straighten the courses of Satan with hunger.”³² This is the secret of his saying, “When Ramadan commences, the doors of the gardens are laid opened, the doors of the fires are bolted shut, and the devils are shackled. An angelic crier calls out, ‘O seeker of virtue! Make haste! O seeker of vice! Desist!’”³³

Know that fasting, with regard to its quantity, is according to three levels, and with regard to its mysteries, is according to three levels:

AS FOR ITS QUANTITY: Its minimum is to limit oneself to the month of Ramadan, and its maximum is the fasting of David, which is to fast one day and break the next. It comes

³⁰ Imām Mālik reports this Tradition. *al-Muwaṭṭaʿ*, *Kitāb al-Ṣiyām* #691.

³¹ Ibn ʿI-Mubārak reports this Tradition with a weak chain of narration.

³² Al-Bukhārī and Muslim both report this Tradition without the last clause. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Kitāb al-ʿIṭikāf* #2074.

³³ *Sunan al-Nisāʿī*, *Kitāb al-Ṣawm* #2119.

in a rigorously authenticated Tradition³⁴ that this is more meritorious than uninterrupted fasting; it is the best form of fasting, its secret being that for the one who fasts uninterrupted, fasting becomes a routine for him. He does not, therefore, sense through it a breaking of his soul, or clarity in his heart, or a weakening of his carnal appetites. For no doubt, the soul is but influenced by what contravenes it not by what it inures, hence, this [explanation] is not unreasonable. In this manner, doctors also prohibit the habitual drinking of medicine, saying, “Whoever makes a habit of it, he will not be benefited by it when he falls ill. If his humors accustom to it, he will not be affected by it.”

Know that the medicine of hearts is akin to the medicine of bodies, and this is the secret of the Prophet’s words to ʿAbdullah b. ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ³⁵ when [the latter] was asking him about fasting, to which he replied, “Fast one day and break one day.” [ʿAbdullah] then said, “I want something better than that,” and he replied, “There is nothing better than that.”³⁶ Similarly, when it was told to the Messenger of God, “So-and-so fasts uninterrupted,” he said, “He has neither fasted nor broken the fast.”³⁷ As such, ʿĀ’isha³⁸ said to a man who would recite the Koran hastily and perfunctorily, “This person has neither recited the Koran nor remained silent.”

As for the intermediate level of moderation, it is that you fast one third of the time. Whenever you fast Mondays and Thursdays while adding to it the month of Ramadan, then you have fasted four months and four days of the year, which is more than the third.

³⁴ That is, the Tradition, “There is no fasting beyond the fasting of David (peace be upon him): half of the time – fast one day and break fast the next.” *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Ṣawm* #2017.

³⁵ (d. 64/684): A Companion known for his asceticism and scholarship. Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller*, 1024.

³⁶ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Ṣawm* #2013.

³⁷ Reported by al-Nisā’ī. *Sunan al-Nisā’ī, Kitāb al-Ṣiyām* #2391.

³⁸ (d. 58/678): Wife of the Prophet and daughter of the Caliph Abū Bakr, she related 2,210 Traditions and was a major source of legal edicts during the early Umayyad dynasty. Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller*, 1037.

Inevitably, however, one of the three days following the Feast of the Sacrifice will be waived, and the increase reduces to three days. It is [likewise] conceivable that through the two Feasts, two days will be waived, and so the increase of three days reduces to one day. Thus, you know how to ascertain its numerical estimation. It is not seemly that your fasting fall short of this amount, for truly it is light on the soul, and yet its return is lavish!

As for the levels of its mysteries, they are three:

THE LOWEST LEVEL: That one limit himself to abstaining from the juridical nullifiers of the fast while not restraining his limbs from those things contemptible. Such is the fasting of the masses, and [it serves] their complacency in name alone.

THE SECOND LEVEL: That you append the restraining of your limbs to [the previous level]. Thus, you vigilantly guard your tongue from backbiting, and your eye from baseless suspicions, and so forth with the rest of the appendages.

THE THIRD LEVEL: That you append to this the safeguarding of your heart from inane thoughts and devilish whisperings, restricting it to the remembrance of God. Such is the fasting of the elect of the elect; it is the perfection of fasting.

Subsequently, fasting has a final stage by way of which it is idealized; specifically, that one break the fast with food lawful beyond any uncertainty, and that one not eat of the lawful excessively such that [his later meal] catches up with what passed him in the morning. In this manner, he will have joined two meals in one go, and his bowels will grow heavy while his carnal appetites grow stronger. He [thus] nullifies the secret of the fast and its utility, which results in his neglecting the supererogatory prayers of the night – or perhaps he doesn't even wake before dawn! All of that is forfeiture, and the benefit of fasting may well never accord with him.

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding the Pilgrimage

God (Exalted is He!) says, *Pilgrimage to the House [of God] is a duty men owe to God, - those who can afford the journey;*³⁹ while the Prophet said (may God bless him and grant him peace), “Whoever dies having not performed the pilgrimage, then let him die as a Jew, if he so wishes, or a Christian, if he so wishes.”⁴⁰ And he said, “Islam is built upon five things: [testifying that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God, establishing the prayer, paying the alms tax, making pilgrimage to the House of God, and fasting the month of Ramadan].”⁴¹

The pilgrimage has outward actions that we have mentioned in the *Revival*. Now, we call your attention to its finer etiquette and esoteric mysteries.

AS FOR ITS ETIQUETTE, it is seven:

The First: That you seek a righteous companion and a pure and lawful expenditure for the journey; for the lawful provision illumines the heart, whereas the righteous companion reminds one of virtue while eschewing evil.

The Second: That one’s hand abstain from commerce money so that his mind is not diverted, and his thoughts are not divided, and the object of his visit ceases to be his sole preoccupation.

The Third: That he is openhanded with food on the journey and he is congenial and fair-spoken with his companions and mule drivers.

The Fourth: That he abandon all obscenity, wrangling,⁴² and boasting in worldly matters; rather he relegate his tongue (other than to the exigencies of his sudden needs) to

³⁹ Q. III:97: *Let there be no obscenity, nor wickedness, nor wrangling in the Hajj.*

⁴⁰ A closely worded Tradition is reported by al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Hajj* #817.

⁴¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Īmān* #8.

⁴² A reference to Q. II:197.

litanies and recitation of the Koran.

The Fifth: That he ride his camel without the howdah,⁴³ and that he be of a shabby, disheveled, and dusty mien – not well adorned, but rather of the appearance of the destitute, such that he is not written among the lot of the affluent.

The Sixth: That he periodically dismount his beast to ease its burden, to placate the heart of the mule driver, and to give relief to his limbs by walking around. He must not load his beast with more than it can bear, instead he should be as gentle with it as possible.

The Seventh: That he be of good cheer with what he spends of his provision, and with whatever hardship and deprivation afflict him. He must see such things as tokens of the divine acceptance of his pilgrimage; hence, he anticipates a goodly reward for them.

AS FOR ITS SECRETS, they are many. We will depict them as of two types:

THE FIRST TYPE: That it was set as a substitute for the monasticism of the earlier religious communities, as it comes in the Tradition.⁴⁴ Thus, God has made the pilgrimage monasticism for the nation of Muhammad. He ennobled the ancient house and attributed it to Himself, appointing it as an object for worshipping Him. He has made its surroundings a sanctuary for His house in order to venerate His command, and He made Arafat as the open tract upon the courtyard of His sanctuary, emphasizing the sanctity of the site by making inviolable its game and trees. He has made it a simile of being in the presence of royalty, so that pilgrims will repair to it from every mountain pass, disheveled, dusty, and humbled before the Lord of the worlds – fully submissive before His majesty and fully

⁴³ A camel-borne litter.

⁴⁴ Though not the referenced Tradition, an analogous narration comes as follows: “A man said, ‘O Messenger of God! Permit me to partake in monastic wanderings (*al-siyāḥa*).’ The Prophet replied, ‘The monastic wanderings of my nation are in the form of jihad in the path of God.’” *Sunan Abī Dāūd, Kitāb al-Jihād* #2488.

resigned before His might, while acknowledging His transcendence beyond a house enclosing Him, or that a place should contain Him, that it may further heighten their thrall-dom and servitude. As such, He has charged them with unusual rites that do not accord with human nature or reason, that their undertaking the command may be genuine servitude and an implementing of the order without the support of another incentive. This is a great secret of servitude, and accordingly, the Prophet said, “Here I am [O Lord!], at the pilgrimage, in truth, devotion, and bondage!”⁴⁵

THE SECOND TYPE: That this journey has been established upon the simile of a journey to the hereafter. Thus, let the seeker remember every deed of his as an equal counterpart to an affair of the afterlife, for clearly in it is a reminder for the mindful and an admonition for one of insightful reflection.

Then, at the onset of your journey when you bid farewell to your family, reflect upon bidding farewell to the family at the agonies of death; when departing the homeland, reflect upon leaving the worldly realm; when mounting the camel, reflect upon mounting the bier; when wrapping the garments of ritual consecration, reflect upon wrapping the burial garments; when entering the wilds until the points of consecration, reflect upon what is between leaving the worldly realm and the gathering point of the Resurrection; through the terror of highwaymen, reflect upon the questioning of Munkar and Nakīr;⁴⁶ through the predatory animals of the wilds, reflect upon the scorpions and worms of the grave; through your isolation from your family and relatives, reflect upon the estrangement and solitude of the grave; and with the chanting of “Here I am, O Lord!” reflect upon responding to the summons of God at the Resurrection. [And do] likewise with the

⁴⁵ Al-Dāraqūṭnī has reported this Tradition.

⁴⁶ The two angels of the grave who question the recently deceased.

remainder of your actions, for in every action is a secret beneath which lies a symbol, to which every servant is heedful according to the extent of his preparedness for heedfulness, according to the clarity of his heart and the confining of his concerns to the exigencies of religion.

THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding Recitation of the Koran

The Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace) said, “The best worship of my nation is recitation of the Koran;”⁴⁷ and he said, “If the Koran were in a skin, fire would not touch it;”⁴⁸ and he said, “There is no intercessor with a better standing before God on the Day of Resurrection than the Koran –neither prophet, nor angel, nor any other;”⁴⁹ and he said, “God says, ‘Whoever recitation of the Koran preoccupies from supplicating and asking of Me, I give him the best reward of the grateful servants.’”⁵⁰

And know that recitation of the Koran comprises outward etiquette and inward secrets:

AS FOR THE OUTWARD ETIQUETTE, it is three:

THE FIRST: That you recite it with veneration and exaltation. The reverence in your heart will not observe what the mien of reverence in your exterior does not observe. You have already become acquainted with the manner of the heart’s connection with the limbs and the mode of the illuminations’ rising from them to [the heart].

The mien of reverence is that you sit in a state of ritual purity, motionless, with your head lowered, facing the direction of prayer, not reclining, nor cross-legged, nor sleeping

⁴⁷ Reported by Abū Nu^ʿaym with a weak chain of narration.

⁴⁸ Reported by al-Ṭabarānī with a weak chain of narration.

⁴⁹ Reported by ^ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb.

⁵⁰ Reported by Ibn al-Shāhīn.

– just as you sit before the teacher. You recite it in a leisurely, psalmodizing manner (*tarīl*), with emphatic pronunciation, fully rendering each letter without haste or perfunctoriness. Ibn ʿAbbās said, “That I recite ‘*When the Earth is shaken*’⁵¹ and ‘*The Day of Clamour*’⁵² while reflecting upon [their meanings] is more beloved to me than reciting ‘*The Heifer*’⁵³ and ‘*The Family of ʿImrān*’⁵⁴ frivolously.”

THE SECOND: That you yearn at certain times for the highest degrees of grace contained therein. Such as reciting the prayer, standing, especially in the mosque at night, for at night the heart is clearer because it is emptier. If you seclude yourself during the day, the comings and goings of creation and their activities in their engagements will agitate your interior and will preoccupy you, especially if you expect to be called for an errand from among your duties and vocations. No matter how you recite, even if it be in bed without ritual purity, do not forsake this grace, for surely God praised the lot of them, saying, *Men who remember God standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides.*⁵⁵ We did not, however, mention [this latter person] among those of *added* grace.

If you are, therefore, of the seekers of the afterlife, then abandoning this grace will not be easy upon you. ʿAlī⁵⁶ said, “Whoever recites the Koran while standing in prayer, for him is one hundred rewards for every letter, while whoever recites the Koran outside of prayer in a state of ritual purity, then twenty-five rewards, and whoever recites it without ritual purity, then ten rewards.”

THE THIRD: As to the extent of recitation, it has three levels:

⁵¹ Q. XC. A chapter of only eight verses.

⁵² Q. CI. A chapter of only eleven verses.

⁵³ Q. II. The longest chapter of the Koran at 286 verses.

⁵⁴ Q. III. The second longest chapter of the Koran at 200 verses.

⁵⁵ Q. III:191.

⁵⁶ (d. 40/661): Cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, in addition to his role as the fourth of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and first Shiite Imām. Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller*, 1037-38.

The least of them is that [the Koran] is completed once per month, while the highest of them is that it is completed once in three days. The Prophet said, “Whoever has recited the Koran in less than three [days], he has not comprehended it.”⁵⁷ The middle ground of [recitation] is that it is completed once per week. As for completing it everyday, doing otherwise is commendable.

Take heed in freely disposing your intellect, hence you may say, “Whenever that which is good and beneficial is more abundant, it is more beneficial.” Your intellect cannot be guided to the secrets of matters divine, only the faculty of prophecy can receive them. It is, therefore, incumbent upon you to adhere [to prophecy], for surely the particulars of matters cannot be grasped by analogy.

Or do you not see how you are commissioned with prayer, and yet you are prohibited from it throughout the day: you are ordered to abandon it after dawn, after the afternoon prayer, at sunrise, at sunset, and at midday. All of this amounts to one third of the day. How then, when the sign of imperfection is so obvious in this analogy of yours! For it is like one’s saying, “Medication is beneficial for the patient, thus whenever it is more, it is more beneficial,” while you know that an excess of medication may very well kill.

