
Clyde G. Leamaster
The American University in Cairo AUC

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book of meditation (Kitab al tafakkur) by al-Ghaza
Thesis 79
THE BOOK OF MEDITATION
(KITĀB AL TAFAKKUR)
By
al Ghazālī

Being a translation of
The Ninth Book of the Section on
The Saving Matters of Life
in
The Book of the Revivication of the Religious Sciences
(IHYĀ’ULUM AL DĪN)

A THESIS
Presented to the School of Oriental Studies
at the American University of Cairo in
partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

By
Clyde G. Leamaster
April 1955
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to acknowledge the helpful assistance and
gratifying patience which Doctors E. E. Calverley,
Kermit Schoonover and Butrus Abdul Malik have given me
in preparing this translation: without them, this work
would never have been finished. I also acknowledge the
patient kindness and willing help given to me by Iskandar
Effendi who led me through every line of the text.
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Introduction

a. al-Ghazālī

In this brief introduction I do not propose to detail the biography of al-Ghazālī for there are full-length treatments of this subject in English. Rather I am content to mention briefly the position of al-Ghazālī in Islam, coupled with only a few major facts about his life.

By general consensus of opinion, among both orientals and orientalists, he is the most remarkable of the Islamic theologians.\(^1\) He is known by Muslims as the Proof of Islam, ḤUJJAT AL-ISLĀM, and he is credited with having done the major work in bringing a moderate type of mysticism within the folds of orthodoxy. Though his system is not his own creation, nor did he add much to the system as it existed before his time,\(^2\) in arriving at his own presentation of it, he passed through all the prominent ways of his own day: philosopher, scholastic, traditionalist, Pythagorean, skeptic and finally mystic.\(^3\) Ultimately his system as stated in the 'Ihya' became the statement par excellence of orthodoxy, in which was included a mysticism which vitalized the law and doctrines of the religion, paving the way for the development and inclusion of the darwishi fraternity within orthodoxy.\(^4\)

**References**


(4). Thomson, op. cit.
Whatever was most excellent in Aristotle and the Sufism of al-Ghazali's predecessors, he discreetly adapted to Islamic theology and it remains to this day a vital force in the religion of Islam. Its dicta as the universal creed in its ultimate form was fixed by al-Ghazali building on the foundation constructed by al-Ash'ari.(1)

The text which follows is a translation of one of the books of his major work, 'Ihya' Ulum al-Din (Revivication of the Religious Sciences). The whole of the 'Ihya' is his interpretation of the religion of Islam, as well as a rule of life, conduct and attitude toward all that Muslims consider pertinent to religion. The part of it under present consideration is his presentation of meditation as an all-important factor in leading one to the good life along the straight path.

The 'Ihya' is believed to have been composed during the period of retreat in Syria and Palestine which lasted for some ten years,(2) during which he occupied himself with pious exercises and literary work. We may perhaps assume that during this period of relative quiet, in-active in the affairs of men, he arrived at the evaluation of meditation and how it is accomplished which he sets forth in the "Book of Meditation" in the 'Ihya', having experienced first-hand the benefits to be had from such exercise. In fact he tells us that during his period of retirement he meditated in the mosques of Damascus, Jerusalem and Mecca and through meditation he found more peace in his religious experience of the love of Allah.(3) No wonder then that he firmly assures us that meditation is the "beginning and the key" to all religious experience and the first step in the path of the man who is seeking Allah.

b. **Meaning of TAFAKKUR**

The verb TAFAKKARA, form V of FAKARA, to think or mentally examine, gives a heightened but not necessarily a reflexive meaning to the same mental process. Thus TAFAKKARA becomes an application of man's thinking capacity upon objects with the aim of seeking knowledge of something unknown. The translation of TAFAKKARA as meditation is not entirely suitable, although meditation best conveys all the aspects of its implications. Taj al 'Arus (1) and Lisān al 'Arab (2) both equate it with TA'AMMALA, to contemplate, and say nothing further about it, although Lane (3) in translating the root FAKARA and its derivatives expands the meaning by saying that it is "the arranging of known things in the mind in order to attain to the knowledge of an unknown thing....repeated consideration for the purpose of seeking to discover meanings.....the arranging of things in the mind in order by them to arrive at some object of which the attainment is desired though it be but a pondering opinion," a definition which is in accord with al-Ghazālī's use of the word, though he implies that it is religious facts which will be brought to bear upon the mind and will thus bring the meditator to repentance, the first of the states along the mystic path. In other words, it means for al-Ghazālī, being continually mindful of the interrelationship between Allah and his servant, the qualities and acts of both, and of the world to come.

c. **Summary of "Kitāb al-Tafakkur"**

This treatise on meditation is a masterfully organized and logically presented guide to those who through meditation aspire to a knowledge of their omnipotent and essentially unknowable Creator.

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(1) Taj al 'Arus, iii. p. 475
(2) Lisān al 'Arab, vi. p. 373. According to this source, FAKARA, AFKARA, TAPARKARA and APTAKARA all have one meaning.
(3) Lane, Book I Part IV p. 2431. Arabic-English dictionaries generally give the translation of TAFAKKARA as reflection, pondering and thinking.
It instructs, it guides and it points the way to disciplined thought. It explains precisely what is meant by meditation; it mentions the benefits to be derived from it and it tells how and upon what to meditate. The importance of meditation cannot be overestimated for it is the "beginning and key" to all blessings.

Al Ghaţâli's avowed purpose in writing is to enlighten about the benefits of TAFÂKKÛR...and then to instruct about how to channel meditation in the most meritorious and productive manner, the object always being to draw nearer to Allah, for as the physical senses reveal the apparent world of sense, the inward world of the heart and insight, through meditation, reveal what is spiritual about both the seen world and the unseen world.

He begins with an artificial but cleverly expressed formula as logical as any of the hypotheses of Greek logic: one philosophically reasons that 1) the more permanent is more worthy of preference and then, by a simple act of faith one decides that 2) the next world is the more permanent. One then logically concludes, by a juxtaposition of words and a relation of these two ideas that 3) the next world is more worthy of preference. He terms these three hypotheses "experiential knowledge," MA'RIFA, and the final experiential knowledge, from which all else begins, is not acquired until experiential knowledges one and two have been mystically mixed through the seat of understanding, the heart. By his definition, meditation is this process of subjecting these two experiential knowledges to the processes of the heart from where it crosses over to the third experiential knowledge. If the crossing over does not occur, one can only listen to the exponents of the law, believe them, and act accordingly, and therefore meditation is not involved.
He says that experiential knowledges, MA'RIF, are the consequences of meditation (1) whereas learned knowledges, 'ULUM, are the fruits which are derived from meditation, although states, AHWAL, and acts, A'MAL, may also be included as deriving from the consequences of meditation, but learned knowledges are the special fruit. (2) It is the experiential knowledges which are brought into the heart and mixed mystically with the reason and the insight to produce both the learned knowledges and further experiential knowledges, through the addition of which a man increases his piety and goodness. The process is to bring the knowledge to the heart through meditation, by which the state of the heart changes, and with this change of heart, the acts of a man change for the better, and as both change, the worshipper is brought nearer to his Lord in both outward and inward acts of piety. This is the utmost goal of the meditator.

Al-Ghazâli then, with his remarkable clarity of mind, presents in logical order a practical manual of meditation for the seeker after Allah. Through the deductive reasoning of his original premise one enters upon the purgative life through repentance, the first of the steps toward the achieving of the beatific vision, MUSHÂHADA. Al Ghazâli even goes so far as to say that meditation, on which the original intention is predicated, is of greater preference than all the rest of the acts of worship, 'IBADAT, for through it and it alone does one begin to realize the proper inter-relationship between the worshipper and the worshipped.

Upon entering on the purgative way, keeping the world to come always foremost in the mind, al Ghazâli like others before him, suggests the use of the diary-method, a mechanical and practical way of keeping watch over the progress of the purification of the soul, testing it with

(1). See text, p. 12.
(2). See text, p. 15. Also see text p. 11 where he states that "the benefit of meditation is increasing 'ILM and acquiring MA'RIFA."
the ten major virtues and vices to see in what state he finds it in relation to them. When he finds that he has been freed from a sin, he lines it out of his diary, or if he has acquired a virtue he also lines it out, until all entries in the diary have been lined out. Gradually the soul after passing through various stages, MAQĀMĀT, while being granted various knowledges along the way by divine gift, is prepared to receive the Beatific Vision, the final grace of Allah in this life and a gratuitous gift reserved for the pure of heart alone.

Here words fail, and al-Ghazāli illusively mentions to the unspeakable joys at the end of the path. The importance of meditation in reaching this goal is that it is the first step one must take: one cannot enter the path without intention and one does not come by intention unless he meditates upon the matter.

In expounding his theory of meditation, al Ghazāli employs a curious mixture of logic and religious spirit, all based on a belief in the eternal truth of revelation. His narrative is generously dotted with conditional phrases and he often enumerates results, steps, consequences. "If such and such is done" he constantly repeats, "then such and such will happen in such and such an order." The clarity and logicality of his thinking processes are eminently portrayed in this guidebook, although in discussing the realms of higher mystical meditation, he is only tantalizingly suggestive. The real secret of meditation he never divulges, but he only gives preliminary hints about how to approach the real joys of supreme meditation of the eternal verities.

He carries us through the earthly beginnings, it is true, but he abruptly drops us at the door of sublimity to continue alone, reminding us that such joys are for a select few of the ultra pious and the ordinary person cannot bear them. From his beginning until this door is reached
sheer logic carries him along, but as the surpassing beauty of thinking on the person of the Omnipotent crowd all human utterances from his heart, he can only assure us of the reality of the contentment and pleasure. Divinely given insight then takes the place of logic and reason--and insight is a gift for which a human can only prepare his soul to receive, and he can never hope to achieve it in and of himself.

The purpose of meditation for al-Majšūm, which is to shift the affection towards Allah and divine things and to move the will to acts of devotion and surrender,\(^{(4)}\), is approximately the same as that of al-Majšūm.\(^{(5)}\) Although for al-Majšūm, meditation seems to be one of a mystical-spiritual process where outward disturbances are reduced to a minimum and the mind is freed to perceive the yearnings of Allah.\(^{(6)}\)

\(^{(1)}\) al-Nasir, A. A. (1937), "Knowledge," as published.
\(^{(2)}\) ibid., p. 101.
\(^{(3)}\) ibid., p. 102.
\(^{(4)}\) ibid., p. 104.
\(^{(5)}\) ibid., p. 105.
\(^{(6)}\) ibid., p. 106.
SOURCES: Al Muḥāṣibī

With regard to the meditative process, al-Ghazālī appears to have been widely influenced by al Muḥāṣibī (d. 857), in whom, with insistence on an implacable moral perfection, is found the codification of the early Sufi tradition. (1) His treatise Al Riḍāya, which is his expression of the rule of life, is in many ways similar to the Ṭhyaḥ, both insisting that the law of Allah is to be observed not only in bodily actions, Aḥmād AL-ǦAWĀRĪ, but in the actions of the heart, ʿAḥmād AL-ǦU'LĪ, (2) and that the faithful servant must constantly struggle against the self, NAFA, pointing out to it, by means of meditation, the terrors of eternal punishment and the joys of eternal bliss. (3)

With regard to meditation, al-Ghazālī uses similar terms to express similar ideas, occasionally employing the same similes. Both use the simile of the ant in relation to a human being contrasted with the human being in relation to Allah; a simile of the bat not being able to bear the light of the sun as man is unable to bear the sight of Allah; and they both compare meditation to the striking of the flint to secure a spark which will enlighten the heart.

The purpose of meditation for al Muḥāṣibī, which is to stir up the affection towards Allah and divine things and to move the will to acts of devotion and surrender, (4) is approximately the same as that of al-Ghazālī, (5) although for al-Muḥāṣibī, meditation seems to be more of a mystical-spiritual process where outward disturbances are reduced to a minimum and the mind is freed to perceive the promptings of Allah. (6)

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5. See text, p. 13.
There seems to be more of an interiorization in the teachings of al-Muḥāsibī (7) than in the rational progression of practical exercising of al-Ghazālī in regard to the process of meditation.

Both men consider the heart to be the organ of religion and they both consider meditation to be the beginning of the road which leads to Allah. (8) They make the same distinction between 'ilm, intellectual or learned knowledge, and ma'ārifā, illuminative or experiential knowledge, both of which are the major fruits of meditation, and neither of which have strong esoteric connotations. (9) Like al-Ghazālī, al-Muḥāsibī distinguishes finely in defining the various terms used in this mental process, i.e., ʾitībār, tadhakkur, nazār, tafaqqur, the last of which he considers a form of inward service, by which Allah's servant is strengthened for outward service. (10) Through it he finds the "key to wisdom and thereby advances from service to his goal—salvation." (11) And like al-Ghazālī he maintains that Tafaqqur, i.e., man's use of reason in meditation, (12) leads to all good, for it enables a man to know whether he is serving Allah or committing a sin, to prove which he uses the same tradition about Tafaqqur for a single hour being better than service by good works for a whole year. (13)

A work by al-Muḥāsibī which is no longer known to exist is Kitāb al-Tafaqqur waʿl ʾitībār from which al-Ghazālī may have drawn some of his inspiration and information for his own book of Tafaqqur. (14)

(7). Schoonover, op. cit., p. xxxii.
(14). The definitions of ʾitībār and Tafaqqur by al-Muḥāsibī in other works is in precisely the same sense as used by al-Ghazālī. ʾItībār is inferring one thing from another and meditation, Tafaqqur, on the results is the completion of the process. Smith, p. 58-9. See text, p. 10.
However, in Al Riḍaʿa as a whole, al Muḥāṣibī deals primarily with a method with little direct discussion of the mystical relationship with Allah, a theme immediately recognizable in al Ghaṣāli's Kitāb al Tafakkur. Both men seem to be more concerned with a state of "right relationship" with Allah rather than with a mystic union. (15) In achieving this "right relationship" both men place great importance on the process of introspection which is effected by means of DHIKR-TADHAKKUR and FIKRA-TAFAKKUR. (16)

In speaking of the historical relationship between these two great Islamic thinkers, Margaret Smith in the last chapter of her study of Al-Muḥāṣibī has the following to say: "It was al Muḥāṣibī who laid the foundation on which Ghaṣāli has built up the mighty structure of his teaching, al Muḥāṣibī who originated, while Ghaṣāli, out of his own genius and greater knowledge, has developed and added, and so brought to perfection his own doctrine of the religious life, lived Godward and manward." (17)

OTHER SOURCES:

Unlike al-Bisṭāmi (d. 875) and al-Junayd (d. 910) both of whom through meditation and trust in Allah, TAWAKKUL, attempted annihilation of the self in pitiless asceticism, (18) al Ghaṣāli seeks to use meditation only as an instrument for a purification of the soul that it may be fit to approach Allah. But the writings of Abū Ṭālib al Makki (d. 996) and al Qushayrī (d. 1074) are known to have been used by al Ghaṣāli in preparing the 'Ihya', although neither Qūt al Qulūb nor Al Risāla include individual sections on TAFAKKUR. (19)

(18). Thomson, op. cit.
(19). Whole pages of Qūt al Qulūb were copied into the 'Ihya' by al Ghaṣāli. See Ency. of Islam, iii. p. 174.
THE BOOK OF MEDITATION

Being
The Ninth Book of the Section on
The Saving Matters of Life
In
The Book of the Revivification of the Religious Sciences

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

I. INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah. He did not decreed either direction or place
for the infinitude of His might, and He did not make a path for the ascent
of the rest of the imagination or the target of the arrows of the understand-
ing to His inaccessible greatness. Rather He left the hearts of the seekers.

(1). The Book of Meditation is the ninth of the ten books of volume four of
'Ihya'. The 'Ihya' is composed of forty books divided into four quarters
of ten books each. The four quarters are 1) Acts of a Creature Toward
His Lord, RUB' AL IBADAT, 2) Usages of Life, RUB' AL TADAT,
3) Destructive Matters of Life, RUB' AL MUHLIKAT, and 4) Saving Matters
of Life, RUB' AL MUNJIYAT. There is a ten volume commentary on the
'Ihya' by Sayyid Murtada under the title ITHAF IS SADAT AL MUTTAQIN (The
Precious Gift of the God-Fearing Masters), Cairo, 1306. The commentary
on Book of Meditation is in Volume X, p. 160 ff.

(2). Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad al Ghazali (A.H. 450-506;
A.D. 1058-1111.) For his biography, see : Margaret Smith, Al Ghazali,
The Mystic, London, 1944; Cara de Vaux, Ghazali, Paris, 1902; G.D.
Macdonald, "Life of Al Ghazali", in the Journal of the American Oriental
Society for 1899, vol. xx, pp. 71-132, and his article in the Ency. of
Islam, ii, pp. 146 ff; S.M. Zwemer, A Moslem Seeker After God, New York,
1920; and W.R. Gardner, Al Ghazali, in the Islam Series of the Christian
Literature Society for India, Madras, 1919.

(3). This translation is made from the text in ITHAF AS SADAT AL MUTTAQIN,
but references are also made to the text on the margin and to the text
of the 'Ihya', published for Dar al Kutub al 'Arabiya al Kubri, Cairo,
1354. The commentary is referred to hereafter as SM'. For information
on its author see Lane, Lexicon, Preface XXII ff.

(4). The eulogia have not been translated.

(5). From the verb to seek, desire, endeavor. Applied to the suris, a
TALIB is one who seeks to find Allah. Plural, TALIBIN.
behind in the wilderness of His grandeur, distracted and perplexed. Whenever they have been moved to achieve their goal, praises of the majesty (of Allah) have forcibly turned them back. When they turned to leave hopelessly, they were called from the pavilions of beauty: "Patience! Patience!" Then they were told: "Meditate on the humiliation as a creature on your part, because if you meditated on the majesty of Allah's lordship, you could not appreciate it." If you seek something beyond meditation on your qualities, consider the graces and favors of Allah and how they have successively followed each other. For each grace, renew mentioning and thanksgiving. Contemplate on how, over the seas of destiny, they have flooded the worlds with good and evil, benefit and harm, difficulty and ease, victory and defeat, repairing and breaking, enfold ing and spreading, belief and unbelief, and gratitude and ingratitude.

If you have passed over from consideration of the acts (of Allah) to consideration of the being (of Allah), you have attempted a difficult matter, and the passing beyond the limit of the power of human kind has dangerously imperilled you. Minds have been dazzled without approaching the beginnings or His brilliancy and were compelled to turn back on their heels.

Blessings be on Muhammad—Master of the children of Adam, although he did not proudly esteem his mastery—a blessing which will remain as provision and treasure for us at the advent of the Resurrection. Blessings and great peace be on his family and companions, each one of whom has become a full moon in the firmament of the religion and a leader for the parties of the Muslims.

It is recorded in the SUNNA that "Meditation for an hour is better than worship for a year," and in the Book of Allah there is much
insistence on reflection, pondering, consideration and thinking. It is no secret that thinking is the key to illuminations, as well as the beginning of deliberation. It is that which ensnares the sciences and entraps knowledge and understanding. Most of mankind have known its benefits and rank, but they have been ignorant of its real nature and its fruits, its source and end, its channel and stage, and its path and modality. Nor have they known how to contemplate, nor about what, nor why, nor what to seek through its usage. Is it something to be desired for itself or for its fruits from which they benefit? If it is the fruits, what are they? Is it knowledge, 'ULUM, or states, AHWA', or both? (1) The revealing or all this is important, so we shall first mention the virtue of meditation, then the real nature of meditation and its fruit, then the channels of thought and its stages, if Allah wills......

(1) Singular, HĀL. As used in Sūrism it signifies a mental condition, given immediately and momentarily by Divine grace, not to be gained by application or effort, consisting of joy, sorrow, depression, exaltation, etc., the highest of which are ecstatic. The terms HĀL and MAQAM are central to the SŪFI mystical system. If the HĀL continues in the mystic, as according to some interpretations it does, it becomes a MAQAM. Thus the MAQAM is a part of practical religion while the HĀL belongs to the inner spiritual life. The latter is a passive yielding to divine influence, and the mystic is dominated by the HĀL of the moment. The MAQAM is one of a series of stations along the mystic way which the seeker must traverse. He can progress from MAQAM to MAQAM only after he has become perfect in the previous one. The step ladder of MAQAMAT usually begins with repentance and progresses from there to FANA', or passing away of the self, Nafs, permanently into the divine being. For an account of the relationship between HĀL and MAQAM see Ency. of Rel. Knowledge, xii. p. 13 ff. Also Ency of Islam, ii. p. 227. Also Macdonald, Religious Attitudes, p. 188 ff. Scherer, O. Youth, p. 92.

(2) In the SM's opinion the benefit is all in knowledge.
II. THE VIRTUE OF MEDITATION

In innumerable places in His beloved book, Allah commanded meditation and reflection, praising those who meditate, saying, "Such as remember Allah, standing, sitting, and reclining, and consider the creation of the heavens and the earth, (and say): Our Lord! Thou createdest not this in vain." (1)

Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with both of them, (2) said, "A people meditated on Allah, and the Prophet said 'Meditate on the creation of Allah but not on the being of Allah, for you will never appreciate His value.'" It is related about the Prophet that one day he came upon a group of people while they were meditating and asked them "How is it you are not talking?" They replied, "We are meditating on the creation of Allah," and the Prophet said, "So do! Meditate on His creation but do not meditate on His being, for on this horizon there is a white land. Its light is its whiteness and its whiteness is its light. The whiteness of daylight is forty times that of this world. In it are creatures of the creation of Allah who have not disobeyed Him by so much as a blink of the eye." They said, "O prophet of Allah, where is Satan among them?" He replied, "they do not know whether or not Satan was created." They said, "Are they of the offspring of Adam?" The Prophet answered, "They do not know whether or not Adam was created."

This is a tradition from 'Atā'. (3) He said, "One day 'Ubayd ibn 'Amīr (4) and I came upon 'A'isha (5) who spoke to us from behind a curtain. She said, "O 'Ubayd, what keep you from visiting us?" He said,

(1). Koran III 191. All quotations from the Koran are taken from Bell's English translation.
(2). 'Abdallah bin al 'Abbas, cousin of the Prophet (d. 69). Ency. of Islam, i. p. 19. The dual eulogy refers to both father and son.
(3). 'Atā' ibn Abī Rabi'ah al Mekki, (d. AD 733), a Jurist. See al Nawawi p. 422.
(4). 'Ubayd Ibn 'Amīr Ibn Qitada Al Lithi, Meccan judge
"The saying of the Prophet of Allah 'Visit rarely and you will be loved more.'" Ibn 'Amir said, "Tell us of the most wonderful thing you have seen from the Prophet of Allah." He said she wept and replied, "Everything about him was a wonder. On my night he came to me, until his skin touched mine, then he said 'Hasten away! while I devote myself to worship of my Lord!' He rose, went to the water skin, performed the ablutions, got up to worship and wept until he moistened the floor. He then lay on his side until Bilal(1) came to call him for the morning worship. He said, 'O Prophet of Allah, what makes you weep? Allah has pardoned that from your sin which has preceded and that which has been lately committed.' He replied, 'O woe to you, Bilal. What keeps me from weeping, since this night Allah has revealed to me that in the creation of the heavens and earth and in the succession of night from day there are signs for those of sound judgment? Woe to anyone who reads them and does not meditate on them.'" Al Awsâ’t(2) was asked, "What is the aim of meditation on them (i.e., the signs)?" He replied, "One reads them and then understands them."

Muhammad ibn Wasi(3) related that a man from the people of Basra rode up to Umm Dhurr after the death of Abû Dhurr(4) and asked her about Abû Dhurr's worship. She said that he spent all his day meditating in a corner of the house. Al Hasan(5) said that an hour's meditation is better than spending all night (in worship). Al Fudayl(6)

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(1). Bilal bin Rabah al Habashi (Abyssinian), the first MU’ADHDHIN (d. 20). See Ency. of Islam, i. p. 718 f.
(2). 'Abd al Rhammân bin 'Amrî al Awsâ’t, Jurist, Ascetic. (d. 157). See Al A'llâm.
(3). Muhammad bin Wasi' al Azdi al Basri (d. 120). Flugel, Pihrist, p. 185; De Goeje, Annales de Tabari, ii. 1326. (From Worship in Islam, E. E. Calverley, Madras, 1925.)
(4). Abû Dhurr al Ghifari, Companion (d. 32 or 33), Ency. of Islam, i. p. 85.
(6). Abû 'Ali at Fudayl bin 'Iyad bin Mas'ud al Tamimi al Yarbusi. (d. 187) See Al A'llâm.
said that thought is a mirror which shows you your virtues and vices.

It was told to Ibrahim, (1) "You spend a long time thinking." He replied that thought is the essence of work. Safyān ibn ʿUyyaṇa (2) often gives examples in the words of the speaker in his poetry, "A man, when he thinks, has insight into everything." Tawūs (3) said that the apostles of ʿIṣa bin Maryām (4) said to him, "O Spirit of Allah, is there anyone on earth today like you?" He replied, "Yes. He whose utterances are remembrances of Allah, whose silence is meditation, and whose reflection teaches him a lesson, verily he is like me." Al Ḥasan said, "Anyone whose speech is not wisdom is an empty talker, anyone whose silence is not meditation is absentminded, and anyone whose consideration is not meaningful is frivolous."

In the word of Allah, "I shall turn away from My revelation those who magnify themselves wrongfully on earth." (5) Allah said, "I will debar their hearts from meditation on my affairs." (6)

Abū Saʿīd al Khāḍrī (7) related that the Prophet of Allah said, "Give your eyes pleasure from worship." The people replied, "O Prophet of Allah, what is the pleasure from worship?" He answered, "Looking into the Holy Writ, meditation on it, and pondering its wonders." A woman who was living in the desert near Mekka said, "If the hearts of the pious in their thought looked at the blessings of the next world which are stored behind the veils of the unseen, the life of this world would not

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(1). ʿIbrāhīm ibn Adham (d. 160-166) See Ency. of Islam.
(2). Safyān bin ʿUyyaṇa b. Abū ʿIrān Maymūn al Hilālī (d. 198), See Al-ʿĀlam.
(3). Tawūs bin Kaysān al Yamānī (d. 160), follower of the Companions. See Dictionary of Names.
(4). The proper name of Jesus in Islam. See Ency. of Islam.
(5). Koran VII 146
(6). Koran
(7). Aḥd Saʿīd Saʿīd bin Mālik al Khāḍrī al Ansārī (d. 74). Ibn Ḥajar, ii. p. 333; Ibn Doraḍ, p. 269; Annales at-Ṭabarī, i. pp. 1492, 1682; ii. p. 418; iii. p. 2338. (Taken from Calverley, op. cit.)
be happy for them nor would this world give them pleasure." Luqmān(1) used to sit by himself at length, and his master would pass by him and say, "O Luqmān, still you sit by yourself! If you sat with the people, it would be more sociable for you." Luqmān would say, "Prolonged solitude gives thought better understanding and prolonged thinking is a guide on the way to the Garden." Wahb ibn Munabbih(2) said, "The thinking of a man is not lengthened a bit unless it is by knowledge, and a man knows nothing unless it is by action." ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz(3) said that meditation on the favors of Allah is one of the most excellent forms of worship. One day ʿAbdullah ibn al Mubārak(4) said to Sahl ibn ʿAlī when he saw him silently meditating, "To where have you arrived?" He replied, "The path."

Bishr(5) said, "If the people had meditated on the greatness of Allah, they would certainly not have disobeyed him." Ibn ʿAbbās said, "Two prayers cycles devoted to meditation are better than staying up all night (in prayer) without (having one's) heart (in the ritual)."

While Abū Sharīḥ(6) was walking, he sat down, veiled himself with his garments and began to cry. He was asked what made him cry and he answered, "I meditated on the passing of my life and the paucity of my works and the approach of my appointed time." Abū Sulaymān(7) said, "Accustom your eyes to weeping and your hearts to meditation."

(1). Legendary writer of fables and wise maker of proverbs. He is mentioned in the Koran. See Ency of Islam, iii. p. 35 ff.
(2). Wahb bin Munabbih, Successor (d. 110) Ency. of Islam, iv. p. 1084.
(3). ʿUmar bin ʿAbd al ʿAzīz bin Marwān, pious Umayyad Khalīfa. (d. 101) See Al Aʾlam.
(6). Abū Sharīḥ ʿAbdalrahman bin Sharīḥ al Maʿafarī (d. 167 in Alexandria.)
Abū Sulaymān said, "For the saints, meditation on this world veils one from thinking about the next life and punishment, while meditation on the next life bequeaths wisdom and gives life to the heart." Ḥātim(1) said, "From experience knowledge increases, from DHIKR love increases; and from meditation fear increases." Ibn ʿAbbās said, "Meditation of righteousness calls for acts of righteousness and repentance from evil calls for its abandonment." It is related that Allah says in some of his books, (2) "I do not accept the word of every wiseman, but I look at his concern and desire. If his concern and desire are for me, I make his silence meditation and his words praise, even if he doesn't speak."

Al Ḥasan said that intelligent people are still alternating between mentioning, DHIKR and meditation, FIKR, and from FIKR to DHIKR, so that they question their hearts and they utter wisdom. Ishaq ibn Khalaf said, "Dāʾūd al Tāʾiy(3) was on a roof one moonlight night. He meditated on the realms of heaven and earth, gazing at the sky and weeping, until he fell into the house of a neighbor. The owner of the house jumped up naked from his bed with sword in hand thinking that it was a thief, but when he saw Dāʾūd, he went back, put down his sword and said, 'Who was it threw you from the roof?' Dāʾūd replied, 'I didn't feel this.'"

Al Junayd(4) said, "The most honorable and the highest of sessions is the session of thought about the unity of Allah, TAWHĪD, inhaling the breath of knowledge about Him, drinking from the cup of love from the sea of affection, and the beauty of thinking well of Allah."

Then he cried out, "O what sessions! How glorious! O what draughts!"

(1) Abu ʿAbdallāh Ḥātim b. ʿAlwān (or ʿAnwān) the Dear, ascetic, SM i. pp. 371, 372 ff.; Abu al Maḥāsin Ibn Tagrī Bardī, Annales, i. p. 719f. (from Calyerley, op. cit.)
(2) From AHADITH QUDSIYYA. See Ency. of Islam.
(3) Dāʾūd b. Ṣākir al Tāʾi’, famous Sūfī of Kufa. (d. 186) See Dict. of Names.
How delicious! Blessed is he who receives the gift!" Al Shafi'i(1) said, "Seek the aid of speech through silence and of conclusions through meditation." He also said, "Sound sight in affairs is a safeguard against self-seception; determination of opinion is security against prodigality and regret; reflection and meditation disclose resolution and prudence; consultation of wise men is stability in the soul and power for the insight: so meditate before you resolve and reflect before you attack, and consult before you proceed." He said further that "The virtues are four: one of them is wisdom, the consistency of which is thinking; the second is chastity, the consistency of which is in desire; the third is power, the consistency of which is in anger; and the fourth is justice, the consistency of which is in moderation of the forces of the self."

These are the sayings of the 'ULEMA' in regard to meditation; yet not one of them has begun to mention its essence or explain its channels.