AS FOR THE INWARD SECRETS, they are five:

THE FIRST: That at the start of your recitation, you are overcome with the sublimity of the Speech according to the overcoming exaltation of the Speaker. Hence, you bring into your heart the Throne and the Footstool, the heavens and the earth and what is between them of angels and jinn, humans and animals, plants and minerals. You call to mind that the Creator of all this is one, while everything is in the grasp of His Omnipotence, oscil-

⁵⁷ Al-Tirmidhī has reported this Tradition with a rigorously authenticated chain of narration. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Qirā’āt* #3198.

lating between His Grace and His Mercy. You want to recite His Speech while through it looking at the quality of His Essence, and inspecting the beauty of His Knowledge and Wisdom. You know that just as none but the ritually pure (*muṭahharūn*)⁵⁸ may touch the outside of the Koran (*muṣṣhaf*) with their outward parts, and it is veiled from all others, then similarly the reality of its meaning and inner significance is veiled from the inner heart unless it is purified of all filth and inner vices. An example of this exaltation was ʿIkrima⁵⁹ – when he opened the Koran many a time would lose consciousness, saying, “This is the Speech of my Lord! This is the Speech of my Lord!”

Know that had not the illuminations of His Speech and His Sublimity descended in the clothing of letters, human capacity could not bear hearing Him due to His Sublimity and Sovereignty and the splendors of His Light. Were it not for God’s fortification of Moses, he could not have borne hearing Him divested of the clothing of letters and sounds, just as the mountains could not bear even the preludes of His self-disclosure except that they [crumbled] to powder.⁶⁰

THE SECOND: That you recite with contemplation of its meanings (if you be of its folk), while for everything that runs off your tongue in heedlessness, repeat it and don’t consider it part of your good deeds, because leisurely, psalmodizing recitation (*tarfīl*) on the outside is to establish contemplation. ʿAlī said, “There is no good in worship devoid of understanding and there is none in recitation devoid of contemplation.”

And take heed that you should become enamored of yourself by the number of your

⁵⁸ A reference to Q. LVI:79: *[The Book] which none shall touch but those who are clean.*

⁵⁹ (d. 105/723): A manumitted slave of the Prophet’s cousin Ibn ʿAbbās, under whose patronage he lived out his free years. He was an important transmitter of the latter’s famous exegesis of the Koran. Winter, *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, 296.

⁶⁰ A reference to Q. VII:143: *When his Lord manifested Himself to the mount, He made it as dust, and Moses fell down in a swoon.*

completions [of the Koran], for that you should repeat a single verse for an entire night, contemplating it, is better for you than two full completions [of the Koran]. Hence, the Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace) recited “*In the name of God, Most Compassionate and Merciful*, and repeated it twenty times;”⁶¹ while Abū Dharr⁶² said, “The Messenger of God stood for the night vigil with us, repeatedly reciting the verse, *If Thou dost punish them, they are Thy servants...*”⁶³ Tamīm al-Dārī⁶⁴ stood for the night vigil with His words, *What! Do those who do evil deeds...*⁶⁵ While Sa‘d b. Jubayr⁶⁶ stood for the night vigil with His words, *And O ye in sin! Get ye apart this Day!*⁶⁷ Perhaps more suitable for you is what one of the gnostics has said, “For me is a completion of the Koran every Friday; or for me is a completion of the Koran every month; or [for me] is a completion of the Koran every year; or for me is a completion of the Koran for the past thirty years – I have yet to finish it!” All this is according to the levels of contemplation, for no doubt the heart cannot endure long contemplation at certain times, so let the long contemplation be a specific completion [in itself].

THE THIRD: That you harvest, through your contemplation, the fruits of knowledge from their branches, gathering them from their lands. You do not seek out the treacle seeking thereby gems, nor gems seeking thereby musk and aloes-wood, for every fruit has a branch, and every gem has a mineral. Your knowing the ten classifications into

⁶¹ Reported by Abū Dharr al-Hirwī.

⁶² (d. 32/652): An early Companion famous for his extreme asceticism and devotional practices. Winter, *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires*, 210.

⁶³ Q. V:118. *Sunan Ibn Mājah, Kitāb Iqāmat ‘l-Ṣalā wa ‘l-Sunna* #1411.

⁶⁴ (d. 40/660): A pious Companion said to be the first to suggest the use of the pulpit (*minbār*) in Islam. Ibn Sa‘d, vol. VII, 129-30.

⁶⁵ Q. XLV:21.

⁶⁶ (d. 95/713): A Follower who studied under Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn ‘Umar until his famous death at the hands of al-Ḥajjāj. Winter, *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires*, 220.

⁶⁷ Q. XXXVI:59.

which we have compiled the divisions of the Koran⁶⁸ will simply facilitate this for you – they are ten minerals.

That which is connected with God, His attributes, and His Actions, gather from it knowledge of His Majesty and Sublimity.

That which is connected with guidance to the straight way, gather from it knowledge of His Mercy, Affection, and Wisdom.

That which is connected with the annihilation of His enemies, gather from it knowledge of His Might, Self-Sufficiency, Predominance, and Omnipotence (*al-tajabbur*).

That which is connected with the affairs of the prophets, gather from it knowledge of His Gentleness, Favor, Grace, and Magnanimity; and the same [applies] for every category with that which suits it. Do not look, therefore, with one eye, though the explanation of that will take too long.

THE FOURTH: That you abandon the obstructions to understanding, i.e. the coverings that block understanding. God says, *Verily We have set veils over their hearts so that they understand this not, and over their ears, deafness;*⁶⁹ while the Messenger of God said, “If it were not for the devils hovering around the hearts of the children of Adam, they would gaze upon the dominion of heaven.”⁷⁰

Know that the meanings of the Koran are from the totality of this dominion, while their letters are but from the visible world. The coverings with which the god-fearing yearner for the truth is tested are of two types. As for the veiling of doubt and denial with which the one weak of faith is tested, and the veiling of the carnal appetites wholly occu-

⁶⁸ The author is referring to the first part of his *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān wa Duraruh* (*The Jewels and Pearls of the Koran*). See Abul Quasem, *The Jewels of the Qur’ān*, section one.

⁶⁹ Q. XVIII:57.

⁷⁰ Aḥmad has reported a closely worded Tradition on the authority of Abū Hurayra. *Musnad Aḥmad*, Bāqī *Musnad al-Mukthirīn*.

pying the heart with which the one engrossed in the world is tested, this is evident – its being an obstruction to understanding the recondite subtleties of the Koran and gathering its illuminations is not unobvious, for by it, most of creation is veiled.

As for the worshippers devoted exclusively to the path of God, they are veiled by two other types of veils:

THE FIRST TYPE: Devilish whisperings that divert the heart to thinking about one's intention – How was it at the beginning? Is it remaining now? Is it sincere at present? This is if he is in prayer. Or there are devilish whisperings that divert one's concern to perfecting the articulation of his letters, then to having misgivings about them, then to repeating them because of that. This occurs in prayer and in other things. Thus, how does a heart that is veiled and diverted to scrutinizing the lips and the method of closing them, the tongue and the palate and the method of passing air between the conjoining of them (and this is the meaning of articulating and perfecting the letters), scrutinize the secrets of the heavenly dominion?

THE SECOND TYPE: Blind following (*taqlīd*) of the outer meanings of the Koran and obstinacy regarding them. This is an enormous veil upon one's understanding. I do not mean by this the blind following of falsehood, like the blind following of the heretical innovator, rather the blind following of the truth as well, for the truth that mankind has been commissioned with belief in has levels. It has an outer starting point, like the allegorical shell, and it has an inner depth, like the kernels. The Messenger of God said, "Verily the Koran has an outer dimension and an inner one, a limit and a point of embarkation."⁷¹ The one who is obstinate regarding the outer dimension, therefore, is the one

⁷¹ Ibn Ḥibbān reports it with a rigorously authenticated chain of transmission.

who presumes that there is no ascent behind it toward which to climb. How does he conceive that the secrets will be unveiled to him! Hence for example, mankind has been commissioned to believe that God can be seen. Vision, however, has an outer dimension and a secret, thus for the one who believes that the vision of God is correspondent with the vision that man is familiar with in this world, how can he conceive to light upon the secret of His words, *By no means canst thou see Me;*⁷² how can he understand that such is impossible in this worldly life with his eye that is dependent upon the perception of directions and spaces, and how can he grasp His words, *No vision can grasp Him,*⁷³ with His words, *Some faces, that Day, will beam (in brightness and beauty) - looking toward their Lord.*⁷⁴ This single example will suffice for you, for we are not going to unveil for you more than this. We have simply had in mind, in this principle, allusions to the starting points of the secrets in order to awaken a desire in those who are equipped for them.

THE FIFTH: That you do not limit yourself to gathering the illuminations, rather you append to this the gathering of states and effects. Such is that you do not read a verse except that you become of its quality. Thus, for each understanding, you have a state and an emotion:

Upon mention of His Mercy and Forgiveness, you rejoice as if you will fly away with joy.

Upon mention of His Anger and the severity of His punishment, you become feeble as if you are going to die of terror.

Upon mention of God, His names, and His Sublimity, you bow your head and cringe until it is as if you have become effaced through the witnessing of His Majesty.

⁷² Q. VII:143.

⁷³ Q. VI:103.

⁷⁴ Q. LXXV:22-23.

Upon the disbelievers' mentioning what is impossible of Him, of [taking] a son or partner, you break, lowering your voice as if you have become obliterated by diffidence. The same [applies] for each of the ten categories, though that will take too long.

Let the effect of that appear on your limbs: weeping with sadness, sweat on the brow with diffidence, quivering of the skin and trembling of the flanks with His Awe and Majesty, delight in the organs, tongue, and voice with rejoicing, anxiety in them with fear (*istish'ār*).

If you do that, all of your organs participate in attaining the good fortune of the Koran, and the effects of the Koran emanate onto your three worlds, by which I mean: the world of dominion, the world of power, and the visible world.⁷⁵ Know that you are composed of the three worlds, thus a part of each world is in you.

And know that the purest of the illuminations of knowledge emanate from the world of dominion to the secret of the heart, for it is from the dominion as well. As for their effects in the form of apprehension (*khashya*), fear (*khawf*), happiness, awe, and the rest of the states, they come down from the world of power, while their place of alighting is the breast, which is the world of power and another of your worlds – we have alluded to it with “breast” just as we have alluded to the first with “heart,” since the world of power is between the world of dominion and the visible world, just as the breast is between the heart and the limbs. As for weeping, sobbing, quivering of the skin, and trembling of the flanks, they descend from the visible world, while their place of alighting is the limbs, for they are of the visible world, though I do not see you understanding anything of the “heart” other than the nut-shaped piece of meat, and of the “breast” other than the bone

⁷⁵ For more information on al-Ghazālī's three-tiered cosmology, see the appendix “Some Notes on al-Ghazzali's Cosmology” in Lazarus-Yafeh's *Studies in al-Ghazzali*, and K. Nakamura's “Imām Ghazālī's Cosmology Reconsidered with Special Reference to the Concept of *Jabarūt*.”

that encloses it. No doubt, you do not grasp anything except by its wrapper and shell, or anything else that removes you from grasping realities. This [faculty] clearly exists for beasts and the dead. The illuminations of all knowledge and sciences do not descend upon it, nor do their effects in the form of apprehension, awe, and happiness.

Then, if you desire to sniff out something of the fragrances of these secrets (and I do not see your desiring), Satan has already throttled you with the rope of carnal appetites. The chapter of divine unity (*tawhīd*) in the beginning of “The Book of Divine Reliance”⁷⁶ is therefore required of you if you so desire it.

Know that the Koran is like the sun, and the emanation of the secrets of knowledge from it onto the heart is like the emanation of the illuminations of the sun onto the earth. The radiation of the effects of fear, apprehension, awe, and the rest of the states from it onto the breast is like the radiation of the sun’s heat within the interior of the earth, following the radiating of its illuminations, for surely apprehension is the effect if the light of knowledge, *Those truly fear (yakhshā) God among His servants who have knowledge.*⁷⁷ The spreading of the motions and changes unto the limbs in the form of weeping, sweating, quivering of the skin, and trembling springs from the effects of apprehension, as do the rest of the states, like the movement of parts of the earth through the rising of the vapors and smokes from them with the increase in the sun’s heat. Hence, the movement follows the heat, the heat follows the light, and the light follows the occurrence of collaterality between the earth and the sun.

So strive to parallel the surface of your heart with the sun of the Koran, and be illuminated by its lights. Similarly, if you can’t handle that, then incline toward the summons

⁷⁶ Book XXXV of the *Ihyā’*.

⁷⁷ Q. XXXV:28.

issuing from the right side of the mountain,⁷⁸ and if you perceive a fire from its sides, then take a burning brand⁷⁹ thereof and kindle it into a light (*sirāj*), for if your oil were pure it would *well-nigh illumine though fire scarce touched it*.⁸⁰ Then if fire touched it, light (*diyā'*) would spring from it, and you would find *some guidance at the fire*,⁸¹ which would fulfill within you the station of the sun that spreads radiance and light. And God guides whom He wills; and God is ample in forgiveness.

THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding the Remembrance of God at Every Instant

God (Glorified is He!) says, *And remember God frequently that you may prosper*,⁸² and He says to His Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), *And keep in remembrance the name of thy Lord, and devote thyself to Him whole-heartedly*.⁸³ The Prophet said, “The remembrance of God in the morning and evening is better than breaking swords in the path of God and giving out wealth profusely;”⁸⁴ and he said, “Shall I not inform you of the best and purest of your actions before your Possessor (*malīk*), the most elevated of them in your levels, better for you than giving out silver and gold, and better for you than meeting your enemies, you striking their necks and they striking yours?” They replied, “And what is that, O Messenger of God?” To which he replied, “The remembrance of God.”⁸⁵ And he said, “The devoted eremites (*mufarridūn*) have gone ahead! The devoted eremites have gone ahead!” So, it was asked, “Who are they, O

⁷⁸ A reference to God’s summoning of Moses from the right side of Mount Sinai, Q. XIX:52.

⁷⁹ A reference to Moses’s being charged with prophecy upon encountering the burning bush, Q. XX:10, Exodus III:1-18, IV:1-17.

⁸⁰ Q. XXIV:35.

⁸¹ Another reference to Q. XX:10. Al-Ghazālī seems to be concluding this principle by shifting the focus away from spiritual struggle (*mujāhada*) and returning it to divine grace and guidance.

⁸² Q. LXII:10.

⁸³ Q. LXXIII:8.

⁸⁴ Al-^cIrāqī reports this Tradition with a weak chain of narration.

⁸⁵ Ibn Mājah reports this Tradition with a rigorously authenticated chain of narration. *Sunan Ibn Mājah, Kitāb al-Adab* #3922.