(1). Founder of the Shafi'i school of law. (d. 204) See Ency. of Islam.
III EXPLANATION OF THE REAL MEANING OF MEDITATION AND THE FRUITS THEREOF

Know that the meaning of meditation is the bringing of two types of experiential knowledge, MA'RIFA, into the heart in order to derive from them a third type of experiential knowledge. Its illustration is that whoever inclines toward the immediate, preferring the temporal world, yet desires to know that the next world is more worthy of preference than the present world, has two paths to follow. 1) He hears from someone else that the next world is more worthy of preference than this world, then takes his authority and believes him, without insight into the actuality of the matter, inclining in his acts towards preference for the other world, depending on the mere words of him to whom he listens. This is called reliance on authority, TAQLID, not knowledge. 2) The second way is to know that the most permanent is most worthy of preference, and then to know that the next world is the more permanent. Thus from these two experiential knowledges, he derives a third which is: that the next world is more worthy of preference. It is not possible to achieve the experiential knowledge that the next world is more worthy of preference except through the two preceding experiential knowledges. Bringing the two

(1). MA'RIFA is the knowledge one comes by through experience or meditation, implying a preceding ignorance, and therefore to distinguish its meaning from 'ILM, also knowledge but of broader meaning, I have translated it "experiential knowledge." The two different types of knowledge differ in the manner by which man comes by them, as well as in the subjects with which they are concerned. Man can acquire MA'RIFA of the 'ILM of Allah, but it is incorrect to speak of the MA'RIFA of Allah because of the connotation of previous ignorance. For the human being, 'ILM is taught or learned whereas MA'RIFA is experiential or intuitive. The goal of the Sufis is MA'RIFA about Allah by submitting themselves to the many stages and degrees of self disciplines, leading at last to FAN' or passing away into Allah. Ency. of Islam, ii. p. 469. Smith, op. cit., p. 98.

(2). The SM adds that the heart may be transported from inclination to viliness towards what is valuable, though perhaps it will feel nothing of the changeover.
previous experiential knowledges into the heart in order to arrive at the third experiential knowledge is called meditation, TAFAKKUR, pondering, I'TIBAR, recollection, TADHAKKUR, consideration, NAZAR, contemplation, TA'AMMUL, or reflection, TADABBUR. (1)

However, reflection, contemplation and meditation are synonymous expressions for one meaning in which there are no variant hidden meanings. (2) But in recollection, pondering and consideration there are various meanings, though the basic meaning is one, just as the name SARAM, cutting sword, MUHANNAD, sharp Indian sword, and SAYF, ordinary sword, simultaneously mean one thing, but considered variously, SARAM indicates cutting, MUHANNAD indicates place of origin, and SAYF gives a general meaning without these qualifications.

Likewise the name pondering, I'TIBAR, is given to (the process of) obtaining the two experiential knowledges since it crosses over them to a third experiential knowledge. (3) But if the crossing over does not take place and it was not possible except to stop at the two experiential knowledges, then it is given the name recollection, TADHAKKUR, not pondering, I'TIBAR. (4) As for consideration, NAZAR, and meditation, TAFAKKUR,

(1). The SM points out that this is a somewhat ambiguous series of terms for meditation. He says that recollection, TADHAKKUR, is the obtaining of the two knowledges, while getting the third is called meditation. TAFAKKUR, reflection, TADABBUR, consideration, NAZAR, or pondering, I'TIBAR.

(2). Reflection, TADABBUR, says the SM, is observing the termination of matters whereas contemplation, TA'AMMUL, means reconsideration of a thing, time after time. Meditation, TAFAKKUR, is the disposal of the heart to consideration, NAZAR, of proof, that it may know that which it seeks.

(3). The triliteral of this verb literally means "to cross over", and the SM adds that the MUSTMAR of Form VIII, as used here, means "crossing over from state, HAL, to state."

(4). The SM explains that in pondering, I'TIBAR, the meaning of crossing over, TABARA, is taken into account, but there is nothing in recollection, TADHAKKUR, except an attempt of the intellect to recall what has passed into forgetfulness.
they occur when the third experiential knowledge is being sought. (1) He who does not seek the third experiential knowledge is not called one who considers, Nāzīr. Everyone who meditates is one who recollects, but everyone who recollects is not a meditator. The value of memory is the repetition of things known upon the heart in order to firmly fix them there and they will not be obliterated from the heart. The benefit of meditation is increasing knowledge, ʿIlām, and acquiring experiential knowledge, Maʾārif. These then are the differences between recollection, Tadḥakkur, and meditation, Tafakkur.

If the experiential knowledges, Maʾārif, are gathered in the heart and coupled in a special arrangement, it gives rise to another experiential knowledge. Experiential knowledge is the product of experiential knowledge. If other experiential knowledge occurs and is coupled with another experiential knowledge, from this another product occurs. In this manner, the products are continually extended, knowledges, ʿUlūm, are continually extended, and meditation is continually extended without end. The way to increase experiential knowledges, Maʾārif, is blocked by death or obstacles. This is for him who has power to cultivate knowledges, ʿUlūm, and is guided into the path of meditation. However, most of the people are prevented from increasing their knowledges, ʿUlūm, through their loss of capital funds which are the experiential knowledges, Maʾārif, through which the learned knowledges, ʿUlūm, bear fruit, (2) just as he who has no goods is not able to make a profit, or he who may own

(1). The SM adds that after examination, consideration is brought to bear on the resultant knowledge. Through it, one might desire contemplation or inquiry, to seek the meaning with the heart, or it might cause a reversal of the vision or the insight in order to comprehend or see something.

(2). In this case, says the SM, he acquires no results unless it is from a beneficial shaykh.
goods, but does not do well in the profession commerce and gains nothing. Thus he might have some experiential knowledges which are the capital funds of the learned knowledges, ʿULŪM, but he does not do well in using them, composing them, and coupling them leading to production. Exper-}ential knowledge, MAʿRIFA, of how to use them and make them fruitful may at times be through a divine light in the heart which takes place innately, as was the case with the prophets, but that is very rare. Or it might be through learning and practice, as it is in most cases. (1)

Then these experiential knowledges, MAʿRIF, might come to the meditator and acquire the fruits for him although he does not feel the modality of the acquisition, (2) and he is unable to express it because of the paucity of his practice in the skill of expression in the bringing forth (of the experiential knowledge.) How many of mankind really know that the next world is the most preferable? When one is asked the reason for his experiential knowledge, MAʿRIFA, he can neither produce it nor express himself about it, although he did not get his experiential knowledge except through the two preceding experiential knowledges, MAʿRIFA, which are 1) that the most permanent is most worthy of preference and 2) that the next world is more permanent than this world, which acquires for him a third experiential knowledge which is that the next world is more worthy of preference. The consequence of real meditation goes back to the acquisition of the two previous experiential knowledges, through which

(1). By which he means, according to the SM, accompanying perfect shaykhs and intensively considering their states, for their company is a great influence.

(2). A mystic flight over which man has no control. The SM says that the acquisition is an explanation of the speedy transference of the heart from experiential knowledge to experiential knowledge, and its possessor escapes what he does not feel, thinking that he is still standing at the first knowledge.
he arrives at the third experiential knowledge. As for the fruit of thinking, it is learned knowledges, 'ULUM, states, A'NĀL, and acts, A'NĀL, but its special fruit is knowledge and nothing more. Yes, if learned knowledge is acquired in the heart, the state of the heart changes; if the state of the heart changes, the acts of the senses change; the act follows the state and the state follows the learned knowledge and the learned knowledge follows thinking.

If then meditation is the beginning and the key to all blessings, and this (book) uncovers for you the virtue of meditation, (1) then it is better than mentioning, DHIKR, and remembrance, TADHAKKUR, because thinking, FIKR, is mentioning, DHIKR, and more. The DHIKR of the heart is better than the act of the senses, but the act is honorable when there is DHIKR. Therefore meditation is more preferable than the sum total of acts, and therefore it is said that meditation for an hour is better than worship for a year; that it transports (one) from the repugnant to the beloved, from desire and greed to asceticism and contentment; and that it causes the beholding of Allah, MUSHĀHADA, and piety. Therefore Allah said: "Mayhap they will show piety." (2) or a mentioning, DHIKR, may come to them.

If you want to understand the modality of changing the state through thought, its illustration is what we have mentioned of the matter of the next world. Thinking about it will make us know that the next world is more worthy of preference. If this experiential knowledge is firmly affixed in our hearts, the hearts will be changed to a desire

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(1). The SM makes the note than because learned knowledges and states are the goods used as merchandise in meditation, this is the secret of the special acceptance of the Book of Meditation, among all the books of the section on Saving Matters in the 'ĪHYĀ', by some of the 'ARIFIN.

(2). Koran II 186
for the next world and indifference toward this world, which is what we meant by state, Ḥāl. If the state of the heart before this experiential knowledge was love of the immediate and inclination toward it and aversion for the next world and paucity of desire for it, and by this experiential knowledge the state of the heart was changed and its will and its desire were altered, then the change of will gave rise to acts of the senses in hurling away this world and advancing the works of the next world. In this there are five steps, the first of which is remembrance, Tadhakkur, which is bringing the two experiential knowledges into the heart; the second is meditation which is the seeking of an intended experiential knowledge from them; the third is the acquisition of the experiential knowledge sought for and the enlightenment of the heart with it; the fourth is changing the state of the heart from what it was by reason of the acquisition of the light of the experiential knowledge; and the fifth is making the senses serve the heart in accordance with its renovated state. Then, just as when stone strikes iron and fire comes out, the place will be illuminated, the eye will see where it did not see, and the members will be raised up for action. Likewise the flintlock of the light of knowledge is thought which gathers the two experiential knowledges like the stones and iron are gathered and in a special manner; just as the stone hits the iron with a special blow, the light of experiential knowledge is sent out, as the fire springs from the iron, and the heart is changed by reason of this light until it leans to where it did not lean; just as the sight changes with the light of the fire, and one sees what he had not seen, the members are raised up for action in the requirements of the state of the heart; and like he who was incapable of action because of darkness, he rises up for action when he perceives what he did not see.
Thus the fruit of thought is learned knowledges and states. There is no end to learned knowledges and the states which are imagined to frequent the heart are not possible to count. Therefore, if the adept, MURİD, desires to limit the arts of thought and the channels through which he meditates, he cannot do so because the channels of thought are unlimited and its fruits have no end. Yes, we endeavor to control its channels, in addition to the tasks of the religious sciences and the states which are the stages, MAQÂMÊT, of the mystics bound on the path to Allah, SÂLIKÎN, that it will become a complete mastery, although the details of that would call for explanation of all the sciences, and the entirety of these books is only an explanation for some of them even though it includes knowledge of those sciences, deducted from which are special thoughts. So let us refer to them for mastery by the assemblies in order to allow them to pause on the channels of thought.
IV EXPLANATION OF THE CHANNELS OF THOUGHT

A. General

Know that thought might be concerned with a matter pertaining to the religion, or that it might be concerned with a matter other than the religion. However, our purpose is what pertains to the religion, so let us leave the other part. By religion we mean the interrelation-ship, MU'AMALA, between the worshipper and the Lord, and all the thoughts of the worshipper, either pertaining to the worshipper and his qualities and states, or to the Worshipped and His qualities and acts. It is not possible to be outside these two parts: 1) what pertains to the worshipper, whether it be consideration of what is beloved by the Lord or what is hateful to Him, for there is no need for thinking about what does not fall into these two parts; and 2) what pertains to the Lord whether it be consideration of His being, His qualities and His beautiful names, or whether it is in His acts, or His dominion, MULK, realm, MALAKUT, and all that is in the sky and on the earth and what lies between them.

An illustration will reveal to you how thought is confined to these parts. The state of those who are on their way to Allah, SA'TRIN. (4)

(1). The SM makes it clear from the first that this section does not include meditation of the Being of Allah: it concerns only the channels through which the adept, MURID, reaches experiential knowledge of Allah during his journey towards his master.

(2). The MU'ADAR of the reciprocal form of the triliteral verb 'AMALA, to make, thus to have dealings and relations with another, a behav- ing, conducting oneself towards another. In the vocabulary of the mystics, 'ILM AL MU'AMALA becomes the science of the duties of a believer towards Allah and man. Redhouse, p. 1879.

(3). MULK is royal power. Used in the Koran with regard to Allah in which case it is synonymous with MALAKUT. To Allah alone belongs MULK over heaven and earth and judgment. He gives MULK to whom He will. MALAKUT is used in the sense of the celestial realms of the angels. Ency. of Islam, iii. p. 721.

(4). In the mystic sense, those who are spiritually progressing through the chain of MAQAMAT. Redhouse p. 1100.
and those who long to meet him, resembles that of lovers, ُUSHSHIQ.  

Let us take the infatuated lover as our illustration. We say that the engrossed, absorbed lover has been inspired by his love. His thought does not wander from what pertains to his beloved or what pertains to himself. He meditates on his beloved, whether he meditates on his beauty and the loveliness of his form in itself, in order to enjoy his sight through thinking of him, or whether he meditates on his benevolent good acts which indicate his characteristics and his qualities in order to redouble his pleasure and strengthen his love. If he meditates on himself, his thought will be on his qualities which bring him down in the sight of the beloved in order to get rid of them, or he may meditate on the qualities which bring him closer to him, making him beloved, until he (i.e., the lover) is known by them. If he meditates on something outside these parts, then that is outside the limit of love and it is deficiency in (love), because complete perfect love is that which absorbs the lover and fills the heart until there is no space in it for something else.

The lover of Allah ought to be thus, his consideration and meditation not leaving his Beloved. Whenever his meditation has been confined to these four parts, he has not been outside the requirements of love in any way.

B. Meditation on One’s Self

Let us begin with the first part, which is meditation on the qualities of his lower soul, NAFS, and of the acts of his soul, in order to distinguish what is beloved thereof from what is hateful. It is this meditation which pertains to the experiential knowledge of the inter-relationship, MUFAALAT, which is that which is intended in this book.

The other part, 2, pertains to the knowledge of the unveiling, MUFAHFA.  

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(1) Singular, ُUSHSHIQ. A lover of Allah in the ecstatic sense. Redhouse, p. 1302.
(2) That is, meditation on the Being of Allah, the meanings of His names and his qualities.
(3) Allah’s openly manifesting himself to a saint. Redhouse, p. 1952.
Everything which is hateful or beloved with Allah is divided into tangible (categories), such as the obedient and disobedient acts, and intangible (categories) such as the saving and destructive qualities, the place of which is in the heart. We have mentioned the details in the Rūḥ al Muhliḵāt wal Munjiyāt. \(^1\) The obedient acts and the disobedient acts are divided into what pertains to the seven members \(^2\) and what is related to the entire body, such as fleeing from battle, disobedience to the parents and acquiescing in a forbidden habitation. There must be meditation on three matters in each of the hateful things: first, is it hateful to Allah or not? Possibly there is a thing whose condition does not appear hateful, though it is perceived by careful consideration. Secondly, meditation on the way to guard against something if it is hateful. Thirdly, is this hateful thing one of his qualities at present and if so he abandons it, or is he exposed to it in the future so he may guard himself against it, or he committed it in past states so he has need for making up for it.

It is the same with each of the beloved things. Each one is divided into these divisions, and if these parts were collected, the channels of thought in these parts would exceed a hundred. The worshipper is pushed toward thought, whether in all of them, or most of them. Explanation of the parts one by one of these divisions is lengthy, but this part is confined to four types: the obedient acts, the disobedient acts, the qualities of the saving matters of life and the qualities of the destructive matters of life. For each type let us mention an illustration in order that the Murid can measure all of them by it and in order that the door of thought will be opened for him and the way become broad.

\(^1\) A section of the Ḥiyā.
\(^2\) According to the SM, the members referred to are the two hands, the two legs, and the senses of sight, hearing and speech.
1. The Disobedient Acts

The first type is the disobedient acts. In the morning of each day a man ought to inspect all seven members in detail and then his entire body. Is he at present conjoined in a sin through it? If so, he abandons it. Or he committed a sin yesterday and he makes up for it by abandoning it and repentance. Or if he will be exposed to it during the day, he prepares to protect himself against it and avoid it.

He then observes his tongue and says that it is exposed to slander and falsehood, to thinking wrongly that his soul is purified, mocking at others, to stubborn opposition and jesting, to interference in affairs which do not concern him, and other offenses. First of all he decided within himself that they are offensive to Allah, and he meditates on the proofs of the Koran and the SUNNA as regards the severity of punishment for them. Then he meditates on his states and how he is exposed to them unconsciously, and he meditates on how to guard himself against them and he knows that that cannot be accomplished except by isolation and solitude, or by not associating with anyone except a pious man who disapproves of whatever is said if it is offensive to Allah. Otherwise, he puts pebbles in his mouth if he associates with anyone else so that they will be a reminder to him. Thus thinking will be on the devise (used) in guarding himself.