Messenger of God?” He said, “Those who are infatuated with the remembrance of God – the remembrance of God has relieved them of their burdens so they appear lightsome at the Resurrection.”⁸⁶

Know that it has been unveiled to the masters of spiritual insight (*baṣā’ir*) that remembrance is the best of actions. It has, however, three shells, some being closer to the kernel than others; and it has a kernel behind the three veils, while the excellence of the shells is but a factor of their being a path to it.

THE MOST OUTLYING OF THEM: Remembrance of the tongue only.

THE SECOND: Remembrance of the heart whenever the heart demands chaperoning for it to be present with the remembrance, while if it is left to its own nature, it would surely trail off into the valleys of thought.

THE THIRD: That the remembrance take possession of the heart and predominate over it such that it demands coercion (*takalluf*) to turn from it toward something else, just as it demanded coercion in the second level for the heart to be settled upon persistence in remembrance.

THE FOURTH (and it is the kernels): That the Remembered One takes possession of the heart, while the act of remembrance is effaced and disappears. Such is the sought-after kernels. It is that one inclines neither toward the act of remembrance nor toward the heart, rather the Remembered One wholly immerses his entire being and whenever consideration of the act of remembrance occurs to him during this [state], it is a distracting veil. This is the state that the gnostics refer to as “annihilation” (*fanā’*), and that is because one becomes annihilated from himself until he no longer senses anything from the

⁸⁶ Reported by al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Da’wāt* #3945.

ning of the path, namely, the journey to God, while guidance is but after it. I mean by “guidance,” God’s guidance as stated by the intimate one⁹² (God’s prayers be upon him), “*I will go to my Lord! He will surely guide me!*”⁹³ Thus, the beginning of the matter is traveling *to* God and then the traveling *in* God, and that is annihilation and total immersion in Him. This immersion, however, is at first like a fleeting bolt of lightning: that which is established and remains is very little. If this remains, it becomes an ingrained practice and an established state; he ascends by way of it to the highest world and observes the purest true Being. The inscription of the dominion is imprinted upon him, and the sanctity of godhead (*al-lāhūt*) reveals itself to him.

The first things of that world to find symbolic expression before him are the substances of the angels and the spirits of the prophets and saints in beautiful forms – some of the realities pour upon him by way of them. That is at the beginning until his level rises above symbolism and he is confronted with sheer truth in everything.

Then, when he is returned to this metaphorical world, which is like shadows, he looks upon creation with pity for them, for their debarment from gazing upon the beauty of the holy realm. He is astonished at their contentment with shadows and their delusion with the world of deception and the world of fantasy. He is then with them present in person, absent in heart, astonished at their presence, while they are astonished at his absence.

This is the fruit of the kernels of remembrance. Its starting point is remembrance of the tongue, then remembrance of the heart with coercion, then natural remembrance of the heart, then the Remembered One seizes the heart and the act of remembrance is effaced. This is the secret of the Prophet’s saying, “Whoever would love to graze in the

⁹² The epithet of Abraham.

⁹³ Q. XXXVII:99.

gardens of Paradise, then let him increase in the remembrance of God.”⁹⁴ Moreover, it is the secret of his saying, “Secret remembrance takes precedence over the remembrance heard by the recording angels (*al-ḥafaẓa*) by seventy measures.”⁹⁵

Know that the recording angels hear every act of remembrance of which your heart is aware. Their cognizance no doubt corresponds with your cognizance (and in this is a secret), such that if your act of remembrance is absent from your cognizance by your all-encompassing journey within the Remembered One, then your act of remembrance is absent from the cognizance of the recording angels, while your heart still perceives it and is still directed at Him. It is averse to God and not absolved from hidden idolatry until it becomes fully immersed with the One, the Truth; and that is affirming God’s unity (*tawḥīd*).

The same has been said of knowledge, for whoever seeks knowledge for the sake of knowledge, he has spoken the latter position.⁹⁶ Whoever finds it, in that he doesn’t find it per se, rather he finds what is known by way of it, he is the one who has gained mastery over the reality of communion and has alighted in the opulence of the holy realm.

Then if you said, “But these unveilings are not particular to the state of annihilation?” Then know that the theorizing of the theorist is extensive in this narrative, such that if you so desired, you would not fall short in perceiving the existence of the senses, the impediments of the soul, and its carnal appetites that draw it to the world of the senses – the world of falsehood and deception. For that reason, sheer truth is unveiled through death, owing to the futility of the authority of the senses and the fantasies that turn the surface of

⁹⁴ Reported by al-Ṭabarānī with a weak chain of narration.

⁹⁵ Reported by al-Bayhaqī.

⁹⁶ i.e. hidden idolatry.

the heart toward the lower world.

When the authority of the senses abandons you with sleep, you are apprised of something of the unseen realm according to your preparedness, receptivity, and ambition (*himma*). But it is symbolic and demands interpretation – and I doubt that you yourself have not encountered a true vision through which you came to know of a future matter! The imagination, however, does not slacken during sleep, even if you [try to] suspend it. For that reason, [dream] interpretation is weak and is not free from the contamination of symbolism.

As for annihilation, it is articulating a state in which the senses are suspended and do not function, while the imagination subsides and does not jumble matters. Thus, if a muted remnant remains in the imagination, it has no effect except in imitating what is manifested of the world of sanctity, such that it represents the prophets, angels, and holy spirits in the forms found in the imagination.

You have been apprised of these matters so that you may long to be among the people who taste them (*ahl 'l-dhawq*). If not, then among the people of knowledge of them, and if not, then among the people of belief in them: *God will raise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and have been granted knowledge.*⁹⁷ Dare you not be of the deniers of them and thus you meet with a severe punishment when the truth that you would turn from is unveiled to you at the pangs of death and it is said to you, *Thou wast heedless of this; now have We removed thy veil, and keen is thy sight this Day.*⁹⁸

Know that belief, knowledge, and tasting are three separate levels:

⁹⁷ Q. LVIII:11.

⁹⁸ Q. L:22.

No doubt, one can conceive of the impotent man's believing, for example, in the existence of someone else's appetite for sexual union when he accepts that from one regarding whom he holds a high opinion and who he does not charge with lying. That is belief (*īmān*).

One can conceive of his knowing of its existence in another by way of rational demonstration – this is knowledge. His source is analogy such that he examines his appetite for food, for example, and draws an analogy thereby for the appetite for sexual union. All of this is far from realizing the reality of the appetite by his possessing it.

Similarly, the ordinary, healthy person knows of disease and believes in it, while the healthy doctor knows of it by way of rational proof, i.e. knowledge, though for him who has not become sick, sapience has not befallen him.

Along these lines is the claim of annihilation in affirming God's unity (*tawhīd*). Thus, tasting is witnessing, while knowledge is analogy, and belief is acceptance based upon good opinion with the dissociation from accusation. So strive to be among of the people of witnessing (*mushāhada*), for hearing reports is not like observing.

Then if you said, "You have greatly extolled the matter of remembrance; so is it better or is recitation of the Koran?" Know then that recitation of the Koran is better for the entirety of creation, save the traveler to God. [Remembrance] is better for the traveler to God in all of his beginning states, and in some of his latter states, for clearly the Koran comprises of all types of knowledge, states, and guidance to the path. As long as the servant is in need of refinement of character and procuring knowledge, the Koran is foremost for him. If he moves beyond that and the remembrance seizes his heart such that it is hoped that this will lead him to total immersion [in God], then persistence in remem-

brance is foremost for him, for the Koran engages his mind and distracts him with the gardens of Paradise. It behooves not the disciple traveling to God to pay heed to Paradise and its gardens, rather it behooves him to make his concern undivided and his remembrance undivided, until he realizes the level of annihilation and total immersion. As such, God says, *And the remembrance of God is greatest.*⁹⁹ Similarly, whoever ends up at the level of total immersion and does not persist or remain steady upon it, when he is returned to himself, recitation of the Koran may thus benefit him. This situation is extremely rare, like red brimstone: it is spoken of but not found. Recitation of the Koran, therefore, is better in an absolute sense; for it is better in every state, save for the state of one who distracts the theologian from his speech with it, since the essence of the Koran is the theologian's knowledge of it, the knowledge of His beauty, and the total immersion in Him. The Koran is a pilot to Him and a guide toward Him; and he who is on the brink of the objective does not look toward the path.

Then if you said, "So which of the litanies (*adhkār*) are best?" Know then that the best (as we have mentioned) is the Remembered One's seizing of the heart, which is a single thing without multiplicity, until he chooses his best [form of remembrance]. That is the reality of union and affirming God's unity (*ʿayn al-jamʿ wa 'l-tawḥīd*). Differentiation and multiplicity are but before that, which is still within the station of remembrance with the tongue or the heart. During this [stage], the form of remembrance divides into "the best" and other, while its preference is according to the attributes that are expressed by the litanies.

The attributes and names that come as the possession of God divide into that which is

⁹⁹ Q. XXIX:45.

literally in the possession of the servants and allegorically in His possession, such as the Forbearer (*al-ṣubūr*),¹⁰⁰ the Appreciative (*al-shakūr*),¹⁰¹ the Most-Merciful (*al-raḥīm*), and the Avenger (*al-muntaqim*), and into that which is literally in His possession and when used as the possession of another, it is in a figurative sense.

Among the best forms of remembrance is: “There is no god but God, the Living (*al-ḥayy*), the Self-Subsisting (*al-qayyūm*),” for in it is God’s greatest name, as the Prophet has said, “God’s greatest name is in the verse of the Thrown¹⁰² and in the beginning of ‘The Family of ‘Imrān.’^{103,104} The two do not share in anything except this [abovementioned formula], which has a secret, the mention of which is too subtle for your understanding. The scope that can be alluded to is that your saying “there is no god but God” intuitively attesting to God’s unity (*tawḥīd*). The reality (*ma‘nā*) of Oneness in the Essence and Lordship is, within the possession of God, literal, not allegorical. Rather, in the possession of other than Him, it is figurative and allegorical. Along these lines is [the name] the Living (*al-ḥayy*), for the meaning of “living” is the one who is aware of his very self and knows himself, while “dead” is the one who has no experience of himself. This name is truly God’s as well, not allegorically. The Self-Subsisting (*al-qayyūm*) is aware of His subsisting through Himself and of all things’ subsisting through Him. This name is truly God’s as well, not allegorically. It does not exist for other than Him, rather it cannot be

¹⁰⁰ “The Clement, or Forbearing, who does not hastily avenger Himself upon the disobedient, but forgives and defers.” Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, entry ṣ-b-r.

¹⁰¹ “He who gives much reward for small, or few, works.” Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, entry sh-k-r.

¹⁰² Āyat ‘l-Kursī, that is, Q. II:255.

¹⁰³ The third chapter (*sūra*) of the Koran.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Tirmidhī reports a similar Tradition with a good chain of transmission. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Da‘wāt* #3813.

conceived of for other than Him!¹⁰⁵ What is other than these of His names that denote His actions, such as the Most-Merciful, the Equitable (*al-muqsiṭ*), the Just (*al-ʿadl*),¹⁰⁶ and others is beneath what denotes His attributes, since the sources of His actions are His attributes: His attributes are a foundation while His actions follow. What is other than these of His attributes that denote His Omnipotence, Knowledge, Will, Speech, Hearing, and Sight: what is established of these as understood by their externalities is conceived to be God's. How absurd! For what is understood from their externalities are matters that correspond to the attributes of man, his speech, power, knowledge, hearing, and sight. Rather, [God's attributes] have realities, the establishment of which is impossible in man so it is derived from these names through a type of allegorical interpretation. This then will apprise you, according to what your understanding can handle, of the distinction of these words by way of their supreme nature. Approaching this are your words, "Glorified is God; all praise be to God; there is no god but God; God is greatest," for "glorified is God" [conveys] His transcendence (*taqdīs*), which is literally His possession, for true holiness (*quds*) cannot be conceived of except as belonging to Him. Your words, "All praise be to God," intuit the ascription of all blessings to Him, which is real since He is the sole possessor of all actions in a true, non-allegorical, sense. He is solely entitled to all praise, for there is surely no partnership in the least, belonging to anyone with Him in His action, just as there is surely no partnership belonging to the pen with the writer in deserving praise for excellence of penmanship.

Know that everyone other than Him, from whom you see a blessing, He is subjugat-

¹⁰⁵ This last clause is an addition found only in the Tunisian manuscript.

¹⁰⁶ "He whom desire does not cause to incline, or decline, so that he should deviate from the right course of judgment." Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, entry ʿ-d-l.

ing him like the pen. This analogy, therefore, is to appraise you of His sole possession of all deservingness of praise. Your words, “There is no god but God,” – you have thus recognized that they are the true attestation of God’s unity (*al-tawḥīd al-ḥaqīqī*); while your words, “God is greatest,” – the meaning of them then is not that He is greater than others, for there is nothing with Him that is other than Him that He can be said to be greater than! Rather, everything other than Him is a light from the illuminations of His Omnipotence. Sunlight does not possess the rank of “withness” (*maʿīya*) in relation to the sun such that it is said, “[The sun] is greater than it;” rather, it possesses the rank of “dependency” (*tabʿīya*). Instead, its reality is that He is greater than to be attained by the senses or that His Sublimity should be grasped by the intellect or analogy; rather, He is greater than any other should even grasp the essence of His sublimity! And even greater than any other should even know Him! For verily none knows God except God, and the terminus of His servants’ knowledge is therefore their knowing that true knowledge of Him is impossible. None but a prophet or saint (*ṣiddīq*)¹⁰⁷ knows this in full. As for the Prophet, he expressed this saying, “I do not enumerate the praise due to You; You are as You have praised Yourself!”¹⁰⁸ As for [Abū Bakr] al-Ṣiddīq, he said, “The inability to grasp comprehension of God is [itself] comprehension.” If you yearn for additional verification of this meaning, or if you reject my words, “None knows God except God,” then search for knowledge of His Reality through the proofs in the book *The Most Brilliant Purport in the Meanings of the Most Beautiful Names of God*. This amount suffices you for now of

¹⁰⁷ Literally: a veracious speaker of or attester to truth. See Q. LVII:19: *And those who believe in God and His messengers – They are the saints(ṣiddīqūn) and the martyrs.*

¹⁰⁸ Reported by Muslim with a rigorously authenticated chain of narration. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-Ṣalāt* #1118.

allusions to the secrets of remembrance and the merit of their litanies.

THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding Seeking Lawful Sustenance

God (Glorified and Exalted is He!) says, *Enjoy things good and pure, and work righteousness.*¹⁰⁹ The unlawful is odious and not good and pure, and so He has joined the eating of things good and pure with worship.

The Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace) said, “Seeking lawful sustenance is obligatory upon every Muslim after the obligatory,”¹¹⁰ that is, after the obligation of belief and prayer. And he said, “Whoever eats lawful food for forty days, God will illuminate his heart, while additional [days] will cause wisdom to flow from his heart onto his tongue,”¹¹¹ and in another narration, “God would make him averse to the worldly realm.” It also comes, “Verily God has an angel in Jerusalem who calls every night, ‘Whoever eats unlawful food, neither expenditure nor justice will be accepted from him!’”¹¹² Expenditure is thus the supererogatory, while justice is the obligatory. The Prophet said, “Whoever buys a garment for ten dirhams, one of which is unlawful, God would not accept his prayer as long as anything [of the garment] is on him.”¹¹³

°Abdullah b. °Umar¹¹⁴ said, “If you prayed until you were cambered like bows, and fasted until you were immobile like pegs, God would not accept this from you unless it were with a barricade of assiduous piety (*wara*°).” And he said, “Worship while eating

¹⁰⁹ Q. XXIII:51.

¹¹⁰ Reported by al-Ṭabarānī and al-Bayhaqī.

¹¹¹ Abū Nu°aym reports a similar Tradition that replaces “whoever eats lawful food” with “whoever maintains his sincerity.”

¹¹² Al-°Irāqī is unable to find a source for this Tradition.

¹¹³ Reported by Aḥmad with a weak chain of narration. *Musnad Aḥmad, Musnad al-Mukthirīn min al-Sahāba*.

¹¹⁴ (d. 73/693): A famous Companion, Traditionist, and scholar, he is son of °Umar b. al-Khattāb, the second Caliph in Islam. Winter, *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires*, 217.

the unlawful is like constructing atop dung.”

Know that the purity of nourishment has a property of immense effect in purifying the heart, illuminating it, and assuring its preparedness for acceptance of the illuminations of knowledge. In it is a secret, the mention of which is beyond the capabilities of this book. It behooves you, however, to understand that the levels of assiduous piety are four:

THE FIRST LEVEL: It is that which makes sinfulness inevitable when infringed upon, and decency vanishes with its cessation. It is what the rulings of the jurists have made inviolable.

THE SECOND LEVEL: The assiduous piety of the righteous, which is caution of that which admits the potentiality of unlawfulness, even if the mufti has made it permissible as based upon the apparent [variables]. This is what the Messenger of God spoke about [when saying], “Leave what gives you doubt for what doesn’t give you doubt.”¹¹⁵

THE THIRD LEVEL: The assiduous piety of the god-fearing. The Prophet said, “The servant does not reach the level of the god-fearing until he leaves what there is no harm in out of caution and fear of what there is harm in.”¹¹⁶ Umar said, “We used to leave nine-tenths of the lawful in fear of falling into the unlawful.” Upon this principle, if a certain Companion were entitled to one hundred dirhams, he would limit himself to ninety-nine, and would leave one as a barrier between him and the Hellfire out of fear of extravagance.

Another would take whatever he was taking sans a seed, and would give whatever he

¹¹⁵ Reported by al-Nisā’ī, *Sunan al-Nisā’ī*, *Kitāb al-Ashriba* #5729.

¹¹⁶ Al-Tirmidhī reports a closely worded Tradition with a good chain of narrators. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Sifat ‘l-Qiyāma* #2639.

was giving with an extra seed. As such, °Umar b. °Abd al-°Azīz¹¹⁷ would pinch his nose out of caution of the scent of musk from the public exchequer that was being distributed in front of him, saying, “Is it not enjoyed except by its scent?!”

Along these lines, one must assiduously abstain from ornamentation and food [that stirs] the carnal appetites out of fear that the soul (*nafs*) will become overpowering and thereby call him to the forbidden desires.

Along these lines is abstaining from looking at the self-adorning of worldly people, for it no doubt stirs the heralds of worldly desire, and as such, God says, *Nor strain thine eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to parties of them, the splendor of the life of this world.*¹¹⁸ As such, Jesus the son of Mary said, “Do not look to the wealth of worldly people, for the luster of their wealth steals the sweetness of your faith. As such, the pious predecessors have said, “He who’s garment is soft (*raqqa thawbuh*), his religion is weak (*raqqa dīnuh*).”

Thus, the lawful that is permissible, pure, and good, is every lawful thing that is disassociated from the likes of these contraventions, while one is not wary of harm in them.

THE FOURTH LEVEL: The assiduous piety of the saints (*ṣiddīqīn*); that is, caution of all that physical strength for the obedience of God is not intended by partaking of it, or what the components of which may have been infiltrated by disobedience.

Along these lines is what has been narrated, that Dhū ‘l-Nūn al-Miṣrī¹¹⁹ was imprisoned and famished, so a righteous woman sent him food from the purest of her wealth by

¹¹⁷ (d. 101/720): A Follower renowned for his piety and just rule. He is known as the “fifth” Rightly-Guided Caliph. Winter, *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires*, 222.

¹¹⁸ Q. XX:131.

¹¹⁹ (d. 245/859): A well-known sage of Nubian origins who lived during the first half of the Abbasid dynasty. Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller*, 1045.

way of the warden. He thus did not eat of it, claiming that it had come to him on the platter of a tyrant, i.e. the hand of the warden.

Along these lines, Bishr al- Ḥāfi¹²⁰ would not drink water from the rivers that the sultans dug. Another would extinguish a lamp that a page from a tyrant's house had lighted. Another drank medicine, so his wife advised him to walk and pace about, to which he said, "This walking, I do not know of a reasonable way to account for it, and I take account of myself for all of my movements."

This is the rank of peoples who have fulfilled His words, *Say: "Who then sent down the Book which Moses brought? A light and guidance to man: But ye make it into (separate) sheets for show, while ye conceal much (of its content): therein were ye taught that which ye knew not – neither ye nor your fathers."* *Say: "God sent it down," then leave them to plunge in vain discourse and trifling.*¹²¹ So give up as unlawful all that is not for the sake of God – though this is not your bailiwick, nor that of your counselor. Therefore, advance gradually and strive to fulfill [your covenant] with the assiduous piety of abstention according to which the jurists rule.

In fact, it behooves you to append two things to this:

THE FIRST: That you be wary of the areas of [the jurists'] delusions, and you do not pay attention to their words, "Whoever bestows his wealth to his wife at the end of the year, and then requests her wealth from her, the alms tax is no longer obligatory upon them both." For if they mean by this that the sultan will not demand the alms tax from them since the object of his jurisdiction is the outward form of the property, then this is

¹²⁰ (d. 227/841): A companion of Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ and a central personality of early Sufism in his own right. Winter, *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires*, 214.

¹²¹ Q. VI:91.

correct. The level and rulings of the jurists is a reference to what is connected to outward forms. Thus, they rule in favor of absolution from the alms tax when the demand of the tax collector (*sāʿī*) ceases, and they rule in favor of a valid prayer when the killing of the sultan is averted by the motions of a semblance of the prayer.

[This is] since they have no other legislation before them except that which the sultan uses politically to regulate the sphere of worldly subsistence, which is a way station among many along the road as has been mentioned above.

As for you, if you were to consider what would benefit you tomorrow before the Compeller (*al-jabbār*) of the haughty (*jabābira*) and the Sovereign (*al-sulṭān*) of sultans, you would not pay attention to this. Know that the objective of the alms tax is to eliminate the vice of niggardliness, for surely it is ruinous, as the Messenger of God said, “Three are ruinous: avarice that is obeyed (*muṭāʿ*), caprice that is followed, and one’s self-conceit.”¹²² Bestowing the alms-taxable wealth for the sake of averting the alms tax makes one’s avarice obeyed, for it becomes obeyed through his compliance with what necessitates it, while before this it was not obeyed. How can this then be a means of salvation?

Similarly, whoever spoils relations with his wife such that she parts herself from her dower for his sake, the dower is still not lawful for him before God, even if the jurist rules for the nullification of the dower and the validity of absolution. For God says, *But if [the women], of their own good pleasure, remit any part of it to you, take it and enjoy it*

¹²² This Tradition has been reported by al-Barrāz, al-Bayhaqī, Abū Nuʿaym and others with a weak chain of transmission.

with right good cheer,¹²³ while this is not of willing, good pleasure (*tayyibat 'l-nafs*), but rather of willing, good pretense (*qālib*). The jurist does not distinguish between the two, because his passion is for cutting off outward disputes and nothing else.

Bloodletting and drinking unpleasant medicine is not with willing, good pleasure; rather, it is with willing, good pretence. Similar to this is everything that one's nature detests while the intellect desires it for a greater physical benefit in the end. This subject is long, and its foundation is that you not appropriate the money of others unless with unconditional, genuine consent.

It behooves you not to consume what you solicit [from another]. If you do ask, be wary of asking in public, for perhaps he would give it out of embarrassment, and that is not associated with consent. No doubt, the embarrassed person prefers the sting of losing property to the sting of embarrassment: there is no difference in your taking his wealth by lashing his exterior with the whip, and taking it by lashing his interior with the whip of embarrassment – both are misappropriation.

Also, be wary of his giving you in the name of religion, which is that he gives you thinking that you are assiduously pious and god-fearing. Hence, you consume in the name of religion, while a condition of its lawfulness is that there not be something hidden inside you that if revealed to the giver would preclude his giving. There is no difference between one who takes in the name of Sufism and piety (*taqwā*) while internally he is no such thing, and one who claims to be an Alawite¹²⁴ that he may be given [something] while he is lying. All of this is unlawful according to those of spiritual insight (*baṣīra*),

¹²³ Q. IV:4.

¹²⁴ That is, having a genealogical connection to Muhammad through one of the two children of his cousin and son-in-law ʿAlī.

even if the jurist rules it lawful based upon the outward form while using the noble Sacred Law that merely looks to the outward form.

THE SECOND: That you consult your heart even if it has [already] delivered you a ruling, for surely sin leaves an impression (*ḥazzāz*)¹²⁵ on the hearts, and then, that which harms you is what is contrived in your heart. As such, the Messenger of God said, “Consult (*istafti*) your heart even if it has delivered you a ruling.”¹²⁶ This secret’s mention will take too long.

Know in short, however, that the peril of the unlawful is the darkening of the heart, while the aim of the lawful is illuminating it; and this derives from your belief and not from the actuality (*nafs*) of the thing believed. Thus, whoever makes love to a woman thinking that she is not his wife,¹²⁷ when in fact she is,¹²⁸ darkening of the heart occurs. If he made love to a woman who is not his wife thinking that she is his wife, darkening of the heart does not occur. The same applies to impurities and purifications, for the influencing factor in illuminating the heart is your design and belief. You have not been commanded to pray, therefore, while your garment is clean, but rather to pray while you believe that it is clean. Thus, perception of purification is an influence in irradiating the heart, even if it is not in accordance with the present reality (*ḥāl*). Likewise, we say, “If one is praying and then remembers that an impurity is on him, the stronger opinion is that he is not obliged to repeat the prayer; for the Prophet removed his shoes during his prayer, because Gabriel told him that there was filth upon them, and he continued

¹²⁵ “Anything that makes an impression in, or upon, the heart, or bosom, causing one to waver or scruple.” Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, entry ḥ-z-z.

¹²⁶ This is a truncated version of a Tradition reported by Aḥmad. *Musnad Aḥmad*, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*.

¹²⁷ *Ajnabīya* could be translated as “a stranger,” but this implies that she is unknown to the man, while the legal term connotes that she is simply not the wife of the man in question.

¹²⁸ *Fa idhā hiyya mankūḥatuh*.

therein.” As such, the matter becomes more difficult for the one afflicted by devilish whisperings, for as long his heart is not at peace with his belief in purity, then it is obligatory for him to scrutinize thoroughly and return [to it] repeatedly. These are a people who have been severe on themselves, so God has been severe on them. They have been destroyed by their scrutinizing, like the Prophet said, “The neurotic (*mutanaṭṭi^ʿūn*) are destroyed.”¹²⁹ Then, the same applies to the lawful: you are a devoted worshipper according to what your heart finds peace in, not according to what the mufti rules in favor of. So consult your heart.

Dare you not be severe on yourself, thus you say, “All the moneys of the world are unlawful: transgressing hands and corrupt transactions have defiled them, hence I am content with grass for the sake of asceticism lest I partake of all of it for the sake of opulence. I do not differentiate in it between lawful and unlawful, rather I know conclusively that, ‘The lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear and between them are doubtful matters.’”¹³⁰

The situation was the same in the time of the Messenger of God and so it will be forever, so take recourse in the secret that we mentioned; for you are not a devoted worshipper according to what is lawful in its actuality, but rather according to what is lawful in your belief, [i.e.] you do not know an obvious reason for its unlawfulness. Hence, the Messenger of God made ritual ablutions from the water-skin of an idolater, while ʿUmar made ritual ablutions from the jorum of a Christian woman. If they had been thirsty, they would have drunk from it, while drinking impure (*najis*) water is unlawful. They held fast

¹²⁹ This Tradition has been reported by Muslim on the authority of Ibn Masʿūd. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-ʿIlm* #6955.

¹³⁰ This latter sentence is a reference to a famous Tradition reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim and is found in al-Nawawī’s book of forty Traditions. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Buyūʿ* #2090.

to the certainty of purification, however, and did not leave it to the neurotic delusions (*tawahhum*) of impurity.

The same applies to all wealth that you encounter in the hand of a man whose state is unknown to you. You are free to buy from him and eat from his hospitality, meliorating your thoughts of a Muslim, for the principle assumption (*aṣl*) is that whatever is in his hand is lawful, while what you encounter in the hand of a man who you know to be righteous is more worthy of your believing it lawful.

Of course, it is obligatory to be wary of what you encounter in the hand of a tyrannical sultan, or a man whom you know to be involved in usury or selling alcohol. It is obligatory to be wary of him until you inquire, scrutinize thoroughly, and know from where it came to him. Then, if the source (*jiha*) of its procurement becomes obvious to you, and it is lawful, you are free to take it, and otherwise no, as contingent on the outer indications, namely, the context of his situation. This is if the majority of his wealth is as such. If the majority of it is lawful, you are free to eat from it, while if you abstained, that is assiduous piety. Thus, some of the envoys of Ibn al-Mubārak¹³¹ wrote to him from Basra asking about transactions with a man who deals with the sultan, to which he replied, “If he deals with none other than the sultan, then don’t deal with him; while if he deals with others also, then deal with him.”