He meditates on his sense of hearing: he listens to slander, falsehood, useless speech, joking and innovation. Whether he hears this from Zayd or ʿAmrū, he ought to guard himself from them by withdrawing himself or by prohibiting the doing of evil.
Whatever that may be, let him meditate on his stomach: he disobeys Allah by eating and drinking to excess that which is allowable, which is offensive to Allah and strengthens lust which is the arm of Satan and the enemy of Allah; or by eating what is either forbidden or suspected (of being impure). He considers from whence his food, his clothes, his dwelling and his earnings come, and what his earnings are. He contemplates the allowable way and its approaches. Then he meditates on the devise of acquiring it and guarding himself against the forbidden. He then decides for himself that all the acts of worship are lost with the eating of the forbidden, and that the eating of the allowed is the basis of all the acts of worship; for Allah will not accept the prayer of a worshipper in the price of whose garment there is one forbidden dirham, as it was told in the traditions, ḲHABAR. Thus he meditates on the members and in this amount there is sufficiency without going into detail. Through this meditation, whatever he may acquire of real experiential knowledge with these states, he has occupied himself with self-examination, MURAQABA, all day long to preserve his members against them.

2. The Obedient Acts

As for the second type, which is the obedient acts, let us look first at the obligatory acts, FARĀ'ID, which are stipulated. How does he perform them? How does he guard them against deficiency and negligence? Or how does he make up for the deficiency by the frequent increase of supererogatory acts, NAWĀFIL? He then returns to each of his members, one by one, and meditates on the actions loved by Allah concerned with each of them. He says, for example, that the eye was created for looking into the realms of heaven and earth as an insight, 'IBRA, and to be used

(1) By which the sufis mean practicing religious meditation in serving Allah scrupulously. Redhouse, p. 1799.
in obeying Allah. It looks into the Book of Allah and the Sunna of the Prophet. I am able to employ the eye in reading the Koran and the Sunna, so why do I not do it? I am able to look at one who is obedient, honoring him, and cause gladness to enter his heart; I am able to look upon one who is sinful with contempt and rebuke him for his sin: so why do I not do it?

Likewise he says about his sense of hearing: I am capable of listening to the speech of a distressed heart, wisdom and knowledge, and recitations and DHIKR, so why do I leave it idle (i.e., the sense of hearing) when Allah has graced me with it? He put it in me in order to thank him and why am I ungrateful for the grace of Allah by wasting it or keeping it idle?

Thus he meditates on his tongue and says: I am able to draw close to Allah through teaching, preaching and drawing near to the hearts of the pious; and by inquiring about the conditions of the poor, ANWĀL AL FUQARA', and causing gladness to enter the heart of Zayd the Pious and 'Amr the Learned with a good word, and each good word is an act of almsgiving, ŠADAQA.\(^{(1)}\)

Then he meditates on his property, MĀL, and says: I am able to give a certain amount as alms for I am in no need of it. Whatever it is I may need, Allah has provided me with its equal, and if I am now in need, I am more in need of the regard for good works than I am in need for this wealth.

Thus he inspects all his members, the entirety of his body, his properties, cattle, slaves and sons. All these are his ways and

\(^{(1)}\) ŠADAQA is a supererogatory act of almsgiving, not the obligatory ŽAKĀT.
means. He is able to obey Allah through them, deducing with accurate
thought all possible acts of obedience through them, meditating on his
desire to speed toward obedience. He meditates on the sincerity of in-
tention in them, seeking the mark of deserts for them, (i.e., the ways
and means), until through them his act is purified. By this, measure
the rest of the obedient acts.

3. Destructive Qualities

As for the third type, which are the destructive qualities
whose place is in the heart, he knows them from what we have mentioned
in the RUBÚ AL MUHLIKĀT. They are mastery of lust, anger, avarice, pride,
vanity, hypocrisy, envy, evil thinking, inattention, self-deception, and
others. He searches his heart for these qualities, and if he considers
that his heart is free from them, he meditates on how to test it and seek
the signs of proof of it. The (lower) self, Nafs, always vows benevolence
from itself and breaks the vow. If it pretends to humility and innocence
from pride, it ought to try to carry a bundle of wood in the market as
the ancients, AWWALŪN, themselves used to try. If it pretends to pati-
ence, let it be exposed to the anger it receives from others. Then test
it by controlling the temper, and thuswise for all the qualities. This
is meditation as to whether or not it can be described as possessing
hateful qualities, and for that there are signs which we mentioned in
the RUBÚ AL MUHLIKĀT. Just as if he saw in himself vanity through a
deed, he meditates and says: my deed is done by my body, sense, ability
and will, all of which are not from me nor ascribed to me; it is of
Allah's creation and His grace to me; it is He who created me and created
my ability and will; it is He who gave movement to my members through
His power, and likewise my power and my will; so how can I be vain about
my deed or with myself when I cannot stand up for myself by myself?

If he feels himself to be proud, he determines what it is in
him that is foolish, and says (to his lower soul, Nafs): Why do you see
yourself greater? The great is he who is great with Allah and that will
be revealed after death. How many who are now unbelievers will die close
to Allah, having shed unbelief? And how many muslims will die sinners,
their state being changed at death by an evil end? If one knew that pride
was destructive and that its origin was foolishness, he would meditate
the remedy for removing it by engaging in the deeds of the humble.

If he finds in himself the appetite for food and greed, he medi-
tates (on the fact) that these are the qualities of beasts. If there were
perfection in the lust for food and intercourse, they would have been the
qualities of Allah and the angels, as are knowledge and power, and not
the qualities ascribed to beasts. The more greed one has, the more he
is like the beasts and farther from the favored angels. Likewise he deter-
mines what anger is in his soul, then meditates on the way to cure it.
All this we have mentioned in these books, and whoever wishes to broaden
the path of thought has no recourse but to acquire what is in these books.

4. Saving Qualities

As for the fourth type, the saving qualities, they are repentance,
regret for sins, patience in face of catastrophe, thanksgiving for grace,
fear, hope, indifference towards this world, sincerity, acts of obedience,
love of Allah and magnifying Him, contentment with His acts, longing for
Him, reverence and humility toward Him, and all we have mentioned in this
RUBā', and we have also mentioned their causes and their signs, so let the
worshipper each day meditate on his heart and which one (of these qualities) which draw him near to Allah he lacks, should he be backing in one of them. Let him know that they are states, _AHWAL_, which nothing except knowledge will fructify, and that nothing except meditation will fructify thoughts. If he desires to acquire for his soul the states of repentance and regret, let him inspect his sins first, and let him meditate on them, and then let him bring them together in himself and magnify them in his heart. Then, let him look to the threat and restriction of the law, _SHAR'I_, in their regard, and let him realize in himself that he is exposed to the hatred of Allah until a state of repentance emerges.

If he desires to rouse from his heart the state of thanksgiving, let him look to the goodness and benevolence of Allah toward him and the concealing of his sins and in His sending the beauty of His cover over him, in line with what we have partly explained in the Book of Thanksgiving, so let him read that.

If he desires a state of love and longing (for Allah), let him meditate on the Majesty, beauty, greatness and grandeur of Allah, all with a view toward the wonders of His wisdom and the excellences of His workmanship. We will point out part of it in the section on thought. (1)

If he desires a state of fear, let him first consider both his apparent and hidden sins, then let him consider the pangs of death and the questioning of _MUNKIR_ and _NAKIT_ which follows (2); then the torture of the grave with its snakes, scorpions and maggots; then the awe of the Last Calling at the blast of the trumpet; then to the awesome gathering

(1). The reference is to Section V of this book on how to meditate on the creation of Allah.

(2). "The Unknown" and "The Repudiating". The two angels said by Muhammad to visit the dead in their graves and to interrogate them as to their belief in the prophet and his religion. Hughes, Dictionary of Islam.
when all creatures are collected in one place; then the discussion of the Last Account of even the most minute of matters; and then the path and its narrowness and sharpness and the importance of the matter for him: if he goes to the left, he will be with those of the Fire, ASHĀʾ AL NĀR; or if he goes to the right, he will enter the Everlasting Abode, DĀR AL QARĀR. Then, after the awes of the resurrection, let him bring forth a picture of Hell, JAHANNU, into his heart with its iron bars, its terrors and chains, its bonds, deadly food, and suppuration, the varieties of torture to be found and the hideousness of the shapes of the rebellious JINN who are in charge, whose skin, whenever it is burned to a crisp, is again renewed, and whenever they want to leave are made to stay, and of those who seeing hell from a distant place hear only the puff and hiss of the intense flames, and so on, as its explanation is in the Koran.

If he desires to summon forth the state of hope, let him consider the Garden and its pleasure, trees, rivers, houris, young boys, its lasting joy and permanent dominion. This is the way to meditation, through which he seeks the knowledge which will beget for him an inclination for the states loved (by Allah) or to be free from the blameworthy qualities. We have discussed each of these states in a single book which will aid him in detailing thought. (1) But as for the mentioning of this in general, there are none more useful than meditative reading of the Koran, which is a collection of all the stages and states, and therein is a cure for the worlds, as well as that which bequeaths fear, hope, patience, thanksgiving, love, longing and the rest of the states.

5. The Koran and Hadith

It (i.e., the Koran) cries out against all the blameworthy qualities, and the worshipper ought to read it, and recall (to his mind) the ĀYA on which he needs to meditate time after time, even though it be a hundred times, for the reading of one ĀYA in meditation and understanding, is better than (the reading of) the whole Koran, KHITNA, without reflection and understanding. Let him pause in contemplation of it, even though it is for one night, for behind every word of it there are unlimited mysteries which are not grasped except through exact meditation on the purity of the heart\(^{(1)}\) and the truth of interrelationship (between him and Allah)\(^{(2)}\). It is the same in reading the traditions, AKHEĂR, of the Messenger of Allah, for he was given tomes of words, and each word of his words is one sea of the sea of wisdom; if the learned man really contemplated them, his consideration of them would not cease during the length of his life, for the explanation of the single verses and traditions, one by one, are lengthy.

Consider the saying of the Messenger of Allah, "Verily the Holy Spirit inspired my awe: love whoever you will, since verily you

\(^{(1)}\) QALB as used by the sufis does not signify the heart of the flesh but a transcendental subtlety or non-material essence whereby the realities of all things are perceived and reflected as in a mirror. This power to perceive and reflect depends on its purity. It is veiled by the senses to a greater or less degree and as these veils are removed, its vision of reality becomes more perfect, until the heart is purged of everything except the thought of Allah. The QALB represents the whole inner nature, intellectual, emotional and volitional, and the region spiritual experience. It is the point of union between body and soul, where the spiritual is joined with the temporal. The heart, including the reason, is the means by which reality is perceived and interpreted and is the instrument of knowledge, both ĪLM and MAĞFA. Ency. of Rel. and Ethios, xii. p. 15. Macdonald, Religious Attitudes, p. 221 ff. Smith, An Early Mystic of Baghdad, p. 87 ff.

\(^{(2)}\) This phrase is supplied in the SM's explanation.
are going to part from him; live as you will since verily you will die; do as you will since verily you will be rewarded for it." These words are the collection of the proverbs of the ancients and moderns and they are sufficient for a lifetime for those who contemplate on them, since if they paused on their meanings and (the meanings) truly predominate over their hearts, they will absorb them and this will completely come between them and looking toward the world.

This is the way of thought on the sciences of interrelationship (between Allah and His worshippers), and on the qualities of the worshipper where they are beloved of Allah or detested. The beginner ought to be absorbed in these thoughts so that his heart may be occupied by praiseworthy manners and the honorable stages, and that he may free himself, inside and out, from what is hateful. Let him know that although this is preferable to the rest of the forms of worship, yet it is not the final goal (for the SĀLIKHIN)\(^1\), but rather, he who is occupied with it, is veiled from the goal of the righteous, which is the delight of thinking on the majesty of Allah and His beauty and the absorption of the heart to the point where it passes away from its "self", YAFNI I'AN MA FSIHĪ, which is to say it forgets itself, its states, stages and qualities, and becomes fully absorbed in the beloved, like the infatuated lover, ṬASHIQ, when he meets the Beloved, AL HABĪB. Then he does not devote himself to consideration of the states and characteristics of his "self", but he remains as one dazzled, unaware of himself. This is the utmost of the delight of the lovers, ṬUSKHJ.\(^2\)

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(1) An explanatory phrase by the SM. The SĀLIKHIN (Sing., SĀLIK) are those wayfarers on the path of Allah who have eliminated the temporal world in their relationship with Him, i.e., they do not act except for Allah. Dict. of Tech. Terms, p. 431. Dictionary of Islam, p. 563.

(2) This paragraph contains a good portion of the technical ideas and terms used in Islamic mysticism. For further information see Ency. of Islam under "Tasawwuf", Ency. of Rel. and Ethics under "Sufis". Also W. H. T. Gairdner, "The Way" of a Mohammedan Mystic, Bristol, 1912 and Appendix 10 of Scherer’s translation of Iyul al Wali by Al Ghazalī, entitled O Youth, Beirut, 1933.
What we have mentioned is meditation on building up the innermost, that it may be fit for approaching Allah), AL QURB, and arriving at (a vision of Allah), WISĀL. If he loses all his life bettering himself, when will he be graced by the approach (to Allah)? Al Khawwās used to rove through the desert and was met by Al Ḥusayn bin Mansūr (1) who said, "What are you doing?" He replied, "I rove over the deserts to improve my state of trust (In Allah), TAWĀKKUL." Al Ḥusayn said, "You have passed your life in building up your innermost, but where is the passing away, AL FANĀ', into the oneness of Allah, and the passing away into the One Reality, AL WĀHID AL HAQQ, which is the goal of those who seek and the utmost felicity for the righteous?"

6. The Diary

As for freeing one's self from the destructive qualities, it runs the course of secession from the prescribed period of waiting before marriage (is allowable) (2), but as for assuming the saving qualities, it runs the course of the preparation of the woman of her bride's outfit, cleaning her face and combing her hair, in order to be fit through this to meet her husband. If she spent all her life cleansing her vagina and decorating her face, this would be a veil keeping her from meeting with her beloved. Thus you ought to understand the way of the way of the religion if you are to be of those sitting in company with Allah, AHL AL MUWĀLISA. If you are as the bad worshipper, not stirring except in fear of being struck and out

(1). Abū al Mughīth al Ḥusayn ibn Mansūr al Hallaj, Sufi martyr. (Hangod 309)

(2). AL 'IDDA FI IN-NIKAH. AL 'IDDA according to the SHARĪ'AH is the prescribed period of waiting during which widows and divorced women cannot contract a new marriage after the dissolution of a previous one. (Ency. of Islam ii. p. 445) AL NIKAH, though properly sexual intercourse, has come to mean marriage, and in the Koran is used exclusively of the marriage contract. (Ency. of Islam iii. p. 912)
of greed for payment, you can continue tiring your body with the outward acts (of worship), for there is between you and the heart a thick veil. When you accomplish the real acts you will be of those of the Garden, but for sitting in company with Allah, there are other peoples. When you know the scope of meditation in the sciences of interrelationship which are between the worshipper and his Lord, you ought to adopt them as your habit and your motto morning and night. Do not neglect yourself, your qualities furthering you from Allah, and your states bringing you close to Him. Indeed each devotee, MURĪD, (1) ought to have a diary, JARĪDA, (2) in which to fix all the saving and destructive qualities and the disobedient and obedient acts, examining himself by it each day.

Consideration of ten of the destructive qualities suffices him and if he is free from them, he is free from the others. They are avarice, pride, vanity, hypocrisy, envy, intense anger, greed for food, sex greed, love of money and love of grandeur; (3) and ten of the saving qualities: regret for sins, patience in face of catastrophe, contentment with the decrees (of Allah), QADĀʾ, (4) thanksgiving for favors, moderation of fear and hope, indifference toward the world, sincerity in works, good conduct with the people, love of Allah, and reverence to Him. (5) These then are

(1). From the verb to want, desire. In the derwish orders the novice is known as a MURĪD while he is purging his heart of the blameworthy qualities. It is used here in a broader sense to include one who is seeking mystic enlightenment.

(2). The SM explains that a JARĪDA is a small copybook used for taking accounts.

(3). The SM says that these are the basic evils and all others are branches from them.