In short, in regard to you, people are in six categories:

THE FIRST: That [a man] be unknown. So eat from his wealth, and caution is not obligatory, rather it is the purest of assiduous piety.

THE SECOND: That you know him as righteous. So eat from him and don’t abstain, for

¹³¹ (d. 181/797): A scholar-saint who studied under Mālik and al-Awzā‘ī. He died in battle against the Byzantines. Winter, *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires*, 217.

assiduously piety in his case is devilish whisperings, while if it leads to offense and alienation, it is disobedience and thus unlawful, in part for the insult therein and in part for your ill thinking (*sū' al-zunn*) of a righteous man.

THE THIRD: That you know him to be associated with tyranny or usury, such that you know all of his wealth, or the majority of it, is unlawful. Such is the case with the tyrannical sultans and their ilk. Their wealth is unlawful.

THE FORTH: That you know that the majority of his wealth is lawful; however it is not free from unlawful sources, such as a man who has a trade and an inheritance while at the same time he is in dealings with the sultan. You are free, therefore, to take of the greater part [of his wealth], though abstaining is from the foremost of assiduous piety.

THE FIFTH: That he be unknown to you, but you see the intimation of tyranny upon him, such as a caftan, a tiara, or the façade of tyranny. This outer intimation demands caution, thus do not eat from his wealth except after thoroughly investigating.

THE SIXTH: That you see upon him the intimation of immorality, not that of tyranny, such as his letting his mustache go long, parting his hair by shaving a section of it... or you see him cursing others, or looking at a woman. Then, if you know him to possess inherited wealth or a trade, his wealth is not proscribed by these (while if his matter is unknown to you, there is gravity in it), for the intimation of immorality is weaker evidentially than that of tyranny. The more obvious evidence, in my opinion however, is that his wealth is not proscribed because what is ostensibly known of his trade (*zāhir al-yad*) and his Islam proves [the legality] of his property in a manner evidentially more obvious than these intimations' proving its unlawfulness. And this [latter] proof is not stronger than the Christians and Zoroastrians' proving the impurity of water, while neither the Messenger

of God nor °Umar took them into consideration.

As for the intimation of tyranny, you must therefore analogize (*tuḍāhī*) that if we saw a gazelle urinating in water, and we subsequently found the water altered in state, it could be a factor of the length of stagnancy, or it could be a factor of the urine. It is compulsory to eschew it assigning it to the obvious reason. Beyond all of that, one must consult his heart; and if he finds wavering in it, then let him eschew it, for sin is that which makes an impression on the hearts and an engraving in the breasts.

Here, however, there is a fine point that those of assiduous piety are heedless of, namely that whenever abstaining is out of assiduous piety or a wavering in the soul, it is not permissible to abstain and inquire such that it offends. Thus, when the unknown person presents you with food, and you ask him, “From where?” he feels alienated and offended, while insulting is unlawful, and ill thinking is unlawful. If you inquire of others such that he knows of it, the insult increases, while if you inquired such that he doesn’t know of it, then you have spied and worsened your suspicions, and suspicion in some cases is a sin.¹³² You are careless of backbiting and indicting, and all of this is unlawful, while abstaining from assiduous piety is not unlawful. You have no [choice] but to abstain with discretion. If it will only bring offense, you are obliged to eat, for pacifying the heart of a Muslim and safeguarding him from offense is more important than assiduous piety. And dare you not be one of the self-deceived devotees who grasp not the subtleties of assiduous piety.

Know that the Messenger of God ate from charity [given to the Companion] Burayra and did not ask about its donor. Gifts were brought to the Messenger of God, and he ac-

¹³² A reference to Q. XLIX:12: *O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much as possible; for suspicion in some cases is a sin.*

cepted without inquiry. Of course, at the beginning of his advent in Medina, he did ask, concerning what was brought to him, “Is it charity or a gift?” since there is no offense in that, and because the context of the situation demanded uniform possibility in charity and conferment.

He would be invited to hospitable receptions and would accept, not inquiring nor were inquiries conveyed, except rarely in a place of doubt.

Then if you say, “If unlawful food were in a market, can anything be bought in that market?” To which I say: if you verify that the unlawful is the greater part thereof, then do not buy except after a thorough investigation. If you know that the unlawful is a large amount but not the greater part, then you are free to buy, and a thorough investigation is part of assiduous piety.

The Messenger of God and his Companions would buy from the markets during their journeys, with their knowledge that people of usury, extortion, and booty-theft were in them. They would not abstain from conducting transactions with them.

This chapter demands a long explanation, and if you so desire, study “The Book of the Lawful and the Unlawful”¹³³ from the books of the *Revival* so you can confirm by its study that nothing has been compiled in its genre like it in examination, extraction, and encompassing of all details.

THE EIGHTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding Upholding the Rights of Muslims and Excellence of Fellowship with Them

It is a pillar of the religion, since the meaning of “religion” is the journey to God. Of the pillars of the journey is excellence of fellowship (*ṣuḥba*) with the travelers throughout

¹³³ Book XIX of the *Revival*, also see “The Ninth Principle” below.

the way stations of the journey. All of creation is on a journey: their years carry them in the way that the ship carries its passengers.

Know that in the world, man may be by himself, or he may be with a select few of his folk, children, family, and neighbors or he may be with the general populace of creation. Hence, these are three situations, and excellence of fellowship is obligatory upon him, as is fulfilling all rights, in each of these situations.

THE FIRST SITUATION: That he be by himself. Let him know that he, in himself, is a world, and that his interior comprises of varieties of creation of different natures and character. Hence, if he does not perfect his fellowship with them nor uphold their rights, he is destroyed. The varieties of the armies of the interior are many, *And none can know the armies of thy Lord, except He.*¹³⁴ We have examined some of this in “The Book of the Wonders of the Heart” in the *Revival*.¹³⁵

We will mention now the chiefs and heads of the armies; thus we say:

You have in you the carnal appetite, through which you are pulled toward your beneficial soul, anger, by which you are repelled from your harmful soul, and intellect, with which you ponder matters and watch over your [internal] subjects.

With respect to your anger, you are a dog; with respect to your carnal appetite, you are a beast, like the horse for example; and with respect to your intellect, you are a king. You are commanded with evenhandedness (*al-ʿadl*) between them, upholding their rights, and seeking recourse with them, so that you may avail yourself of eternal felicity through their assistance.

Thus, if you break the horse, discipline the dog, and subjugate them both to the king,

¹³⁴ Q. LXXIV:31.

¹³⁵ Book XXI of the *Revival*.

victory in what you seek will be made easy for you.

If you subjugate the intellect to contriving stratagems for attaining what the dog commands with its anger and persistence, or the horse with its avidity and greed, approaching ruin, in lieu of realizing the objective of the search, then you have become an upended, sinning, tyrant; for tyranny is to put something in other than its rightful place.

If you were to see a person for whom a king, a dog, and a pig were made obedient, yet he continuously forced the king to prostrate to the pig and the dog, would you see him as a tyrant deserving of damnation?

If [this matter] were unveiled to you in your sleep state or during your annihilation from yourself (as we described in section on the total immersion in God), you would see everyone who obeys his carnal appetites and anger prostrating to a dog and a pig – the dog being not a dog in its form but rather in its reality. You see yourself similarly after death, since meanings in the world of the hereafter engender forms, they do not follow them. Everything takes on a form that corresponds to its reality, pursuant to the world of the hereafter. The arrogant are therefore resurrected as small as ants, to be trampled upon by those who accepted and pondered [the truth], while the humble are mighty.

As for this world, it is the world of deceit, for often the meaning of the pig and the dog is lodged in the human form, so don't be deceived by it. Surely this will be unveiled on *the Day that all things secret will be tested*.¹³⁶ You are thus obliged to meliorate your fellowship with your three companions. You, therefore, break the gluttony of your carnal appetite with the impetuosity of anger, while you lessen the excess of anger with the perfidy of the carnal appetite. You set one of the two upon the other, for that is highly profound in rectifying them both, until they yield to the intellect and the law. The intellect

¹³⁶ Q. LXXXVI:9.

makes use of them as far as it benefits from them, just as the hunter makes use of the horse and the dog for an exigency, sheltering them when he has no need. Explaining such disciplining and fellowship is long – we have mentioned it in “The Book of Disciplining the Soul” in *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*.¹³⁷

THE SECOND SITUATION: Your fellowship with the general populace of creation. The lowest level of excellence of fellowship is abstaining from harming them. The Messenger of God said, “The Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand other Muslims are safe.”¹³⁸ Above that is that you serve them (*tanfā’uhum*) and treat them with excellence. The Prophet said, “All people are the dependents of God, while the most beloved of them to God are the ones who best serve His dependents.”¹³⁹ Above that is that you bear harm from them while still treating them with excellence. This is the level of the saints (*ṣiddīqīn*). The Messenger of God said to ‘Alī, “If you desire to outdo the saints, then bond with he who cuts you off, give to him who deprives you, and forgive him who oppresses you.”¹⁴⁰ This is the sum of the matter.

The details of these rights are many. From their totality, we will limit ourselves to twenty apportionments.

ONE: That you do not love for the people except what you love for yourself. The Prophet said, “Whoever would be pleased to be far removed from the Hellfire, then let his aspiration come to him while he bears witness that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God, and let him give to the people what he would love

¹³⁷ Book XXII of the *Revival*.

¹³⁸ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim with a rigorously authenticated chain of transmission. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Īmān* #10.

¹³⁹ Reported by Abū Ya‘lā and al-Ṭabarānī.

¹⁴⁰ Al-Bayhaqī reports a similar Tradition on the authority of Abū Hurayra.

to be given.”¹⁴¹

TWO: That one humble himself to each person, not boasting against him, for *God loveth not any arrogant boaster*.¹⁴² If another is arrogant with him, let him bear it. God says, *Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant*.¹⁴³

THREE: That he honors elders and is merciful to children. The Prophet said, “He is not of us who is not merciful to our youth and does not honor our elderly.”¹⁴⁴ And he said, “Among the acts of exalting God is treating the white-haired Muslim reverentially;”¹⁴⁵ and he said, “No young man honors an elder because of his age except that God appoints for him in his old age such as shall honor him.”¹⁴⁶ This gives him glad tidings of a long life in addition to the reward.

FOUR: That you are cheerful with the entirety of creation and [present] a bright countenance. The Prophet said, “Do you know for whom the Hellfire has been forbidden?” The Companions said, “God and His Messenger know best.” He said, “Upon the easy-going, gentle, amiable, affable one;”¹⁴⁷ and he said, “Verily God loves the mild, amiable one.”¹⁴⁸

FIVE: Redressing discord among the Muslims, even if it is with exaggeration and augmentation in speech. The Prophet said, “He is not a liar who makes peace between two people, thus he speaks good things or he promotes good things;”¹⁴⁹ and he said,

¹⁴¹ Reported by al-Kharā’ī.

¹⁴² Q. XXXI:18.

¹⁴³ Q. VII:199.

¹⁴⁴ Reported by al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Birr wa ‘l-Šilla* #2043.

¹⁴⁵ Abū Dāwūd reports it with a good chain of transmission. *Sunan Abī Dāūd, Kitāb al-Adab* #4845.

¹⁴⁶ A closely worded Tradition has been reported by al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Birr wa ‘l-Šilla* #2154.

¹⁴⁷ *al-‘alā al-hayyin al-layyin al-sahl al-qarīb*. A closely worded Tradition has been reported by al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb Šifat ‘l-Qiyāma* #2676.

¹⁴⁸ Al-Bayhaqī reports it with a weak chain of transmission.

¹⁴⁹ Reported by Abū Dāūd. *Sunan Abī Dāūd, Kitāb al-Adab* #4922.

“Shall I not inform you of what is better than the station (*daraja*) of fasting, prayer, and charity?” The Companions said, “Of course, O Messenger of God!” He said, “Redressing discord; while the deterioration of discord is that which rends all (*al-hāliqa*).”¹⁵⁰

SIX: That you do not listen to the calumnies of the people against one another, and you do not convey to some what you hear from others. The Prophet said, “A slanderer will not enter Paradise.”¹⁵¹ It is said, “He who bears tales (*namma*) to you, bears tales about you.”

SEVEN: That you not exceed three days of evading [another] after being alienated. The Prophet said, “It is not lawful for a Muslim to evade his brother Muslim beyond three [days];”¹⁵² and he said, “Whoever pardons a Muslim for his fault, God will pardon his fault on the Day of Resurrection.”¹⁵³

EIGHT: That you treat with excellence each person, both the deserving and otherwise. The Prophet said, “Do kindness (*marʿūf*) to the one deserving of it and to the one undeserving of it; for if you reach the one deserving of it, then so be it, while if you do not reach the one deserving of it, then you are among the deserving ones.”¹⁵⁴

NINE: That you comport yourself with each class (*ṣanf*) according to their characters, and you do not expect from the ignorant and the stupid what you would from the pious scholar. David said, “O my God! How do I get the people to love me and to submit to the matter between You and me?” So God revealed to him, “Comport yourself with the folk of the world according to the character of the world, and comport yourself with the folk

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* #4921.

¹⁵¹ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Adab* #6125.

¹⁵² Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Isti'dhān* #6309.

¹⁵³ Reported by Ibn Mājah. *Sunan Ibn Mājah, Kitāb al-Tijārāt* #2283.

¹⁵⁴ Al-Dāraquṭnī reports it with a weak chain of transmission.

of the hereafter according to the character of the hereafter.”

TEN: That you treat people according to their standings (*manāzil*). Thus you increase in your reverential treatment of the person of high standing, even if his standing be of the world, for the Messenger of God spread out his shawl for one of these, saying, “If the nobleman of a people comes to you, treat him with reverence.”¹⁵⁵

ELEVEN: That you conceal the faults (*‘awrāt*) of the Muslims. The Prophet said, “No man sees a fault in his brother Muslim and conceals it except that he enters Paradise;”¹⁵⁶ and he said, “O you who believe with the tongue though faith has yet to enter your heart! Do not backbite other Muslims and do not pursue their faults. For he who pursues the fault of his brother Muslim, God pursues his fault; and he whose fault God pursues, He scandalizes him though he be inside his own house.”¹⁵⁷

TWELVE: That you fear the places of suspicion in order to preserve the peoples’ hearts from ill thinking and their tongues from backbiting. It has been narrated, “Fear the places of suspicion!”¹⁵⁸ The Messenger of God was talking with one of his wives, when a man passed by, so he saluted him and when he passed, he called him back and said, “O so-and-so! This is my wife, Ṣafīya.” He replied, “O Messenger of God! Whatever I may think about others, surely I don’t think it about you!” He then said, “Verily Satan courses with the blood in the sons of Adam.”¹⁵⁹

THIRTEEN: That you strive to resolve the exigencies of the Muslims even if it be through intercession. The Prophet said, “Intercede before me and you will be rewarded.

¹⁵⁵ Reported by Ibn Mājah. *Sunan Ibn Mājah, Kitāb al-Adab* #3843.

¹⁵⁶ Al-Ṭabarānī reports it with a weak chain of transmission.

¹⁵⁷ A closely worded Tradition is reported by al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Birr wa ‘l-Ṣilla* #2164.

¹⁵⁸ Al-Zabīdī reports that a similar statement is attributed to ‘Umar.

¹⁵⁹ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-Salām* #5807.

Surely I desire such a thing so I put it off that you may intercede before me and be rewarded;”¹⁶⁰ and he said, “Whoever walks for the need of his brother Muslim for an hour of any evening or day, whether he resolves it or not, it is better for him than secluding himself in the mosque for two months;”¹⁶¹ and he said, “Your attending to your brother Muslim for an hour is better than secluding yourself in the mosque for a year.”¹⁶²

FOURTEEN: That you hasten with salutations upon every Muslim and you shake hands with him such that the merit of initiation will be yours. The Messenger of God said, “If two Muslims meet and shake hands, seventy mercies are distributed between them – sixty-nine for the more righteous of them.”¹⁶³

FIFTEEN: That one aid his brother Muslim in his absence thereby defending his honor and wealth. The Messenger of God said, “No one aids a Muslim in a place where his honor is being defamed or his esteem is being seized upon except that God aids him in a spot where he would love His succor; and no one forsakes a Muslim in a place where his esteem is being defamed except that God forsakes him in a place where he would love His succor.”¹⁶⁴

SIXTEEN: That you treat wicked folk with gentle courtesy in order to be safe from them. ^ʿĀ’isha said, “A man sought permission to enter upon the Messenger of God, so he said, ‘Let him in, for the worst of men is the son of such-and-such people (or the brother of such-and-such people).’ When he entered, [the Prophet] spoke gently with him. I thereupon asked, ‘O Messenger of God! You said such things and then you were gentle

¹⁶⁰ Reported by Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasā’ī. The first part is actually the words of the Companion Mu^ʿāwīya. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Adab* #5134.

¹⁶¹ Al-Ḥākim reports it with a rigorously authentic chain of transmission.

¹⁶² Reported by al-Daylamī on the authority of Anas with a slight variation in its wording.

¹⁶³ Al-Ṭabarānī reports it with a weak chain of transmission.

¹⁶⁴ A closely worded Tradition is reported by Abū Dāwūd. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Adab* #4886.

with him in your words?’ Thus he said, ‘O ʿĀ’isha! No doubt the vilest of people in station before God is the one who the people leave or forsake out of fear of his indecencies.’¹⁶⁵ And he said, “Whatever one safeguards his honor with is charity for him;”¹⁶⁶ and he said, “Mix with the people in their actions, but separate from them in heart (*bi ʿl-qulūb*).”¹⁶⁷

SEVENTEEN: That you are cautious of the assemblies of the affluent, while you frequent the assemblies of the poor. The Prophet said, “Be you ware of the assemblies of the dead.” It was asked, “And who are they?” He said, “The affluent;”¹⁶⁸ and he said, “O God! Let me live poor, let me die poor, and resurrect me among the poor!”¹⁶⁹ If Solomon saw a poor person in the mosque, he would sit with him, saying, “A poor person is sitting with a poor person.” Moses said, “O my God! Where should I seek You?” He said, “With those whose hearts are broken for my sake.”

EIGHTEEN: That one sit only with the one who gives him benefit in his religion, or one who benefits from him. As for the people of heedlessness, he is cautious of them. The Prophet said, “Solitude is better than the evil consort, while the righteous consort is better than solitude.”¹⁷⁰ If he frequents the assemblies of the heedless, then with each sitting, something of his religion decreases. Let him suppose that if each one of them were to take from him, with each sitting, a thread from his garment, or a hair from that of his beard, how cautious would he be of [them] out of fear that he may become beardless and

¹⁶⁵ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Adab* #6123.

¹⁶⁶ Reported by Abū Yaʿlā with a weak chain of transmission.

¹⁶⁷ A similar Tradition is reported by al-Ṭabarānī with a good chain of transmission.

¹⁶⁸ Al-Ḥākim reports it with a rigorously authentic chain of transmission. Also see *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Libās* #1891.

¹⁶⁹ Al-Ḥākim and Ibn Mājah report it with a rigorously authentic chain of transmission. *Sunan Ibn Mājah, Kitāb al-Zuhd* #4265.

¹⁷⁰ Reported by al-Ḥākim and al-Bayhaqī.

naked before long! Caution for the sake of the religion is therefore worthier.

NINETEEN: That one visit their sick, attend their funeral prayers, visit their graves, pray for them in their absence, supplicate for the sneezer,¹⁷¹ give the people their rights over himself, give council when solicited, and all the other rights of which the accounts are numerous and concerning which we have preferred abridgment.

TWENTY: The sum total is that you act in their regard as you would like that your regard be acted upon, of excellence, concern, and abstaining from harm.

THE THIRD SITUATION: Fellowship with those who are united by special privilege, beyond the blanket (*ʿumūm*) of Islam, such as neighborhood, kinship, or mastership. The Prophet said, “If you stone your neighbor’s dog, you have caused him harm;”¹⁷² and he said, “The first two disputants [to appear before God] on the Day of Resurrection are two neighbors.”¹⁷³ It was said to him, “So-and-so fasts all day and prays all night and she causes her neighbor harm.” He replied, “She is in the Hellfire.”¹⁷⁴

He said, “Do you realize what the neighbor’s right is? If he seeks your help, you help him; if he asks you for a loan, you lend him; if he is in need, you are generous with him; if he becomes sick, you visit him; if he dies, you follow his funeral procession; if good befalls him, you congratulate him, while if a misfortune befalls him, you console him; you are not presumptuous with him in your constructing thus you block the wind from him, except with his permission; if you buy fruit, give him some, and if you don’t, then bring it inside discreetly, and your child must not go outside with it and thereby gall his

¹⁷¹ Specifically, to say, “May God have mercy on you!” after a person sneezes.

¹⁷² Al-ʿIrāqī can find no source for this Tradition.

¹⁷³ Aḥmad and al-Ṭabarānī report it with a weak chain of transmission. *Musnad Aḥmad*, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*.

¹⁷⁴ Aḥmad and al-Ḥākim report it with a rigorously authenticated chain of transmission. *Musnad Aḥmad*, *Musnad al-Mukthirīn*.

child with it; do not trouble him with the aroma of your cooking pot unless you serve him from it. Do you realize what the neighbor's right is? By Him who holds my soul in His hands, none reaches the neighbor's right except he who God has favored with His mercy!"¹⁷⁵

As for kinship, the Prophet has said, "God says, 'I am the Most Compassionate (*al-raḥmān*), and this is the bond of kinship (*al-raḥim*). I have derived a name for it from my name;¹⁷⁶ therefore whoever makes it close, I shall make him close, and whoever severs it, I shall cut him off."¹⁷⁷ And the Prophet said, "Tying the bond of kinship increases one's life;"¹⁷⁸ and he said, "The fragrance of Paradise lies at a distance of five hundred years, though neither a hinderer nor a severer of the bond of kinship will experience its smell;"¹⁷⁹ and he said, "Filial piety to one's parents is better than prayer, fasting, the greater and lesser pilgrimages, and striving in the path of God."¹⁸⁰ He said, "Filial piety to one's mother is two fold over that to one's father;"¹⁸¹ and he said (may God bless him and grant him peace), "Treat your children equally in gift-giving."¹⁸²

As for the slaves (*mamlūk*), the Prophet has said concerning them, "Fear God in what your right hands possess! Feed them from what you eat, clothe them from what you wear, and do not burden them in work with what they cannot bear; for surely God has given you dominion over them, and if He wills, He can give them dominion over you."¹⁸³ And

¹⁷⁵ Al-Khurā'ī reports it with a weak chain of transmission.

¹⁷⁶ The two words (*al-raḥmān* and *al-raḥim*) are derived from the same trilateral root, r-ḥ-m.

¹⁷⁷ Reported by Abū Dāūd. *Sunan Abī Dāūd, Kitāb al-Zakā* #1696.

¹⁷⁸ Reported by al-Qaḍā'ī.

¹⁷⁹ I have not been able to find this Tradition in any of the canonical collections. Aḥmad reports a Tradition with a similar meaning.

¹⁸⁰ Al-ʿIrāqī can find no origin for this particular Tradition.

¹⁸¹ I have not been able to find the particular wording of this Tradition in any of the canonical collections.

¹⁸² Reported by al-Ṭabarānī.

¹⁸³ This Tradition is a composite of other Traditions reported by al-Bukhārī in his *al-Adab al-Mufrad*.

he said, “When any of you suffices for his slave with food, then he should suffice for his warmth and medical treatment. He should call him near, and then tell him to sit and eat with him, or let him take a morsel, dip it in gravy, place it in his hand, and say, ‘Eat this.’”¹⁸⁴ He was asked, “How many times should we pardon the slave during the day and night?” He said, “Seventy times.”¹⁸⁵ The sum of the slave’s right is that one give him a share in his food and clothing, he does not burden him above his capacity, he pardons his slips, he does not look to him with an eye of arrogance or contempt, and he teaches him the exigencies of his religion.

As for the rights of one’s wife, they are more than this, since in addition to upholding her necessities, excellence of intimacy and teasing pleasantries (*muṭāyaba*) are [also] his duty toward her. The Messenger of God said, “The best of you is the best toward his family, and I am the best of you toward my family.”¹⁸⁶ He was among the most jovial of people with his womenfolk, and the narrations of that are too many to count.

Among the foundations of the religion concerning the matter of fellowship is brotherhood (*ittikhādh al-ikhwān*) for the sake of God. God said to some of His prophets, “As for your asceticism in the world, you have thus hastened the repose; as for your exclusive dedication to Me, you have thus strengthened yourself through Me. Have you then taken a friend for My sake? And have you taken an enemy for My sake?” The Prophet said, “God will say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘Where are the people who loved one another for the sake of My Majesty? Today I shall shade them in My shade on the day that there

¹⁸⁴ Al-Tirmidhī reports a closely worded tradition. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Aḥima* #1972. See also *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-ʿItq* #2596.

¹⁸⁵ Abū Dāwūd reports a closely worded Tradition. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Adab* #5166.

¹⁸⁶ Reported by al-Tirmidhī with a rigorously authenticated chain of transmission. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Manāqib* #4269.

is no shade save Mine.”¹⁸⁷ God revealed to Jesus, “If you were to worship me with the worship of the folk of the heavens and the earth, while there is no love for the sake of God, and there is no hatred for the sake of God, that would avail you nothing.” The Prophet said, “Surely around the Thrown are pulpits of light, upon which are people with clothing of light; their faces are light. They are neither of the prophets nor the martyrs, and the prophets and martyrs will envy them.” The Companions said, “O Messenger of God! Disclose them (*hallihim*) for us: who are they?” So he said, “The people who loved one another for the sake of God, and those who sit together for the sake of God, and those who visit one another for the sake of God.”¹⁸⁸

Know that all love that cannot be conceived separate from belief in God and the Last Day is love for the sake of God (Exalted is He!). However, it is on two levels:

THE FIRST: That you love him in order to attain from him a portion that will carry you to the hereafter, such as your love for your teacher or your shaykh, or even your student who through his education disseminates your knowledge, or even your servant who frees your heart from the tidying of your house and the washing of your garment that it may, by way of him, devote itself exclusively to the obedience of God, or the one who spends his wealth upon you, whenever your objective in that is to empty the heart for the worship of God.

THE SECOND (and it is loftier): That you love him because he is beloved before God and he loves God. If no objective of yours in the world or the hereafter is connected with him, of a science or knowledge of religion or otherwise, this is more complete; for love,

¹⁸⁷ Reported by Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurayra. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-Birr wa 'l-Ṣilla wa 'l-Adab* #6713.

¹⁸⁸ The first clause of this Tradition is reported by al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Zuhd* #2567.

when it predominates, crosses over consequently to all who are from the beloved, such that man loves the lover of his beloved and the beloved of his beloved. What's more, he distinguishes between the dog on his beloved's road and all other dogs. The validity (*sirāya*) of love is but according to its predomination, and whoever loves God, it is not possible for him to not love His righteous servants with whom He is pleased, except that this might intensify, such that he undertakes to behave toward them as he behaves toward himself; or rather he prefers them over himself, though he might come up short in that. Their merit in his sight breaks down according to his level and power.

Similarly, he inevitably hates whoever disobeys Him and contravenes His order. The effect of this appears in his keeping aloof and drifting away from [such a person], or his scowling face upon seeing him. As such, the Prophet said, "O God! Do not let a transgressor get an upper hand on me such that my heart loves him!"¹⁸⁹ out of wariness that such may detract from his hating for the sake of God.

In general, whoever does not encounter in his soul love for the sake of God and hatred for the sake of God, according to these causes, he is of weak faith. This has a detailing and an actualization, so search it out in "The Book of Fellowship and Brotherhood for the Sake of God" in *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*.¹⁹⁰

THE NINTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding Enjoining Right and Forbidding Wrong

God (Exalted is He!) says, *Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity;*¹⁹¹ and He says, *The believers, men and women, are protectors, one of an-*

¹⁸⁹ Al-Daylamī and others report this Tradition with a weak chain of transmission.

¹⁹⁰ Book XV of the *Revival*.