(4). QADĀʾ is the universal, general and eternal Decree of Allah, His will and its eternal connection with creation. Ency. of Islam, ii. p. 603.

(5). The SM says that these are the basic good qualities.
twenty traits, ten blameworthy and ten praiseworthy. When he has been freed from one blameworthy quality, he crosses it off his diary, ceases thinking about it, and thanks Allah for his sufficiency against it and the freeing of his heart from it, knowing that the matter would not have been accomplished but for the accordance of Allah and His assistance, for had He left him to rely upon himself, he would not have been able to have erased the least of vices from his soul. Then he concerns himself with the other nine until he lines out all of them.

Likewise, his "self" seeks to be characterized by the saving qualities. When he is characterized by one of them, such as repentance or regret, for instance, he crosses it out and occupies himself with the rest. This is what an industrious devotee needs. As for most of the people who are considered among the pious, they ought to record in their diaries the obvious disobedient acts such as eating suspicious food, freely using the tongue for slander and tale bearing, hypocrisy, self praise, exceeding the limits of enmity toward enemies, excesses of loyalty toward friends, flattering people by leaving off ordering them to do good and forbidding them from evil.

7. Advice to Theologians

Most of those who consider themselves among the foremost of the pious are not free from a number of these disobedient acts in their physical natures, and it is not possible for that which has not purified the physical nature from sins to work towards building up the heart and purifying it, since upon each group of people there prevails some kind of disobedient act, and their searching ought to be for it and their meditation (ought to be) on it, not on disobedient acts from which they are removed. For example the reverent scholar, ✡ALIM, in most cases is not above showing off his knowledge, seeking fame and spreading →

→his reputation,
whether it be in teaching or in preaching. Whoso does thusly is exposed
to great temptation from which only the righteous will be saved, for
although his theology, KALAM, be acceptable and influential upon hearts,
he will not be free from self admiration, vanity, self-adornment and af-
fection, which are among the destructive matters. If his theology is
refuted, he is not free from anger, haughtiness and hatred for whomever
has refuted it, which is more than his anger against whomever refutes
someone else's theology. Perhaps Satan might deceive him and say, "Your
anger is from the point of view that he refuted truth and denied it."
If he finds a difference between the theology of the one who opposed him
or opposed another scholar, then he is deceived and a mockery for Satan.
Then, whatever he may have---comfort at the acceptance (of his theology),
pleasure from praise, and scorn for the shunning or ignoring of it---he
is not free from pretense and affection in beautification of expression
and production, cautiously attracting praise. Allah does not like pretend-
ers. Satan may deceive him saying, "Your careful concern in the beautifi-
cation of expressions and the pretense in it in order that truth will be
spread and its position in the heart be enhanced is elevation for the
religion of Allah." If his pleasure in the beauty of phraseology and
in the praises of the people for him is greater than his pleasure in the
praise of the people for one of his colleagues, then he is deceived,
although they go about seeking eminence and he considers that his aim is
religion.

Whatever of these qualities his conscience may conceive of,
its obviousness will be apparent, so that the one who reveres him and
believes in his excellence, shows him more respect and rejoices greatly
and joyfully in meeting him, more than he who goes to an extreme in be-
friending others (than him) though the others may deserve this friendship.
Perhaps the 'Ulema' will finally be as jealous as women in regard to this matter. It is difficult for one of them that some of his pupils should abandon him for another, even though he knows that he is benefited from another and profits from him in his religion. All of this is an infiltration of the hidden destructive qualities which are residing in his heart, which the 'Alim might consider himself saved from, although he is self-deceived through them, and this is revealed through these signs. The temptation of the 'Alim is great, be he on his way to possessing or perishing, having no ambition in the matter of the security of the common people.

(1)

Whoever has felt these qualities in himself must retire in solitude, seek obscurity, and decline to give religious judgments, FATWA, whenever he may be asked. In the time of the Companions, the mosque used to be filled with a group of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, all of whom were MUFtIS. They used to defer to each other in giving FATWAs, each wishing that the other would suffice. At this, one ought to beware of the devils among mankind if they say, "Don't do this! For if this door is opened, knowledge will be destroyed for mankind." Let him say to them, "The religion of Islam can dispense with me, for it was prosperous before me and so will it be after me. Were I to die, the pillars of Islam would not be destroyed, since the religion can do without me, but I cannot do without an improvement of my heart. But as for that leading to the destruction of knowledge, it is imagination which indicates the utmost ignorance."

(1) The SM wryly comments that there are more who are perishing.
(2) Singular, FATWA.
(3) According to the SM the reference is to the Prophet's Mosque in al Medina.
(4) The SM's comment is that their harm is more severe than the evil of the devils of the JINN.
People, if they were imprisoned, bound and then threatened with the Fire for seeking knowledge, love of leadership and standing would bring them to break the bonds, destroy the walls of the fortresses, go out, and occupy themselves with seeking knowledge: for knowledge will not be obliterated as long as Satan tempts people with leadership, nor will Satan slacken in his work until the Day of Resurrection, for peoples who will have no share in the Last Day will rise up to spread knowledge. As the Messenger of Allah has said, "Verily, Allah will support this religion with peoples without good character," and "Verily, Allah will support the religion with a profligate." Therefore, the َ‌`Alīm need ought not be deceived by these ambiguities, occupying himself in mixing with the people until he cultivates in his heart a love for eminence, praise and self glory, which are the seeds of hypocrisy.

The Messenger of Allah said, "Love of eminence and money will cause hypocrisy to grow in the heart, just as water causes grass to grow." He also said, "The spoilage done by two fierce wolves in a sheep pen is not more than that done to the religion of the Muslim by the love of eminence and money." There is no uprooting of the love of eminence except it be by withdrawing from people, fleeing from their association and abandoning everything which develops his eminence in their hearts.

Let the thinking of the َ‌`Alīm be scrutiny of the hidden things of these qualities in his heart, and in deducing the way of deliverance from them. This is the duty of the pious َ‌`Alīm. As for such people as us, our meditation ought to be in what strengthens our faith in the Day of Judgment. For if the pious forefathers saw us, they certainly would say, "These (people) do not believe in the Day of Judgment," for our deeds are not the deeds of one who believes in the Garden and the Fire, since whoever fears something, flees it, and whoever hopes for something seeks
it. We have known that fleeing from the Fire is by abandoning the suspicious, forbidden and disobedient, whereas we are absorbed in them, and that seeking the Garden is by increasing the supererogatory acts of obedience, whereas we are negligent in the obligations. Nothing of the fruit of knowledge has befallen us unless it follows our example in holding fast to the world and rushing together upon it like hounds.

It is said that if this were blameworthy, the 'ULEMĀ' are more correct and more worthy of avoiding it that are we. Would that we had been like the common people, so when we died, our sins would die with us. How great is the allurement to which we would have been exposed if we had contemplated. We ask Allah to make us good and do good through us, and to accord us repentance before we pass on. Verily, He is generous, kind and gracious to us.

8. Summary

These are the channels of thought of the 'ULEMĀ' and the pious in the knowledge of the interrelationship, and if they have achieved them, they will abandon looking toward their "selves" and will be lifted up from them to meditation on the majesty and greatness of Allah and the enjoyment of seeing Him, MUSHĀHADA, with the heart's eye, but that will not occur until one is rid of all the destructive qualities and has assumed all the saving qualities. If anything of this (i.e., the enjoyment of MUSHĀHADA), appears before that, then it is weak, ailing, distressing and hopeless, and it is as weak as a flash of lightning without stability or permanence. He will be as the lover alone with the Beloved, though beneath his garment will be snakes and scorpions biting him time and again, thus embittering the pleasure of the Beatific Vision. There is no way for completing the enjoyment except by expelling
the scorpions and snakes from his garment, for these blameworthy qualities are scorpions and snakes and they are the causes of pain and confusion. In the grave, the pain of their stinging will be more than the stinging of the scorpions and snakes.

This is enough warning on the channels of meditation of the worshipper on the qualities of his self, Nafs, as they are hated or loved by his Almighty Lord.

C. Thinking on What Pertains to Allah

1. On His Being

The second part is thinking on the majesty, greatness and grandeur of Allah, and in this there are two stages, the highest stage being meditation on His being, Dhātihī, on His qualities and the meanings of His names. This has been forbidden since it has been said, "Meditate on the Creation of Allah and do not meditate on His being," since minds are perplexed in Him and only the righteous have power to extend their vision to Him, and then they cannot maintain their vision, but (as for) the rest of creation, the states of their vision in comparison to the majesty of Allah is like the state of vision of the bat in comparison to the light of the sun which he cannot bear at all, since he hides himself in daylight although he returns at night to look upon what is left of the sun's light if any remains. The states of the righteous are like the state of a man looking at the sun: he is able to look upon it, but cannot sustain his vision, and he is afraid for his vision if he continues looking at it. His blinding observation of it begets him weak sight and distracts his vision. Likewise, looking into the being of Allah begets only perplexity, amazement and confusion of the mind.
It is therefore proper that one should not expose himself to the channels of meditation on the being and qualities of Allah. Most minds cannot bear it, since the little bit (of instruction) that has been declared by some of the 'ULMA', which is that Allah is completely free of place, entirely without relationship to regions and directions, neither inside the world nor outside it, and neither attached to the world nor separated from it, has perplexed the intelligence of some people until they denied Him, since they were not able to bear hearing Him or knowing Him. Indeed, a group were too weak to bear even less than this when it is said to them that He is too great and too exalted to have a head, leg, hand, eye and limb, and that He should have an individual body which has shape and bulk, they deny this and think it is impignity of the greatness of Allah and His majesty, (1) until some of the foolish of the common people said that this is a description of an Indian melon, not a description of a deity, for the wretched one thought that majesty and greatness is in these appendages. This is because man does not know anything but himself and does not regard anything as great but himself, and what is not similar to him in his qualities, he does not understand the greatness in it.

Yes, the utmost of his ability is to consider himself beautiful sitting on his couch with his servants before him to obey his command, and certainly the utmost of his ability is to evaluate that as the right of Allah in order to understand greatness. But, if the fly had intelligence

(1) The SM says that these sects are the AL HASHWIYA AL KARRAMIYA. These sects are of those whose conception of Allah is anthropomorphic, MUSHABBIHA. AHE AL HASHW is a contemptuous term for the men of tradition who accepted and even preferred the anthropomorphic traditions. AL KARRAMIYA held that the divine being is a substance though without human members. See Ency. of Islam under HASHWIYA and KARRAMIYA.
and it was said to him that your creator does not have two wings, no hand, no leg and no flying ability, he would deny it and say, "How is it that my creator is more deficient than I? Will his wings be clipped or will there be a time when he cannot fly, or I will have means and power and he will not have the same, although he is my creator and the one who shaped me?" The intelligence of most people is near to this intelligence. Man is in ignorance, darkness and ingratitude. Therefore, Allah revealed to some of His prophets, "Do not inform my worshippers of my qualities so they will deny me, but tell about me (in terms) they will understand," since consideration of the being of Allah and His qualities is dangerous in this respect and the ethics of legislation and goodness (for the sake of) the people necessitate than one does not expose himself to the channels of meditation on Him.

2. On His Acts

But let us turn to the second stage which is consideration of His acts, the channels of His decree, QADAR, the wonders of His fashioning, and the excellences of His command in His creation, for they indicate His majesty, grandeur, sacredness and sublimity, and they indicate the perfection of His knowledge and wisdom, and the execution of His will and His power.

One considers His qualities from their effects. We cannot bear consideration of His qualities as we can bear to look at the earth whenever it may be lighted with the light of the sun. From that we deduce the greatness of the sun's light, and consideration of the effects gives a certain indication of the effector, although it does not replace consideration of the effector itself. All existing things of the world
are effects of the power of Allah and an illumination from the il-
muminations of His being, since there is no darkness more severe than
nonexistence, and no light clearer than existence. The existence of
all things is an illumination from the illuminations of His exalted
and sacred being, since the form, QAWĀM, of existence of things is in
the person of the All-Effecting, AL QUYYUM, just as the form of the
light of (heavenly) bodies is in the enlightening sun itself. When-
ever part of the sun is uncovered, the custom has been to place a
basin of water so you can see the sun (reflected) in it in order to
consider it. The water then becomes a medium which decreases the
light of the sun a little so that consideration of it can be borne.
Thus His works are a medium in which we see the qualities of the Maker,
and we are not dazzled by the lights of His being after we have been
removed from them little by little through the medium of His works.
This is the secret of the prophet's saying, "Meditate on the creation
of Allah, but do not meditate on the Exalted being of Allah."
V. EXPLANATION OF HOW TO MEDITATE ON THE CREATION OF ALLAH

A. General

Know that everything in existence, except Allah, is an act of Allah and His creation; and that every atom of all the atoms, whether of essence, body, attribute or thing qualified, possesses wonders and strangenesses which show the wisdom, power, majesty and greatness of Allah, the enumeration of which is impossible, because if the sea were ink for which (to enumerate such wonders) the sea would be exhausted before one hundredth of them are recorded. But we will refer to some of them, so that they will be used as an example for the others.

We say that created existing things are divided into that whose origin is not known and which is not possible for us to meditate upon. How many existing things there are we do not know! For as Allah said, "And he createth what you do not know," (1) and "Glory be to Him who created pairs, of what the earth causes to sprout up, of themselves, and of what they do not know." (2) Allah said, "We have created you, so why not count (it) true?" (3) (And they are divided) into that whose origin and entirety is known but whose details are unknown. He makes it possible for us to meditate on their details which are divided into what we comprehended with the sense of sight and what we do not comprehend through sight. In what we do not comprehend by sight, such as the angels, jinn, devils, the throne of

(1). Koran XVI 8
(2). Koran XXXVI 36
(3). Koran LVI 57
Allah, ʾARSH, and the chair of Allah, KURSTI, among other things, the scope of thinking is among those which are constraining and obscure, so let us turn to what is closer to the understanding which are those things that are perceivable by the sense of sight, i.e., the seven heavens and the earth and what is between them. The sky is visible through its stars, sun, and moon and their movements and rotation from sunrise to sunset. The earth is visible through its mountains, minerals, rivers, seas, animals and plants. What is between the sky and earth is the atmosphere perceived by its clouds, rain, snow, thunder, lightning, thunderbolts, meteors, storms, and winds.

These are the kinds of things which are visible in the heavens and earth and what is between them. Each of the phenomena are divided into a type, and each type is divided into parts, and each part is subdivided into categories. There is no end to the division and subdivision in the variegation of its qualities, forms and tangible and intangible meanings, all of which is an avenue for thought. An atom of the heavens and earth, either mineral, plant, animal, astronomical or a star, does not move unless Allah be its mover, or that in its movement is a bit of wisdom, or two, ten or a thousand bits of wisdom, all of which is a testimony for Allah in His oneness, BIL WAHDANIYYA, and an indication of His majesty and grandeur. They are the signs pointing to Him, and the Koran has come to encourage meditation on these signs. For as Allah said, "Verily in the creation of the heavens

(1) Both ʾARSH and KURSTI occur in the Koran as words for the throne of Allah. Some have seen KURSTI as the stool placed in front of a throne on which a sovereign rests his feet, but in general the terms are synonymous, although KURSTI has also been allegorically interpreted as simply His knowledge. Ency. of Islam, ii. p. 1156
and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day are signs for
those of insight;"(1) just as Allah said in His AYAT from the first of
the Koran to the last, so let us mention the modality of thinking on
some of the signs.