¹⁹¹ Q. III:103.

other;¹⁹² and He says, *Nor did they forbid one another the iniquities which they committed: evil indeed were the deeds which they did.*¹⁹³ Abū

Abū Bakr (may God be pleased with him) said in his sermon, “O people! No doubt you recite this verse while you interpret it contrary to its correct interpretation: *O ye who believe! Guard your own souls: If ye follow (right) guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who stray,*¹⁹⁴ while surely I have heard the Messenger of God saying, ‘No people does acts of disobedience while among them is one capable of censuring them though he does not, except that God all but afflicts the lot of them (*ya‘ummahum*) with a punishment of His.’”¹⁹⁵ ‘Ā’isha said, “The Messenger of God said, ‘The people of a village of eighteen thousand were afflicted with a punishment, while their deeds were those of the prophets.’ The Companions said, ‘O Messenger of God! How can that be?’ He said, ‘They would not get angry for the sake of God, and they would not enjoin right and forbid wrong.’”¹⁹⁶

Anyone who witnesses a wrong and does not censure it and he remains silent about it, he is a partner in it. Thus, the listener is the backbiter’s partner. This follows for all types of disobedience, to the extent of even [sitting] in assemblies of those wearing silk brocade, or gold rings, or sitting upon silk. [Similar is the case with] sitting in a house or bathhouse with images on its walls, or in which are vessels of silver or gold, or sitting in a mosque in which the people spoil their prayer, not fully completing the bowing and prostrating, or sitting in an assembly of exhortation in which there is the mention of a heretical innovation, or an assembly of debate and arguing in which insulting and alienating

¹⁹² Q. IX:71.

¹⁹³ Q. V:79.

¹⁹⁴ Q. V:105.

¹⁹⁵ Abū Dāūd reports a closely worded Tradition. *Sunan Abī Dāūd, Kitāb al-Mulāḥim* #4340.

¹⁹⁶ Al-Zabīdī says that Ibn Abī ‘l-Dunyā reports this Tradition.

take place by way of insolence and abuse.

In general, whoever mixes with the people, his disobedience multiplies, though he may be God-fearing in his soul, save if he abandons flattery and the critic's reproach does not get the better of him while in the way of God. He labors in regulating and prohibiting. This obligation but drops from him in two instances:

THE FIRST: He knows that if he censures, [the person] would neither heed him nor would he abandon the wrong, and he would look to him with the eye of mockery. This accounts for the majority of the wrongs committed by the jurists and those who claim to be of the people of religion. Remaining silent is permissible here, however it is commendable to upbraid with the tongue, thereby proclaiming the standard of the religion. Whenever one is incapable of anything beyond upbraiding with the tongue, then he must separate himself from that place. Willfully watching disobedience is, therefore, not permissible, and whoever sits in an assembly of drinking, he is a sinner even if he does not drink, while whoever sits with a backbiter, or one who wears silk, or one who consumes interest money or unlawful income, he is a sinner, so let him rise from his place.

THE SECOND: He knows that he is capable of prohibiting the wrong in that he sees a bottle of alcohol so he flings it and it breaks, or he wrests the musical instrument from another's hand and smashes it on the ground. He knows, however, that he will be beaten or attacked in a most-reprehensible manner, then here, regulating is commendable according to God's words, *And forbid what is wrong: And bear with patient constancy whate'er betide thee*,¹⁹⁷ and it is not compulsory, though the reprehensible outcome that afflicts him has numerous levels, which would take too long to explore. We have men-

¹⁹⁷ Q. XXXI:17.

tioned them in “The Book of Enjoining Right” from the *Revival*.¹⁹⁸

In summation, the obligation does not drop except through a reprehensible outcome to his body by way of beating, or to his wealth by way of impoverishment, or to his dignity by way of condescension in a manner that detracts from his integrity (*murū'a*).

As for the fear of estrangement from the one censured, fear of his opposing him with his tongue or through his enmity toward him, or imagining his laboring against him in the future with what would trouble him or obstruct between him and an increase in good that he was expecting, all of these are delusions and feeble concerns: the obligation does not drop because of them.

The backbone (*ʿumda*) of regulating is two things:

THE FIRST: Gentleness and graciousness, and beginning the exhortation in a soft manner, not in a manner fierce, disdainful, and humiliating through the impudence of righteousness, for no doubt that gives assurance to the caller of disobedience, and carries the disobedient one to rejection and insult. Then, if he causes harm to [the exhorter] while he is not excellent of character, [the latter] would grow angry for his own sake, abandoning censure for the sake of God, and would labor to heal his rancor toward him, thereby becoming disobedient himself. Rather, it behooves him to be averse to regulating, desiring that he abandon disobedience by means of another's words. For, if he fancies that he himself should be the opposing force, it owes to what is in his soul of the impudence of satisfaction and his self-esteem.

The Prophet said, “None should enjoin right and forbid wrong except one gentlemanly (*rafiq*) in what he enjoins and gentle-mannered in what he forbids, one forbearing in what he enjoins and forbearing in what he forbids, and one understanding (*faqīh*)

¹⁹⁸ Book XIX in the *Revival*.

of what he enjoins and understanding of what he forbids.”¹⁹⁹

A man exhorted the Caliph al-Ma'mūn with ferocity, so he said, “O man! Be gentle! For God sent someone better than you too someone worse than me and still ordered him with gentleness; saying, *But speak to him mildly; perchance he may take warning or fear God.*”²⁰⁰ Abū Umāma al-Bāhili²⁰¹ narrated that a young man came to the Prophet and said, “Will you permit me to partake in adultery?” So the people shouted at him, and the Prophet said, “Calm down! Calm down! Come closer to me.” So he came closer, and he said, “Would you fancy such a thing for your mother?” [The young man] replied, “No! And may God make me your ransom!” He said, “Similarly, the people do not fancy such a thing for their mothers.” Then he asked, “Would you fancy it for your daughter?” He replied, “No!” and he said, “Similarly, the people do not fancy it for their daughters,” as such he mentioned his sister and aunts to him while saying, “Similarly, the people don't fancy such a thing.” Then he placed his hand on the young man's breast and said, “O God! Cleanse his heart, forgive his sin, and fortify his private parts from evil!”²⁰² After that, nothing was more despised to him than adultery.

Someone said to Fuḍayl,²⁰³ “Sufyān b. °Uyayna²⁰⁴ accepted the sultan's stipends!” He replied, “He took nothing more than his due, and then he forsook [the sultan] and re-

¹⁹⁹ Al-°Irāqī is unable to find the source of this Tradition, though a somewhat similar narration has been reported by al-Bayhaqī.

²⁰⁰ Q. XX:44. The Caliph is referring to Moses's deputation to Pharaoh.

²⁰¹ (d. 81/700 or 86/705): A Companion famous for his proselytizing the Arab tribes of the desert. He was reported to be the last Companion to die in Syria. Winter, *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, 284.

²⁰² Aḥmad reports this Tradition with a rigorously authenticated chain of transmission. *Musnad Aḥmad, Bāqī Musnad al-Anṣār*.

²⁰³ Fuḍayl b. °Iyāḍ (d. 187/803): A repentant brigand who later became a renowned Traditionalist and ascetic, in addition to his role as a pioneer of early Sufism. Winter, *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, 291.

²⁰⁴ (d. 198/813): A celebrated Traditionalist who studied under al-Zuhrī. Winter, *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, 296.

proved him gently, saying, ‘O Abū ʿAlī!²⁰⁵ If we are to not be of the righteous, then at least we love the righteous!’

THE SECOND: That the regulator has begun with himself, thereby refining his soul and abandoning what he forbids first. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī²⁰⁶ said, “If you enjoin right, then be among the most observant people of it, or otherwise you are destroyed.” This is the worthier [state] in order that his speech may benefit, for otherwise he will be ridiculed for it. This is not a binding condition, rather regulating is permissible for the disobedient person as well. Anas²⁰⁷ said, “We said, ‘O Messenger of God! Shall we not enjoin right until we act upon it completely, and shall we not forbid wrong until eschew it completely?’ He said, ‘Indeed not! Enjoin right even if you do not act upon it completely, and forbid wrong even if you do not eschew it completely!’”²⁰⁸

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said, “[The Prophet] desires that Satan not triumph over you through this detail,”²⁰⁹ namely that you not enjoin right until you implement it completely (meaning that this leads to the closing of the door of regulating). For who is the one impervious to disobedience?

THE TENTH PRINCIPLE: Regarding Following the Precedent (*Sunna*)

Know that the key to felicity is [in] following the Precedent and imitating the Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace) in the totality of his betakings and withdrawals, motions and quiescence, even in the cast (*ḥayʿa*) of his eating, rising,

²⁰⁵ i.e the sultan.

²⁰⁶ (d. 110/728): A Follower and Traditionist, he was the most celebrated of the early Sufis. Winter, *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires*, 215.

²⁰⁷ (d. 91/710): A Companion, personal servant of the Prophet, and major transmitter of Traditions. Winter, *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires*, 213.

²⁰⁸ Reported by al-Ṭabarānī.

²⁰⁹ While the editors’ punctuation implies that the quote continues until the end of the paragraph, the language after the first clause seems to be that of the author.

sleeping, and speaking. I am not saying this in regard to his etiquette in the modes of his worship only, for there is no validity to omitting his precedents that appear therein, rather this applies to all mundane matters, and by way of it, following in an absolute sense takes place. God says, *Say: "If ye do love God, follow me: God will love you;*²¹⁰ and He says, *So take what the Messenger gives you, and refrain from what he prohibits you.*²¹¹

Thus, you must don your pants sitting, tie your turban standing, put on your right shoe first, eat with your right hand, and clip your nails beginning with the right-hand index finger and ending with its thumb; with the feet, you begin with the small toe of the right foot and end with the small toe of the left foot. The same applies to the totality of his motions and quiescence. Hence, Muḥammad b. Aslam²¹² would not eat watermelon because the Messenger of God's method of eating it had not been conveyed to him. Another person was absent-minded and thus donned his sock with his left foot first. He expiated for that with a *kurr* (6,000 kilograms) of wheat [in charity].

It therefore does not behoove you to be negligent in implementing this, saying, "This is what is simply connected with mundane matters, so following therein is meaningless," for that would close a great door for you from the doors of felicity.

Perhaps you now crave to comprehend the incentive for following [the Precedence] in these actions, while you consider it unlikely that beneath it lies an important matter that necessitates such great severity [towards the one] contravening it.

Know that mentioning the secret of each of these precedents is long – this book cannot hold its explanation. It behooves you, however, to understand that it can be con-

²¹⁰ Q. III:31.

²¹¹ Q. LIX:7.

²¹² That is Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī (d. 242/856): A Traditionist known for his innovative research in the subject of weak Traditions. Winter, *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, 302.

densed into three types of secrets:

THE FIRST SECRET: We have clearly apprised you in several places of the connection between the kingdom and the dominion, and between the limbs and the heart, and the method by which the heart is affected by the work of the limbs. For surely the heart is like the mirror, and the realities of truth are not made manifest within it except through its burnishing, illumining, and rectification (*ta^c dīl*).

As for its burnishing, it is through eliminating the foulness of the carnal appetites and the turbidity of blameworthy character.

As for its illumining, it is through the illuminations of remembrance and knowledge. Sincere worship assists in this when performed with complete attendance in accordance with the Precedent.

As for its rectification, it is through conforming to the law of probity in the totality of the limbs' motions, since the hand is not attached to the heart such that it aspires by way of [the heart's] rectification, nor does it bring about in [the heart] a sound, equable cast (*hay'a*) devoid of deviation. Free disposal of the heart is simply by way of rectifying the limbs and rectifying their motions, and for this reason, the world is the plantation of the hereafter. Also for this reason, tremendous is the misery of he who dies before rectifying [his heart], since the path of rectification is occluded with death for the heart's connection with the limbs has been severed. Whenever the motions of the limbs (and what's more the motions of the cerebrations as well) are balanced according to the scale of probity, there occurs in the heart an equitable, level cast, which is prepared to accept realities through the qualification of soundness and uprightness, just as the equable mirror is prepared to resemble images in a manner sound, without deviation.

The meaning of probity: putting things in their places. Its example is that the cardinal directions are four, for instance, while the direction of prayer (*qibla*) has been singled out with ennoblement. Thus, probity is that it is faced in the states of remembrance of God, worship, and ritual ablutions, and that you turn away from it when relieving yourself, and exposing your nakedness, thereby demonstrating a superiority that its superlative nature manifests.

The right hand has an advance on the left hand, generally owing to its superiority in strength. Thus, probity is that you favor it over the left hand, using it in some of the noble deeds, such as picking up the Koran (*muṣḥaf*) and food, while you leave the left hand for removing excrement and reaching for filthy things.

Clipping the nail, for instance, is to cleanse the hand, and it is thus [a form of] honoring it. Hence, it behooves you to begin with what is more honorable and superior. Perhaps your intellect alone is not able to comprehend the sequence in that and the method of beginning, so follow the Precedent in it and begin with the right-hand index finger. The hand is superior to the foot, and the right hand is superior to the left hand, while the index finger, with which one gestures while saying “There is no god but God,” is superior to the rest of the fingers. After that, you rotate toward the middle finger. The palm has a back and a front, its front being that which faces the other. If you made the palm to face the other hand, the middle finger is toward the middle. Imagine that the two hands are facing one another, and imagine that the fingers are individuals, and then rotate with the scissors from the index finger until you finish with the thumb of the right hand. Such is how the Messenger of God did it.

The wisdom in that is what we have mentioned. If you habituate yourself to uphold-

ing probity in the finer motions, decency and soundness will become a cast firmly grounded in your heart. Its image is level, and for that reason, it is prepared to receive the image of felicity. As such, God says, *When I have fashioned him and blown into him of My spirit.*²¹³ The spirit of God is the key to the doors of felicity, and the blowing of it is only after the fashioning, the reality of which goes back to rectification. In this is a lengthy secret, the explanation of which will take too long, while we simply desire to allude to its foundation.

If you cannot manage to understand its reality, then experience will benefit you. Consider the one who has habituated himself upon veracity: how truthful are his visions generally, for veracity yields in his heart a reliable cast that receives the symbolic representations of the unseen in sound form, during sleep.

And consider how the visions of the liar mislead, and the visions of the poet for that matter, due to his habituating himself upon misleading fantasies; owing to this, the image of his heart deviates. Thus, if you desire to behold the mansion of holiness, abandon the outer and inner sinning, abandon licentious misdeeds (*fawāḥish*), what is outward of them and inward, and abandon lying, even in soliloquy as well: you will find prosperity and salvation.