1. Man

Among His signs is man created from sperm, NUTFA. (2) The
closest thing to you is yourself and in you are wonders which show the
greatness of Allah and which consume lifetimes in stopping to write
about one hundredth of them, and you are heedless of them. But oh who
is heedless and ignorant of himself? How can you be greedy for knowledge
of something other than you when Allah in His beloved book has commanded
you to reflect upon yourself? He said: "And in yourselves; will ye not
then clearly see?"(3) He mentioned that you are creature from dirty
sperm and said, "Blast man! How ungrateful he is! From what kind of
thing did He create him? From a drop! He created him, and assigned
his power, then the way He made easy. Then He caused him to die and

(1) Koran III 187
(2) The Koranic terms for the reproductive cycle (See LXXV 38-9; XXIII
12-15; XXII 5; XXIII 12-14) are figuratively translated into English
by Bell. As used in the text of al Ghazali, I have chosen to
render them in scientific terms:

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<tr>
<th>KORAN</th>
<th>BELL</th>
<th>MY TRANSLATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>SALALA MIN TIN</td>
<td>Extract of clay</td>
<td>Mud</td>
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<tr>
<td>QARAFMARTIN</td>
<td>Sure receptacle</td>
<td>Womb</td>
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<tr>
<td>MANNI</td>
<td>Fluid</td>
<td>Semen</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUTFA</td>
<td>Drop</td>
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<td>ALAQA</td>
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<td>MUGHA</td>
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<td>TIZAM</td>
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<td>LAHM</td>
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(3) Koran LI 21
buried him; then when He willeth, He raiseth him again." (1) Allah said: "Among His signs is that He hath created you of dust, and, lo, ye are humankind spreading yourselves abroad." (2) Allah said: "Then he was a blood-clot, and He created and formed (him)." (3) Allah said: "Did We not create you from water shameful, which We placed in a depository safe, until a limit known?" (4) Allah said: "He hath created man from a drop; yet, see, he is an open disputor." (5) Allah said: "Verily, We created man from a drop, a mixture,..." (6) Then He mentioned how the sperm became an embryo and the embryo became a foetus and the foetus became bones. Allah said, "We have created man of an extract of clay; then We made him a drop in a receptacle sure; then We created the drop a clot, then We created the clot a morsel, then We created the morsel bones, and We clothed the bones with flesh, then We produced him, another creature; blessed be Allah, the best of creators." (7)

Repetition of the mention of sperm in the Koran is not so that one listens to its explanation and then leaves off meditation on its meaning. So now consider the sperm. It is a drop of dirty water which, if left for an hour to be hit by the air, will spoil and putrify. How did the Lord of Lords bring it forth from the loins and breast and how did He bring male and female together and cast intimacy and love into their hearts? And how did He lead them through the chain of love and lust to intercourse? And how did He extract the sperm from the man in the act of intercourse? And how did He bring the blood of menstruation

(1). Koran LXXX 16-22
(2). Koran XXX 19
(3). Koran LXXV 38
(4). Koran LXXVII 20-22
(5). Koran XVI 4
(6). Koran LXXVI 2
(7). Koran XXIII 12-14
from the depths of the blood vessels and gather it in the womb? Then, how did He create the infant from sperm and water it with the liquid of the menstruation and nourish it until it grew, was cultured and enlarged? How did He make sperm which is shining white a red embryo? Then how did He make it a foetus? Then how did He separate the parts of the sperm which are equal and similar into bones, nerves, veins, sinews and flesh? Then how did He form from the flesh, nerves and veins and the outward appendages? Then He rounded the head, cleaved the ears, eyes, nose, mouth and the rest of the openings. Then spread out the hand and leg, separating their tips into fingers and into joints. Then how did He form the inner parts: the heart, stomach, liver spleen, lung, womb, bladder and intestines, each one in a special form, with a special size and special function?

Then how did He separate each one of these parts into further divisions, and form the eye of seven layers, each with special characteristics and form and if one layer is lost or one of its qualities passes away, the eye can no longer see. If we went on to describe what wonders and signs there are in these single members, one by one, it would consume lifetimes.

Let us look now to the bones which are solid strong substances. How did He create them from fine insignificant semen and then make them a form and support for the body? Then he assigned them various functions and forms. There are big, little, long, round, hollow, filled, wide and narrow (bones), and when man needed movement with his whole body (while) with part of his appendages he needed movement for going back and forth between necessary objects, He did not make his bones one, but many bones, between which are joints so that movement is facilitated through them. He arranged the form of each one of them for suitability
to the desired movement. Then he connected the joints and tied them
to each other with sinews which He caused to grow from one of the two
ends of the bone, and attached it to another bone as a bond. Then He
created on one of the two ends of the bone additional (attachments)
projecting from it, and on the other end (of the bone) are holes
sinking into it which agree in shape with the additional (attachments)
so that they will enter and fit into each other. So it came to be that
when the human being wishes to move a part of his body, it does not
resist him. If there were no joints, this would be impossible for him.

Then consider how He created the bones of the head, and how
He gathered them and formed them. He has formed them from fifty five
bones of various shapes and forms. He put them together from whence
He made the ball of the head symmetrical as you see it. Among them
are six bones which are especially for the skull, fourteen for the
upper region and two for the lower region, the remainder being the
teeth, some of which are wide for grinding and some sharp for cutting;
they are the eyeteeth, molars and the incisors. Then He made the neck
for the head and formed it from seven rounded and hollowed vertebrae
in which there are alterations, increases and decreases so that they
can be fit together, and mentioning the wisdom therein is long.

Then He set the neck on the back and composed the back, from
the bottom of the neck to the end of the spine, from twenty four
vertebrae. He composed the spinal cord from three various parts and
the coccyx is connected to it from the bottom and it too is composed of
three parts. Then He joined the bones of the back to the bones of the
chest, shoulders, hands, pelvis, spinal cord, thighs, legs and toes.
We will not take long in mentioning their number. The sum total of
bones in the body of man is 248, besides the small bones which fill the
space between the joints. Consider how all this was created from thin insignificant sperm!

The intention in mentioning the number of bones is not that one should know their number, for this is an easy science which physicians and anatomists know. Rather, the object is that one should consider through them their Arranger and Creator. How did he prepare them, arrange them accordingly, distinguish between their shapes and quantities, and specify this certain number, because had He increased them by one (bone), it would have been a catastrophe for man who would then have to eliminate it, or if there were a shortage of one, there would be a deficiency he would have to make up for. The physician considers them in order to know the treatment for setting them right, and the people of innersight consider them in order to seek proofs through them of the majesty of their Creator and their Shaper. How great is the difference between the two points of view!

Look how Allah created the instruments for moving the bones, which are the muscles. He created in the body of man five hundred and twenty nine muscles. The muscle is composed of flesh, nerve, ligament and membrane of various quantities and forms, depending on the variation of their positions and requirements, and He assigned their needs. Twenty four of the muscles are for moving the eye and eyelids. If one of them were deficient, the eye would cease to function. Thus, for every member (of the body) there are muscles in special number and with special power. The matter of the nerves, blood vessels, veins and arteries, their number, origins and networks, is more astounding than all this, and the explanation would lengthen. There is scope for meditation on these parts one by one, on these members one by one, and then on the whole body. This is all consideration of the wonders of the substances of the body,
however, the wonders of the meanings and characteristics which cannot be perceived by the sense are even greater.

How consider what is both inward and outward in man, and his body and characteristics. You will see in him wonders and workmanship which call for admiration, all of which is the fashioning of Allah in a drop of filthy water. You see in this His workmanship with a drop of water. What then is His workmanship in the realms of Heaven and its stars? What is His wisdom in their placings, forms, quantities, numbers, the gathering and scattering of some of them, the variety of forms and the interval between their risings and settings? You must not think that one atom of the realms of Heaven is void of wisdom, because it is greater in creation, more perfect in workmanship and more full of wonders than the body of man, since there is no comparison for all that is one the earth to the wonders of Heaven. Therefore, Allah said: "Are ye more difficult to create or the heaven? He built it, raised high its vaults and set it in order, made dark its night, and brought out its morning brightness."(1)

Return now to the sperm. First, contemplate its condition, and secondly, what became of it. Contemplate that if the JINN and mankind were to resolve to create for the sperm hearing, sight, intelligence, power, knowledge or soul, or to create in it a bone, a blood vessel, a nerve, skin or hair, would they be able to do it? For if they wanted to know the depth of its meaning or the modality of its creation after Allah created it, they would be incapable of doing so.

(1). Koran LXXIX 27-29
You would be amazed if you were to look at a picture of a man drawn on the wall which the painter had been very clever in drawing so that it approximated the form of man. If the one who observed it were to say that it is a man, your astonishment at the workmanship, skill, light hand and exact intelligence of the painter would be great, and his place in your heart would be great although you know that this is a picture, although it was completed with paint, pen and hand through the wall, through ability, through knowledge and through will, and that something of this is not the work of the painter or his creation, but it is the creation of someone other than him, although the end of his act was bringing together the paints and the wall in a special arrangement. Yet your astonishment at him increases and you consider him great.

You see that the dirty sperm was non-existent. Its Creator created it in the loins and breasts and then He expelled it from them and gave it form, beautified its form and arranged it, made its arrangement and shaping good, divided its similar parts into various parts, set the bones firmly in their places, beautified the shapes of its members, adorned it outside and in, arranged its blood vessels and nerves, making them a channel for its nourishment as a means for survival, and made it hearing, seeing, knowing and speaking; and He created for it the back as a support for its body, the stomach containing the instruments for its nourishment, and the head as the centre of the sense; and He opened the eyes and arranged their layers, made their form, color and appearances beautiful, and then protected them with eye lids to screen and protect them, make them shine, and to push the dirt out of them; and then, in a piece of matter the size of a grain of lentils (i.e., the pupil) He made a picture of the heavens appear with all the spaciousness of its areas and the distances of its regions, and (man) looks at it!
Then He fashioned the two ears and stored bitter water in them in order to protect his hearing and to keep insects out of them. Then He surrounded it with the shell of the ear so that it would collect the sound and channel it to the eardrum so that he can hear the crawling of insects toward it. Then He put windings and crooks into it in order to increase (the sound of the) movement of whatever may crawl in them and its way is thereby prolonged so that it will rouse up the owner (of the ear) from his sleep if an insect moves toward it during sleep. Then He projected the nose from the middle of the face, making its form beautiful, opened the two nostrils and put in it the sense of smell in order that he will be guided to his food and nourishment by the breathing in of odors, and to breath in air through the aperture of the two nostrils, nourishing his heart and comforting the heat of his innermost.

He opened the mouth and put into it a tongue with which to speak, interpret and express what is in the depths of the heart. He embellished the mouth with teeth in order to be instruments for grinding, breaking and cutting. He firmly fixed their roots and sharpened their edges, whitened their color and arranged them in lines with their edges evenly placed side by side as if they were rows of pearls. He created the two lips and beautified their color and form to close the mouth and block its opening as well as to perfect pronunciation. He created the larynx and formed it for the outlets of the voice, and created for the tongue an ability for movement and flexibility in order to intercept the voice in various outlets through which the sounds vary, and through their abundance the method of speaking is broadened. Then He created the larynxes into various shapes varying in wideness, harshness, softness, solidity, pliability, length and shortness through which means voices are varied. Two voices do not resemble each other since differences
appear between two voices so that the hearer distinguishes people from each other in darkness by the voice alone. He then adorned the head with hair and earlocks, and adorned the face with the beard and eyebrows, and adorned the eyebrows with fine hair and curved form, and adorned the eyes with eyelashes.

He then created the internal members, enjoining upon each one a special function: the stomach for preparing the food; the liver for transferring food into the blood; and the spleen, gall bladder and kidney for serving the liver. The spleen serves by drawing out the black bile (i.e., from the kidney), the gall bladder serves by drawing out the (yellow) bile; the kidney serves by drawing out the water; and the bladder helps the kidney by receiving the water from it and then discharges it by way of the uretha; and the blood vessels serve the liver by conducting the blood to the rest of the parts of the body.

Then He created the hands and lengthened them for stretching out to grasp objects. He broadened the palm, separated the five fingers, separated each finger into three joints, and placed the four fingers beside the thumb so that the thumb can go around them all. If the ancients and moderns resolved to contrive by meticulous thinking another way for placing the fingers, except as they were placed, the thumb being distant from the four (fingers), the fingers contrasting in length and their arrangement in one form, they would not be able to do so, since with this arrangement the hand is suited for grasping and giving. If one extends it, he has a plate on which he puts anything he desires; if he clenches it, he has an instrument for hitting; if he clenches it incompletely, he has a ladle; and if he stretches it and cups its fingers, he has a spade.
He then created the fingernails on its uppermost part as an ornament for the fingertips; and as a support from the rear against being cut, and in order to pick up fine things which the tips of the finger are unable to do, and, in need, to scratch the body. If man lost the fingernail, which is the meanest of the members, and an itch appeared on him, he would be the most incapable and weakest of creation, for there would be nothing to take its place in scratching his body. Then He guided the hand to the place of itching until it reached it, whether in sleep and drowsiness, without having to ask (for the guidance.) If he sought the help of someone else, he could not discover the place of itching without much inconvenience.

He created all this from the sperm which is in the interior of the womb in three obscure layers. If the coverings were taken off and the eyes focussed on it, they would see the planning and shaping appear on it little by little, but they would not see the Shaper nor His instrument. Have you seen a shaper or a doer who is not in touch with his instrument and the thing he makes, or is not in contact with it while he disposes of it? Praise be to Him! How great are His affairs! How clear is His proof! Then consider, with the perfection of His power, the completeness of His mercy, for when the womb became tight for the infant when it grew, how He showed it the way until it was turned upside down, moved, extracted from this narrow passage and through the opening as if it were intelligent and aware of what it needed. Then when it went out and needed nourishment, (consider) how He guided it to take the breast. Then when its body was weak, not being able to bear heavy foods, how He prepared for it in creating light milk extracted from the menstrual coagulum as a pure edible; and how He created the two breasts, gathered the milk in them, and caused two nipples to grow from them in such proportion
that the mouth of the baby can close over them. Then He opened on the nipples of the breasts a very narrow opening so that the milk does not flow from them except after gradual sucking, for the infant can bear only small amounts. Then (consider) how He guided him to sucking until he extracts much milk from that narrow opening when his hunger is great. Then consider His kindness, mercy and pity and how He delayed the creation of the teeth until the completion of two years, for in the two years he is nourished by milk only and he can dispense with teeth. But when he grows, the simple milk is not suitable for him and he needs heavy food which requires grinding and chewing. Upon this need, no sooner and no later, He grows the teeth for him. Praise be to Him! Consider how He brings out these solid bones from the soft gums and excites the pity of the parents on him for taking care of him during the time he was incapable of taking care of himself. Had Allah not given mercy the mastery over the hearts (of the parents) the infant would have been the most incapable of creation in caring for himself.

Then consider how He provided him gradually with ability, discretion, intelligence and guidance until he matured, became complete and became an adolescent, then a young man, then middle aged, and finally an old man, whether he is ungrateful or thankful, obedient or disobedient, a believer or an unbeliever, thus confirming His saying, "Has there come upon man a period time when he was nothing worth mentioning? Verily, We created man from a drop, a mixture, and We made him able to hear and to see; We guided him as to the way, testing him whether (he would be) grateful or ungrateful."(1)

(1). Koran LXXVI 1-4
Consider the kindness and generosity, then the power and wisdom with which the wonders of the Divine Presence dazzle you. The awe is all the awe of one who sees lovely calligraphy or a lovely painting on a wall and considers it beautiful. He concentrates all his attention in meditation on the painter and calligraphist, how he painted and drew it, and how he was able to do it, and he does not cease to consider him great in himself, saying "How skillful he is! How perfect is his workmanship! How lovely is his ability!" Then he considers these wonders in himself and others, forgetting his Creator and Shaper. His greatness does not amaze him, nor does His majesty and wisdom bewilder him. This is a part of the wonders of your body which are not possible to fathom thoroughly. (The body) is in closest range for meditation and the clearest of proof of the greatness of your Creator, yet you are unmindful of it, occupied with your belly and pudenda, and you know nothing of yourself except that you are hungry, so you eat, satisfy yourself, sleep, crave lust, have sex, become angry, and fight: all the beasts join you in the knowledge (of how to do these things) but the specialty of man, which the animals are kept from, is the knowledge of Allah through consideration of the realms of the heavens and earth and the wonders of the world and souls, since through them the worshipper enters the company of the favored angels and is gathered in the company of the prophets and the pious, being brought near to the Presence of the Lord of the Worlds. This rank is neither for the animals nor a man who was pleased with the temporal world through the lusts of beasts, for he is much more evil than the beast since the beast has no ability for this. For it is man for whom Allah created the power which he then left idle and was ungrateful for the grace of Allah toward him. Those are like cattle but they are more astray in the path.
If you know the path of meditation on yourself, meditate on the earth which is your abode, then on its rivers, seas, mountains and minerals. Then be lifted from them to the realms of the heavens.