THE SECOND SECRET: That you know that the effect of some of the things that have an influence on your body can be grasped by the intellect simply by a type of correlation to heat, coldness, dampness, or dryness, such as your saying, “Surely honey harms the hot-headed person and benefits the humor of the cool-headed person (*al-bārid*).” Among them is what is not grasped by analogy and finds expression through special properties

²¹³ Q. XXXVIII:72.

(*khawāṣ*), which themselves are not understood by way of analogy, but rather the starting point of understanding them is revelation or inspiration. Thus, the magnet draws out iron, and the scammony root²¹⁴ draws out the yellow bile from the depths of the veins, not based upon analogy, but rather through a special property understood either through inspiration or reliable experimentation.

Most of the special properties are known through inspiration, while most of their effects, medicinal or otherwise, are recognized before the special properties [themselves].

As such, know that the effects of actions upon the heart can be divided into those the nature (*wajh*) of whose correlation is understood; such as your knowledge that following one's worldly, carnal appetite confirms his connection to this world, and thus he departs from it inverted on his head, turning his face toward it, since in it is his beloved.²¹⁵

Similar is your knowledge that persistence upon the remembrance of God confirms intimacy with Him, making love incumbent, until rapture in Him is greatest upon parting from the world and proceeding toward God; for rapture is according to the extent of love, while love is according to the extent of knowledge and remembrance.

Of actions is what influences one's preparedness for the felicity or the misery of the hereafter by way of a special property not known by analogy: it is not understood except through the light of prophesy. Thus, when you see the Prophet forgoing one of two permissible things in lieu of the other, preferring it over the other while he has power over both of them, then know that he beholds, by way of the light of prophesy, a special prop-

²¹⁴ *Convolvulus scammonia*: "A twinning convolvulus of Asia Minor with a large, thick root," *Merriam Webster*.

²¹⁵ A reference to Q. XVII:97: *We shall gather them together on the Day of Resurrection on their faces*. It is elucidated by a Tradition related by Anas b. Mālik and reported by Bukhārī, "A man said, 'O Messenger of God! Will God gather a disbeliever on his face on the Day of Resurrection?' He (may God bless him and grant him peace) said, 'Will not the One Who made him walk on his feet in this world be able to make his walk on his face on the Day of Resurrection?'" *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Tafsīr* #4807.

erty in it. He has become acquainted with it from the world of dominion, as it comes in the narrative (*al-athar*), “O people! Verily God has ordered me to teach you what He has taught me, and to discipline you with what he has disciplined me; then, let not any of you give to talking much during love making, for surely the child’s muteness comes from this. Let not any of you look at his wife’s private parts while he is making love to her, for surely blindness comes from this. Let not any of you kiss his wife while he is making love to her, for surely the child’s deafness comes from this. And let not any of you persist in looking at water for surely loss of intellect comes from this.”²¹⁶

This is an example of what we have mentioned. We desire to draw your attention to [the Prophet’s] beholding²¹⁷ the special properties of things with regard to the matters of the world, in order that you might draw an analogy from it for his beholding what, by way of the special property, influences [eternal] felicity and misery.

Do not permit yourself to believe the quack, Muḥammad b. Zakarīyā al-Rāzī,²¹⁸ concerning what he mentions of the special properties of things in bloodletting, stones, and medicines, while you do not believe the liege lord of humanity, Muhammad, the son of °Abdullah, the Hashemite, the Meccan, the Medinan (may the blessings and peace of God be upon him), concerning what he was informed of.

You know that he was shown, in the highest world (*al-°ālam al-°lā*), the totality of secrets. This, in addition to what we mentioned in the first secret, should stimulate (*tan-bīh*) you into following [him] in matters the nature of whose wisdom you do not under-

²¹⁶ This narrative has been declared a forgery by Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn Jawzī.

²¹⁷ *Iṭṭilā°*, which we have translated as “beholding” both in this paragraph and the last, could be read *iḥḍā°* “disclosing,” as the editors of the critical edition seem to prefer. “Beholding,” however, suits the context of the sentence better, since the Prophet is not actually disclosing the special properties of things.

²¹⁸ Muḥammad b. Zakarīyā al-Rāzī: A philosopher and well-known doctor of medicine who died in 313/925. He should not be confused with the Shafī Imam Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī who died in 606/1210. Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller*, 1045-6.

stand.

THE THIRD SECRET: Man's felicity is in imitating the angels through eschewing the carnal appetites and breaking the soul that is want to command toward evil,²¹⁹ and removing himself from vainly resembling an oblivious beast, which freely gives itself to following its caprice, without hindrance, according to what its nature demands.

Whenever man habituates himself upon doing what he wills, in all affairs, without hindrance, he accustoms himself to following his desire (*murād*) and caprice, and the quality of the beast gets the better of his heart. It is thus in his best interest to restrain himself, in the totality of his motions, with a bridle that hinders him from an avenue that leads to others, in order that his soul not forget its servitude to God (*ʿubūdīya*) and its adherence to the straight way. The effect of servitude to God will be manifest upon him in every motion, since he will do nothing in accordance with his own nature, rather according to God's command. Thus, in all of his states, he does not disengage himself from the battles of disciplining his soul (*al-riyāḍa*) by way of preferring some matters to others.

He who puts his halter in the hand of a dog,²²⁰ for instance, such that his conduct and his comings and goings are not pursuant to his own nature but rather to that of someone else, his soul is more apt to accepting true disciplining: it is closer and stronger than one who places his halter in the hand of his caprice, freely giving himself to it as the beast does.

Beneath this is a great secret in purifying the soul, which is a benefit eduuced through the laying down of the lawgiver in the manner that he did.

The wisdom-based advantage or the special property does not change through this

²¹⁹ *Al-naḥa al-ammāra bi 'l-sū'*: A reference to the words of the Prophet Joseph's would-be seductress in Q. XII:53, "Yet I do not absolve myself: the human soul certainly incites to evil."

²²⁰ A reference to "the first situation" from "The Eighth Principle."

laying down, for the objective is that [man] not be left to his own free will. This objective takes place through prohibiting one of the two sides, whichever one it be. In this regard, it can be conceived that the legal prescriptions vary because such is the fruit of this laying down process.

So let these three admonitions suffice you concerning the merit of persistently following [the Precedent] in the totality of one's motions and quiescence.

This encouragement that I have just mentioned is simply in regard to mundane matters. As for matters of worship, I do not know any reason (*wajh*) for abandoning the Precedent without an excuse except hidden disbelief or plain stupidity. Its illustration is the Prophet's saying, "Prayer with the congregation is better than the prayer of the individual by twenty-seven degrees,"²²¹ then how can the soul of the believers tolerate abandonment [of the congregation] without an excuse? Of course the reason for this is either stupidity or heedlessness through lack of meditating upon this enormous incongruity.

He who considers another stupid who prefers one thing to two of it, how can he not consider himself stupid when he prefers one thing to twenty-seven of it! Especially regarding the thing that is the pillar of the religion and the key to eternal felicity.

As for disbelief, it is that it comes to his mind, "This is not the case – mentioning it is simply for incitement toward [prayer with] the congregation; and if not, then what is the correlation between the congregation and this specific number of all numbers?" This is hidden disbelief that perhaps the breast envelopes though its owner perceives not.

How great is the stupidity of he who believes the astrologer and the doctor in matters less likely than this, while he does not believe the Prophet, who was shown the secrets of

²²¹ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Adhān* #648.

the dominion! If the astrologer says to you, “When twenty-seven days have elapsed since your nativity star’s first reaching the center of the sky, a calamity will befall you; so guard yourself on that day and stay in your house,” you would not cease staying [inside] during this period, abandoning all of your engagements. If you asked the astrologer about the reason, he would say to you, “I simply said that because between the degree of the star and the location of Saturn is twenty-seven degrees, and so for every degree the calamity will be delayed by a day or a month.”

If it is said to you, “This is folly, since there no correlation in it. Don’t believe him!” Your heart would not be free of emotion, and you would say, “In the works of God there are wondrous things whose correlation is not known – perhaps it is special properties that cannot be grasped. It has been known through experimentation that this is among the factors that influence even if its correlation is not known.” Then, if the matter springs from a narration of prophecy about the unseen, you deny the likes of these special properties and you demand the unequivocal correlation. Is there, then, a reason for this other than hidden idolatry... no, plain disbelief rather, for there is no other way to interpret it?

The reason for all of this laziness is that the matter of your hereafter does not concern you, for whenever the matter of your worldly life concerns you, you take precautions in it through the words of the astrologer and the doctor, and through divining premonitions, omens, and the other matters far, far removed from correlation.

You yield to far off probabilities because “the affectionate one is enamored with ill thinking.”²²² If you contemplated, you would know that this cautiousness with the eternal consequence (*khaṭar*) is more suitable.

²²² An Arabic proverb meaning that the person emotionally attached to another is obsessed with worrying about them. See Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, entry sh-f-q.

Then if you said, “In which category of actions is it behooving that the Precedent be followed?” To which I say: In everything that appears in the Precedent. The narrations of that are many, and such is like the Prophet’s saying, “He who has his blood cupped on Saturday or Wednesday, and is then afflicted by leprosy, he should blame no one but himself.”²²³ A Traditionist (*muḥaddith*) had his blood cupped on Saturday, saying, “This Tradition is weak.” So he was afflicted by leprosy. This was most agonizing for him, until he saw the Messenger of God in his dream and complained of this to him. The Prophet said, “Why did you have blood cupped on Saturday?” He replied, “Because the narrator of the Tradition (*al-rāwī*) is weak.” He said, “Did he not transmit it from me?” So he said, “I have repented of Messenger of God!” The Messenger of God supplicated for his recovery, and he thereupon woke up and [his affliction] was gone.

The Prophet said, “He who has his blood cupped on Tuesday, the seventeenth of the month, he has a remedy from disease for a year.”²²⁴

He said, “He who sleeps after the afternoon prayer, and thereupon his intellect is snatched away, let him blame no one but himself.”²²⁵

He said, “When the shoe strap of anyone of you breaks, do not walk in one shoe until you have repaired its strap.”²²⁶ He said, “When a woman gives birth, then let the first thing that she eats be a ripe date, and if there be none, then a dry date. For surely if there were anything better than it, God would have fed Mary with it when she gave birth to Jesus.”²²⁷ And he said (may God bless him and grant him peace), “When anyone of you is

²²³ Reported by al-Bayhaqī and al-Ḥākim.

²²⁴ Reported by al-Ṭabarānī and Ibn Ḥibbān with weak chains of transmission.

²²⁵ Reported by Abū Ya‘lā with a weak chain of transmission.

²²⁶ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim, Kitāb al-Libās wa ‘l-Zīna* #5622.

²²⁷ Al-Dārimī reports a similar Tradition with a weak and severed chain of transmission.

offered sweets, let him partake of it; and when anyone of you is offered perfume, then let him put some of it on.”²²⁸ Examples of this in mundane matters are many, nothing of which is without a secret.

A CONCLUDING SECTION: Regarding the Sequencing of the Goodly Endeavors (*al-awrād*) and Its Proclivity Toward the Ten Principles

Know that of these forms of worship that we have categorized, some can be joined together, such as fasting, prayer, and reciting the Koran. Others cannot be joined together, such as reciting the Koran and reciting litanies (*al-dhikr*), or upholding the rights of people and prayer.

Therefore, it behooves that one of your most important matters be to apportion your time between the various sorts of good works (*khayrāt*), from your morning until your evening, and from your evening until your morning.

You are learning that the objective of the forms of worship is to confirm intimacy with the remembrance of God, in order to frequent the realm of eternity and withdraw from the realm of deception. None will have good fortune in the realm of eternity except he who reaches God out of love of Him, and none is a lover of Him except he who is a knower of Him [and] who is frequent in His remembrance. Knowledge and love will not take place except through reflection, remembrance, and perseverance. Remembrance will not persist in the heart except through reminders, which are the forms of worship that consecutively occupy intermittent times, as distinct from those sorts that increase the effect of the reminder, and prevent malaise and the befalling of its effect upon the heart through continuance that boards on everyday routine.

²²⁸ This Tradition is attributed to the Prophet but I have found no source for it.

Of course if you are enraptured (*wālih*) with God and immersed in Him, you are in no need of sequencing your goodly endeavors; rather, your endeavor is one, and that is adhering to the remembrance of God. I do not see you as such, for that is the most august of matters. If you are not enraptured and infatuated, then you must sequence your goodly endeavors:

One of the goodly endeavors is from the time you awake from sleep until sunrise. It behooves you, during this auspicious time after you are free from the [dawn] prayer, to join between reciting litanies, supplicating, reciting the Koran, and meditating, for each has a different effect in illuminating hearts. You know the method and exposition of this from the book *The Advent of Guidance* and “The Book of Sequencing of Goodly Endeavors.”²²⁹ You do similarly between sunrise and midday, between midday and sunset, and between sunset and evening. These are the most auspicious of times, because liveliness is only in abundance when an endeavor is distinct at each time, such that at each time you are transitioning between a different form of worship. This is if you are from the devout worshippers.

If you are a teacher, student (*muta^callim*), or proprietor (*wālī*), then occupying yourself with these things by day is better than the forms of bodily worship because the foundation of the religion is knowledge through which the exaltation of God’s command takes place, and the good that stems from affection toward the creation of God.

Similarly, if you are a household provider and a professional, then upholding the right of your dependents by earning a lawful income is better than all forms of bodily worship. During all of this, however, it does not behoove you to be devoid or detached from the

²²⁹ Book X of the *Revival*. Its full title is “The Book of Sequencing of Goodly Endeavors and an Exposition on Reviving the Night.”

remembrance of God; rather, you should be like the one infatuated with his beloved (*ma^ʿshūq*) who is obliged [to perform] a certain job owing to the necessity of his time. He labors with his body, while he is absent from his work – his heart is with his beloved. It has been told about Abū ‘I-Ḥasan al-Jurjānī²³⁰ that he would always labor with a spade, saying, “We’ve been given the hand, the tongue, and the heart: the hand is for labor, the tongue is for creation, and the heart is for the Truth.²³¹” We will confine ourselves to this amount in the section of the outward actions, for in it is enough, God willing.



²³⁰ The author is either using an unfamiliar agnomen to refer to the celebrated jurist/Traditionist Abū Bakr al-Jurjānī al-Ismaʿīlī (d. 371/981), or the personality in question has simply fallen into obscurity.
²³¹ i.e. God.

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