2. The Earth

Among His signs are that He created the earth as a smooth bed, threaded through it clear roads, and made it subservient that you could walk in the paths thereof. He made it an immovable inland body, making fast the hills as bulwarks to prevent it from oscillating. Then He widened its flanks until men were incapable of reaching all of its sides, whether their lives were long or their wanderings frequent. Allah said, "The heaven— We have built it with hands; verily We were making (it) wide. And the earth— We have spread it out; and good were the smoothers!"(1)

Allah said, "He it is who hath laid the earth low for you; so walk about in the regions of it,..."(2) Allah said, "(It is He) who made the earth a carpet for you..."(3) He has mentioned the earth many times in His precious book so that one will meditate on its wonders: its surface is an abode for the living and under its surface is a grave for the dead. Allah said, "Did We not make the earth an inclusive place—(tracts) living and dead—"(4)

Consider the earth: it is dead, but when water falls on it, it is agitated, developed, becomes green, produces wonderful plants, and brings forth many kinds of animals. Consider then how He made fast the sides of the earth with the high anchored, solid and hard mountains; how He stored water under them; gushed forth springs and made the rivers run on its

(1). Koran LI 47-48
(2). Koran LXVII 15
(3). Koran II 20
(4). Koran LXXVII 25-6
surface; and brought forth from dry stones and dingy dust fine, sweet, pure, cool water, through which He causes all things to live, and through it He brought forth varieties of trees and plants (such as) grains, grapes, green fodder, olives, dates, pomegranates and many innumerable kinds of fruits of various shapes, colors, tastes, qualities and odors, some of which are preferred to others for eating. They are watered with one kind of water and are brought forth from one earth. If you said that their difference is due to the variety of their seeds and roots, then when was there in the stone of a date a palm tree laden with clusters of dates, or when was there in one seed of corn seven ears with a hundred seeds on each ear?

Look at the soil of the wastelands, inspect it inside and out, and you will see that the soil is similar. If water were to fall on it, it would be agitated, developed and produce from each fine-looking pair (of seeds) various kinds of similar and dissimilar plants, each with a taste, odor, color and form differing from the other. Consider their abundance, their varieties, their many shapes; then the variety of natures of the plants, their abundant uses and how Allah deposited strange benefits in drugs. This plant nourishes, this strengthens; this revives, this kills; this cools and this warms; this, if it goes to the stomach, removes the yellow bile from the depths of the blood vessels, and this becomes yellow bile; this removes the phlegm and black bile, and this changes into phlegm and black bile; this purifies the blood, and this changes into blood; this causes happiness and this causes sleep; this strengthens and this weakens. There does not spring from the earth a leaf or straw but that it has benefits whose value man is not able to discover.
The farmer in growing each one of these plants needs to do special work: the palm is fertilized, the grapevine is pruned, planted crops are weeded of grass and bushes, and some of these (plants) are sown by spreading seed in the earth by dry farming, TĀHRIQAN, some of them by planting branches, and some of them are grafted on trees. If we wanted to mention the variation of the kinds and species of plants, their uses, conditions and wonders the days would have been taken up in description of them. A little knowledge of each specie suffices you and directs you along the path of thought. These are the wonders of the plants.

3. What is Under the Earth

Among His signs are the jewels stored under the mountains and the minerals yielded up from the earth. In the earth there are various layers side by side. Consider how He brings forth precious stones from the mountains (such as) gold, silver, turquoise, rubies and others. Some are tempered with hammers, such as gold, silver, copper, lead and iron, while some of them, such as turquoise and rubies, are not tempered. (Consider) how Allah leads people to extract them, purify them, and make vessels, instruments, coins and ornaments from them. Then look at the minerals of the earth, (such as) oil, sulphur, tar and others, the simplest of which is salt which is not needed except for savoring food. Should it be unavailable to a town, destruction would hasten down upon it. Consider the mercy of Allah in creating some land of swampy nature where pure rain water gathers and changes into a pungent burning salt of which the taking of a MITHQāL is not possible, in order that it will be savoring for your food. If you eat it, your food will be wholesome. There is no mineral, animal or plant, unless therein is wisdom of this sort. Nothing of them was created uselessly, jokingly or playfully, since all was created with truth and as it ought to be. Therefore Allah
said, "We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them, in play. We created them only with the truth."(1)

4. Animals

Among His signs are the species of animals and their division into those that fly and those that walk, and the division of those that walk into those that walk on two legs and those that walk on four and ten and a hundred, as one can see in some of the insects, and their division as to benefits, forms, shapes, behaviours and natures. Look at the birds of the air, the wild beasts of the land, and the domesticated animals: you see in them wonders which leave you no doubt about the greatness of their Creator, the power of Him who proportioned them, and the wisdom of Him who shaped them. How then is it possible to fathom this, since if we wished to mention the wonders of the bug, ant, bee or spider, which are among the small animals, in building their houses, gathering their food, courting their mates, storing their provisions, their skill in engineering (the building of) their houses, and how they are guided to their needs, we would not be able to do so.

You see the spider building his house on the side of a river. He seeks first two places close to each other between which is a gap no more than a cubit's length or less so that it is possible for him to reach the two ends with the thread (of his web.) Then he begins by casting his saliva, which is his web thread, (first) on one side until it sticks to it, and then he goes to the other side and firmly fixes his web. Then like this he goes back and forth a second and third time, making the distance between the two geometrically proportionate. When he firmly ties together the knots of the bonds and arranges the threads as the warp, then he works with the woof which he places on the warp, adding

(1). Koran XLIV 38-9
each to the other, tying the knot firmly at the place where the woof meets the warp. He pays close attention in all these stages to the proportions of geometry, and makes it a net into which bugs and flies fall while he sits in a corner lying in wait for the fall of the prey into the net. When the prey falls, he hastens to take it and eat it. If he is incapable of catching any prey like this, he seeks for himself a corner of a wall, spreading his web between the two sides of the corner. Then he attaches himself in it with another strand of web and remains upside down in the air waiting for a fly to pass. When it flies, he throws himself at it, takes it, wraps his web around its legs and fixes it firmly. Then he devours it.

There is not an animal, be it large or small, that does not have wonders which are innumerable. Do you think that he has learned this skill by himself, or that he was brought into being by himself, or that a human being brought him into being and taught him, or that he has no guide or teacher? Does the man of insight doubt that it (i.e., the spider) is mean, weak and incapable? Even the elephant of great stature and obvious strength is incapable of attending to his own affairs, so what is the state of this weak animal? Does it not, due to its form, shape, movement, direction and the wonders of his skill, testify to his wise Maker and his All-Powerful All-Knowing Creator?

The man of insight sees in this small animal, not to mention other animals, such greatness of a fashioning Creator, such majesty, and such perfection of His power and wisdom, as perplexes understanding and intelligence. This subject is unlimited also, since animals, their forms, characteristics and natures are unlimited, but the amazement of the hearts (of men) has ceased because of their familiarity (with them) through frequent observation. Yes, but when one sees a strange animal, even though
it be a worm, the cause for his wondering is renewed, and one would say
"Praise be to Allah! How wonderful it is!"

Man is the most wonderful of the animals and he does not wonder
at himself although were he to look at the cattle which are familiar to
him and consider their forms and shapes, and then the uses and benefits
of their skins, hides and hair which Allah made as clothes for His cre-
atation as well as shelters for them on their journeys and in their en-
campments, vessels for their drink and food, and shoes for their feet,
and He made their milk and flesh nourishment for them, and then He made
some of them good for riding and some of them for bearing burdens across
the wastelands and the distant deserts, the observer increases his
wonderment at the wisdom of their Creator and Shaper. For most certain-
ly He did not create them except with knowledge encompassing all their
uses prior to His creating them.

Praise to Him to whose knowledge all matters are discoverable
without meditation, contemplation or reflection, and without seeking
the aid of a wazir or an advisor, for He is the All-Knowing, Perfectly-
Informed, All-Wise, All-Mighty. With the most minute of the least of
His creation he brought forth a sincere testimony to His unity from the
hearts of the gnostics, ُثاَرِفِين. Therefore, there is not for His cre-
atation anything but submission to His mastery and power, and confession
of His Lordship, and admission of the incapacity for knowledge of His
majesty and greatness? Who is that one who counts praises of Him as he
has praised himself? Rather the utmost of our experiential knowledge
is only confession of incapacity to know Him. We ask Allah to honor us
with His guidance through His grace and pity.
5. **The Seas**

Among His signs are the deep seas spreading to the regions of the earth which are parts of the greater sea surrounding the entire earth, until the land and mountains not covered with water, in comparison to the water, is like a small island in a great sea and the rest of the earth is concealed by water. The Prophet said, "The land under the sea is like a stable (covering) the whole earth." So compare a stable to the entire earth and know that land in comparison to the sea is like it.

You have seen the wonders of the earth and what is therein. Now contemplate the wonders of the sea. The wonder of the animals and jewels therein are many times that of the wonders you see on the surface of the earth, just as its capacity is many times that of the capacity of the earth. Due to the hugeness of the sea, there were huge animals in it whose backs you see in the sea and think they are an island, so voyagers alight on them. Perhaps it (i.e., the animal) feels the fire when it is kindled, so it moves and one knows that it is an animal.\(^{(1)}\)

There are no kinds of land animals, whether horses, birds, cattle or man, but that there are in the sea similar ones and many more, and there are species which have no rival on land. Their descriptions were mentioned in many volumes and people concerned with sea travel and collecting the wonders thereof collected them.

Consider how Allah created the pearl and rounded it in its shell under the water, and consider how coral grew from solid rocks under water, although it is a plant in the form of a tree growing from rocks. Then contemplate other things, such as ambergris and the kinds

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(1) The SM refers us to tales by Al-Qazwīnī (d. 1283) in *Wonders of Creatures*, al-Damīrī (d. 1349) in *The Life of the Animal*, and Ibn Batūta (d. 1356) in his *Journey* for verification of al-Ghazālī’s examples.
of precious materials which the sea throws (ashore) and from which they are extracted. Look at the wonders of the ships and how Allah kept them on the surface of the water, carried away in them merchants, seekers of wealth and others, and caused the ships to serve them by carrying their cargoes. Then He sent the winds to drive the ships. Then He taught the navigators the sources of the winds, to whence they blow and their seasons. All the wonders of the workmanship of Allah in the sea will not be thoroughly examined in volumes.

The most wonderful of all this, and yet the most obvious of things, is the constitution of the drop of water! It is a fine, delicate, flowing, transparent substance, connected in parts as though it were one thing, lightly formed, quickly divisible as though it were disjoined, exploited in disposal, separable and joinable: the life of everything on the surface of the earth, animal and plant, is in it. If the worshipper were in need of a drink of water and was prevented from it, he would spend all the treasures of the earth and the sovereignty of the world, if he owned it, in getting it. Then if he drank it and was prevented from eliminating it, he would spend all the treasuries of the earth and the sovereignty of the world in eliminating it. The wonder about man is how he considers the dinar, dirham, precious stones, and jewels important and pays no attention to the grace of Allah in a drink of water. If he needed a drink of it, or to discharge it, he would spend all the world in doing so.

Contemplate the wonders of waters, rivers, wells and seas in which there is a wide scope for thought: all these are proofs backing up one another and signs supporting each other, eloquently speaking through its essence for the majesty of their Creator, expressing the perfection of His wisdom, calling those who have hearts with its rhythm,
saying to everyone who has good judgment, "Don't you see me, my shape, formation, qualities, uses, the variety of my states and the multiplicity of my benefits? Do you think I brought myself into being or that one of my own kind created me? And are you not ashamed to look at a word of three letters and conclude that it is the workmanship of a wise, able, aspiring, speaking man? Then look at the divine writs formed on the pages of my face with the divine pen, the essence of which the vision does not perceive, or its movement or its touch at the place of writing. Your heart stops at the majesty of its Creator, and the sperm says to those who have a sense of hearing and a heart, not those who cannot hear, you imagine me in the darkness of the bowels, immersed in the menstrual blood, at the time the linings and fashioning appears on my face. Thus the painter paints my pupils, eyebrows, forehead, cheek and lips. You see the curving appear gradually, little by little, but you do not see a painter either inside or outside the sperm, or inside or outside the womb, and from it there is no information about the mother or father, or the sperm or the womb. Is not this painter the most wonderful of whom you have seen painting an amazing picture with a pen? Had you looked at it once or twice, you would have studied it. But are you able to study this kind of painting and fashioning which prevails over the inside and outside of the sperm and all its parts, without contact with the sperm and without connection with it, either from inside or out?

If you do not wonder at these miracles or understand through them that He who fashioned, painted and arranged (them) has no match and that no painter and fashioner is equal to Him, as no painting and no arranging is equal to His painting and arranging, for between the two agents there is something of the incongruity and remoteness which is between the two acts (themselves): if you are not awed by this, then be awed by your
lack of awe, for it is the most awesome of all awe. For whoever blinded your insight, inspite of this clarity, and prevented you from elucidation, in spite of this manifestation, is worthy of being held in awe. Glory to Him who guided and misguided, mislead and directed, and caused misery and happiness, and opened the insights of His beloved ones so they saw Him in all atoms of the world and its parts, and blinded the hearts of His enemies, and veiled them from His might and sublimity: with Him is the creation and command, the grace and favor, and the gentleness and the mastery. There is no opponent of His judgment and no critic of His decision.

6. The Atmosphere

Among His signs is the light air confined between the concavity of the sky and the convexity of the earth. At the blowing of the winds, one does not perceive its substance with the sense of touch, and one does not see its form with the eye. Its entirety is like the one sea: the birds are soaring and swimming rapidly about in the atmosphere of the sky, swimming with their wings just as the animals of the sea swim in the water. Its sides and waves are upset when the winds come up, just as the waves of the sea are upset.

When Allah moves the air, He makes it an awesome wind, and if He wills, he makes it a dispersal of His mercy, as Allah said, "And We send the winds, fertilising,"(1) and (the dispersal) through the movement of the spirit of the air comes to the animals and plants so that they are prepared for growing. If He wills, He makes it a punishment for the disobedient of His creation, as He said, "We sent upon them a roaring wind on a day of calamity continuous, which carried off the people as if they

(1). Koran XV 22
had been stumps of palms uprooted."(1)

Consider the lightness of the air and then its strength and might whenever it is pressed into water. The strong man bearing down on the inflated goatskin in order to submerge it is incapable of doing so, though solid iron which you put on the surface of the water sinks to the bottom. Consider how the air, in spite of its lightness shrinks from water through its might and resists being pressed into water. With this wisdom, Allah upheld the ships on the surface of the water, and likewise everything hollow in which there is air is not submerged in water, because air shrinks from being submerged into water and it is not separated from the outer surface of the heavy ship, which, in spite of its power and solidness, remains suspended in the light air; just as he who falls in a well and is suspended by the tail (of the garment) of a strong man is prevented from falling into the well, so the ship with its concavity, clings to the tails of the powerful air so that it is prevented from falling and sinking into the water. Praise be to Allah who uphold the heavy boat in the light air without a connection you can see or a knot that is binding.

Then consider the wonders of the atmosphere and the clouds, thunder, lightning, rain, snow, meteors and thunderbolts which appear therein. They are the wonders which appear in what is between the sky and the earth. The Koran has pointed to all of this in the speech of Allah, "We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them, in play."(2) This, then, is what is between the two and He has referred to the details in various places where He said, "...and the clouds made to do service between the heaven and the earth."(3) and where He

(1). Koran LIV 19-20
(2). Koran XLIV 38
(3). Koran II 162
referred to the thunder, lightning, clouds and rain. If from all this you take no pleasure except to see the rain with your eye and hear the thunder with your ear, then the beast joins you in this knowledge. So lift yourself up from the depths of the world of beasts to the highest world. You have opened your eyes and perceived its outwardness, now close your outward eye and look with your inward insight in order to see the wonders of its inwardness and the strangenesses of its secrets. This too is a subject on which meditation is prolonged, since there is no hope in penetrating it deeply.

Contemplate how you can see the dense shadowing clouds in which there is no disturbance gathering in the pure atmosphere, and how Allah created them if and when He wills. In spite of their softness, they are the bearers of heavy water and its upholders in the atmosphere of the sky until Allah permits the sending of water and the breaking off of the drops, each drop in the quantity desired by Allah and in the form which He willed. You see the clouds sprinkling water on the earth, sending it in drops separated from each other, one drop of which you do not perceive from another drop, nor is one connected with another, but each one comes down in the path that was decreed for it without deviating from it, and the delayed one does not precede nor does the preceding one delay until they strike the earth drop by drop. If the ancients and moderns resolved to create from it one drop, or to know the number (of drops) that fall on one single city or one village, the calculation of the JINN and mankind would be incapable of doing so, for no one knows their number except He who caused them to be. Each drop was allotted for each part of the earth and for each animal therein—birds, wild beasts, all the insects and crawling things—there is a message on that drop in divine handwriting which is not perceived by the vision that it is the means of livelihood of a specified
worm which exists on a specified mountain and it reaches him at a specified time when he is thirsty.

This, as well as the thickening of solid hail made from the light water when the cold sets in, and the spreading of the snow like carded cotton, is one of the innumerable wonders, and all of these are a grace from the All-Powerful All-Mighty and compulsion from the Omnipotent Creator. Not one of creation has association with Him or an entry to Him, since for the believers among His creation there is nothing but humility and submission to His majesty and greatness, and for the denying blind there is nothing but ignorance of His manner, and conjecturing as to His raison d'être and source.

The ignorant self-deceived one says that the water comes down because it is heavy by nature and that this is the cause of its falling. He thinks that this is knowledge that has been revealed to him and he takes pleasure in it. If he were asked what is the meaning of the nature, what created it, who is it that created the water whose nature is heavy, what made the water fallen to the bottom of the tree rise to the tops of the branches though it is by nature heavy, and how did it fall to the bottom and then rise invisibly to the top inside the hollows of the trees, little by little, until it is spread through all the sides of the leaves and nourishes every part of a leaf, flows to it through the hollows of the capillary veins, waters the stem which is the source of the leaf, and then spreads from this big stem stretched across the length of the leaves, as though the big stem were a river and what shot off from it were streams, and then from the streams small streamlets shoot off, and from them fine thread-like spider webs beyond visual perception branch off until they spread over the breadth of the leaf and through their hollow insides the water reaches the rest of the parts of the leaf, in order to nourish it,
make it grow, adorn it and preserve its softness and freshness. It is
the same with the rest of the parts of the fruits.

If water, by its nature, moves downwards, how does it move
upwards? If this were by an attracting force of someone, what has moved
this attractor? If it comes to one's knowledge in the next life that it
is the Creator of the heavens and earth and the All-Mighty of dominion
and realms, why is it not ascribed to him from the first? The wise one
begins from where the ignorant one ends.

7. The Realms of Heaven and Heavenly Bodies

Among His signs are the realms of heaven and the stars in them.
It is the whole matter. Who understood the whole, and the essence of
the wonders of the heavens escaped him, the whole has undoubtedly
escaped him. The earth, the seas, the air and each body except the
heavens, in relation to the heavens, is like a drop in a sea and smaller.

Consider how Allah exalted the position of the heavens and
stars in His book, for there is hardly a SûRA but that it embodies mag-
nification of them (as to their) positions. In how many parts of the
Koran they are (found)! As the speech of Allah, "By the heaven and its
paths"(1) and "By the heaven and the meteor"(2) and "By the heaven and
its paths"(3) and "By heaven and what built it"(4) and "By the sun and
his morning brightness, by the moon when she follows him"(5) and "I swear
not by (the stars) that lag, that run, and that fade away,"(6) and "By
the star when it falls"(7) and "I swear not by the places where fall the
stars."(8)

(1). Koran LI 7
(2). Koran LXXXVI 1
(3). Koran LI 7
(4). Koran XCI 5
(5). Koran XCI 1-2
(6). Koran LXXXI 15-16
(7). Koran LIII 1
(8). Koran LVII 74
You have known that the ancients and moderns were incapable of experiential knowledge of the wonders of the dirty sperm; Allah did not swear by it. What then is your idea about that by which Allah swore and attributed providence to it and joined providence to it? Having said, "And in the heaven is your provision and what ye are promised,"(1) he praised those who meditate on it, saying, "They meditate on the creation of the heavens and the earth."(2) The Messenger of Allah said, "Woe to him who read this verse and then wiped with it his dung," which is to say passed over it without meditating. He(Allah) blamed those who shun it saying, "And we have made the heaven a roof well-preserved; yet from its signs they avert themselves."(3) What is the relationship of all the seas and the earth to the heavens? They are variable in proximity and the heavens are solid, strong and well-preserved from change until the scripture is fulfilled. Therefore Allah called it "well-preserved", saying, "And We made the heaven a roof well-preserved."(4) and "And We build above you seven (heavens) firm,"(5) and "Are ye more difficult to create, or is the heaven? He built it, raised high its vault and set it in order."(6)

Consider the realms (of heaven) so that you can see the wonders of the might and power. You must not think that consideration of the realms means that you can stretch your vision to it and see the blue of the sky and the light and dispersion of the stars. The beasts join with you in this consideration. If this were the intention, why did Allah praise Abraham saying, "Thus do we show Abraham the realms of the heaven

(1). Koran LI 22
(2). Koran III 188
(3). Koran XXI 33
(4). Koran XXI 32
(5). Koran LXXVIII 12
(6). Koran LXXIX 27-28
and the earth.  

No, since all that is perceived with the sense of sight, the Koran expresses with authority and testimony, and what is absent from sight, it expresses with the unseen and the realms (of the heavens). Allah is the All-Knowing of both the unseen and the seen and the All-Mighty of the dominion and realms. No one encompasses anything of His knowledge save what He wills, and He is the All-Knowing of the unseen. No one sees His unseen unless he be an apostle with whom He was pleased.

So, oh wise one, wander and think about the realms and maybe the doors of the sky will be opened for you, and you will wander with your heart through its regions until your heart will be raised up to the Throne of the Compassionate. Then perhaps it might be hoped for you that you will attain the rank of ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb(2) who said, "My heart saw my Lord." This is because reaching the utmost will not be (achieved) until after surpassing the nearest, and the nearest thing to you is yourself; then the earth which is your abode; then the air surrounding you; then the plants and the animals and what is on the surface of the earth; then the wonders of the atmosphere which is between the heavens and earth; then the seven heavens and their stars; then the chair, then the throne and then the angels who are the bearers of the throne and the treasurers of heaven; then from this you pass on to consideration of the Lord of the throne, chair, heavens and earth and what is between them; and between you and these (things) are great deserts, long distances and towering obstacles, though you have not finished with the close disastrous

(1). Koran VI 75  
(2). ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb, second caliph, (d. 644).
obstacle which is the experiential knowledge of the outwardness of your "self". Then you began to loosen the tongue impudently and pretend to experiential knowledge of your Lord. You say, "I have known Him and have known His creation, so on what shall I meditate and at what shall I look?" Now lift up your head to the sky and consider it, its stars and their rotations, risings and settings; its sun, moon, the difference between the places where they set and rise, and their strife in constant movement, free from faintness in their movement and free from change in their action, since they all follow fixed orbits in calculated times which neither exceed nor diminish until Allah folds them up, just as he folds up the seal of the register for the book.

Reflect on the number and abundance of the stars and the difference in their colors: some incline to be red, others white and others lead color. Then consider their forms: some have the shape of the scorpion and others the shape of the lamb, ox, lion and man. There is scarcely a form on earth but that it has a duplicate in the sky. Then consider the procedure of the sun in its orbit during the period of a year. Each day it rises and sets in a different course to which its Creator made it obedient. But for its rising and setting, night and day would not have differed, appointed times would not have been known, there would have been constant darkness or constant light, and the time for gaining a livelihood would not have been distinguished from time of rest.

Consider how Allah made the night as a cloak, sleep for repose and the day for livelihood. Consider the fading of night into day and day into night, and His bringing of length and shortness upon them according to a special arrangement. Consider His tilting of the path
of the movement of the sun away from the middle of the sky until for this reason Summer, Winter, Spring and Autumn are separated. When the path of the sun is not perpendicular to the center of the sky, the air becomes cold and winter appears; when it is perpendicular to the middle of the sky, the heat is increased; and when it is between the two (positions), the time is temperate.

It is hopeless to enumerate one hundredth of a part of the parts of the wonders of the heavens, although this is advice (guiding one) along the path of meditation. I believe, of the whole, there is not one of all the stars, but that Allah has abundant wisdom in its creation, quantity, form, color, position in the sky, its nearness to the middle of the sky, and its nearness and farness to the stars beside it and behind it. Compare this to what we have mentioned about the members of your body, since there is no part of it but that it has not only wisdom therein, but much wisdom, since there is no comparison of the world of the earth to the world of the sky, either in greatness of size or in the abundance of its meanings. Compare the dissimilarity of what is between the two in abundance of meanings to the dissimilarity between the two in the magnitude of the earth. You know from the magnitude and spaciousness of the earth that a man cannot perceive it and encompass all its sides. Those who consider (this matter) have agreed that the sun is upwards of 160 times (bigger) than the earth, and in the traditions of the Prophet its greatness is indicated. Then the stars you see: the smallest of them is eight times bigger than the earth and the largest is nearly 120 times bigger. Through this you know their height and distance (from the earth) even though, because of the distance, they began to look small. Therefore Allah referred to their distance, saying, "He raised high the vaults and set it in order, "(1)

(1). Koran LXXIX 28
and in the traditions it is said that "Between each heaven and the next there is a distance of 500 years." If the size of one star is many times that of the earth, consider the abundance of the stars. Then consider the sky in which the stars are fixed and its immense size. Then consider the speed of their movement: you do not feel their movement any more than you perceive its speed, but you do not doubt that in one instant they travel the distance of the width of a star because the period moves from the rising of the first part of a star to its complete (appearance), and therefore the star is more than a hundred times (bigger than the earth) and in this instant it has revolved about the orbit a hundred times more than the earth, and it revolves like this continually while you are heedless of it! Consider how Gabriel explained the speed of its movement when the Prophet said to him, "Has the sun set?" He replied, "Yes! No!" The Prophet asked, "How is it you say 'No! Yes!'" He answered, "From the time I said 'no' until I said 'yes', the sun traveled the distance of 500 years."

Consider the enormity of its size, then the lightness of its movement and then consider the power of the wise Maker and how He reflected its picture, in spite of the spaciousness of its area, in the pupil of the eye, in spite of its minuteness, so that you can sit on the earth and open your eyes and see it all. Do not look at this heaven with its enormity and the abundance of its stars, but look to its Creator and how He created and upheld it without a support you can see or a suspender from above.

The whole world is like one house and the sky is its roof. But the wonder is at you when you enter a rich man's house decorated with paints and embellished with gold. Your wonder at it does not cease and you continue to remember it and describe its beauty for the
length of your life, and you forever look at this Great House, its
door and roof, its air and the wonders of its creatures, the strange-
ness of its animals and the excellences of its paintings, and then you
do not talk about it, nor turn to it with your heart. This house is
not inferior to the house which you describe, since that house is also
a part of the earth which is the meanest of the parts of this house,
and in spite of this, you do not consider it. It has no purpose except
that it is the house of your Lord, Him who was alone in building and
arranging it. You have forgotten yourself, your Lord and the House
of your Lord, and have been occupied with your stomach and pudenda.
You have no concern except your passions or your household: the goal
of your passions is to fill your stomach, though you cannot eat a tenth
of what a beast eats, and so the beast will be above you by ten degrees;
and the goal of your household is for ten or a hundred of your acquaint-
ances to come to you and be hypocritical with their tongues in your
presence, and concealing in themselves their evil beliefs about you,
and even if they were true in their affection for you, yet they would
have for you or themselves either benefit or harm, death, life or resur-
rection. There might be in your city rich Jews and Christians whose
eminence exceeds yours. You have occupied yourself with this self-
deception and have been heedless of consideration of the beauty of the
realms of the heavens and earth, and then were heedless of the grace
of the consideration of the majesty of the Sovereign of the realms and
dominion.

What is similar to you and similar to your intelligence
unless it is like the ant leaving its chamber which it dug (under) one
of the magnificently constructed, strongly fortified palaces of the
King which is embellished with slavegirls and youths, various stores
and precious articles. When it leaves its chamber and meets its mate, it does not speak, were it able to do so, except about its house, food and how it stored its provisions, and as for the condition of the palace and the king who is in the palace, it is removed from them and meditation on them, since it has no ability to surpass consideration of itself, its food and house for something other than it.

Just as the ant is heedless of the palace, its floor, roof, walls and the rest of its building and was also heedless of its inhabitants, you also are heedless of the House of Allah and of His angels who are the inhabitants of His heavens. You know no more of Heaven than what the ant knows about the roof of your house; and you know no more of the angels of the heavens than the ant knows about the roof of your house; and you know no more of the angels of the heavens than the ant knows about you and the inhabitants of your house. However, the ant has no way to know about you and know about the wonders of your palace and the excellence of the workmanship of the builder (living) in it, but you have the power to wander about the realms and to know about their wonders and that of which creatures are heedless.

VI CONCLUSION

Let us draw in the reins of this sort of talk since it is a field for which there is no end. If we were to study intensively throughout long lifetimes, we would not be able to explain that with which Allah graced us through His knowledge. All we knew is minute, scant and insignificant in comparison to what the 'ULEMA' and saints knew. What they knew is minute, scant and insignificant in comparison to what the prophets knew. All they knew is minute in comparison to
what our prophet Muhammad knew. What all the prophets knew is minute in comparison to what the favored angels knew, such as Isrāfīl, Jibrā’il and others. Then all the knowledges of the angels, JINN and mankind, when compared to the knowledge of Allah, is not worthy to be called "knowledge", but to be called astonishment, perplexity, inferiority and inability is closer. Praise be to Him who taught His worshippers what they know! He addressed all of them saying, "Ye have no knowledge bestowed on you except a little."(1)

This is a statement of the fields in which the thoughts of those who meditate wander about in the creation of Allah and in them are no thoughts on the person of Allah, although experiential knowledge about the Creator and His greatness, majesty and power is undoubtedly benefited from meditation on the creation. Whenever you have an increase of experiential knowledge of the marvel of the makings of Allah, your experiential knowledge of His majesty and greatness is more perfect, just as you revere a learned man because of your experiential knowledge of his knowledge and do not cease to read each wondrous line, one by one, of his composition or poetry, through which experiential knowledge is increased, and it increases in reverence and respect, through his grace in (composing) it, until each word of his words and each wonderful verse of the verses of his poetry increases his place in your heart and calls forth magnification of him in your soul.

Thuswise contemplate the creation, work and composition of Allah. Everything in existence is the creation and work of Allah, and consideration and meditation on them never ends although the amount of both them that each worshipper has is what he was granted.

(1). Koran XVII 87
Let us confine ourselves to what we have said and let us add to this what we explained in the Book of Thanksgiving.\(^{(1)}\) In that book we considered the working of Allah where it is benevolence and grace for us. In this book we considered only the working of Allah. Everything that we have considered therein, the naturalist, 
TAB\(\text{f}\)\(\text{i}\), also considers, and his consideration will be the reason for his misguidance and wickedness. The successful one considers it, and it is the reason for his proper guidance and happiness. There is no atom in the sky and earth but that Allah, through it, leads astray whom He wills, or guides aright whom He wills. He who considered these matters as being the working of Allah and His making, derived experiential knowledge from them through the majesty of Allah and His greatness and was rightly guided through them. He who considered them, confining his consideration to their effect upon each other and not with a view to their connection with the Causer of causes was miserable and has fallen.

We take refuge with Allah against being led astray. We ask Him to keep our feet from slipping into the path of the ignorant, through His grace, generosity, favor, gifts and mercy. The book is ended. It is the ninth of the Quarter of the Saving Matters of life. Praise be to Allah Himself and His blessings be on Muhammad and his family.

\(^{(1)}\) Book Two of RUB\(\text{f}\) Four in the 'Ihya'. 
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