Meeting God

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلَى ثِقَةِ الإِسْلامِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِي رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ وَالحُسَيْنِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ جَمِيعاً عَنِ القَاسِمِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ عَبْدِالصَّمَدِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ عَنْ بَعْضِ أَصْحَابِهِ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قُلْتُ: أَصْلَحَكَ اللهُ، مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللهِ أَحَبَّ اللهُ لِقَاءَهُ وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَ لِقَاءَ اللهِ أَبْغَضَ اللهُ لِقَاءَهُ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قُلْتُ: فَوَاللهِ إِنَّا لَنَكْرَهُ المَوْتَ. فَقَالَ: لَيْسَ ذَلِكَ حَيْثُ تَذْهَبُ، إِنَّمَا ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ المُعَايَنَةِ إِذَا رَأَى مَا يُحِبُّ فَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مَنْ أَنْ يَتَقَدَّمَ عَلَى اللهِ، وَاللهُ تَعَالَى يُحِبُّ لِقَاءَهُ وَهُوَ يُحِبُّ لِقَاءَ اللهِ حِينَئِذٍ. وَإِذَا رَأَى مَا يَكْرَهُ فَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَبْغَضَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ لِقَاءِ اللهِ، وَاللهُ يَبْغُضُ لِقَاءَهُ.

With my chain of transmission reaching up to the Thiqat al-Islam Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (M) from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from Muhammad ibn Khalid and al-Husayn ibn Sa'id, and both of them from al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, from 'Abd al-Samad ibn Bashir, from someone from among his companions, who reports from Abu 'Abd Allah (A)stating: I said to him (i.e., Imam al-Sadiq), "Aslahakallah! (May God set you right) (Is it true that) if anyone loves meeting God (liqa' Allah,) God too loves to meet him, and if someone should dislike the meeting with God, God too dislikes to meet him?" "Yes," replied the Imam. I said, "Indeed, by God, we detest death." The Imam said, "It is not as you imagine. That refers to the time of confrontation with death. At that moment when he sees (as lying in store for him) what he loves, there is nothing dearer to him than to go forth towards God. Coil, the Exalted, loves to meet him and he, too, loves to meet God. But if he sees (as lying in store for him) what he detests, nothing is more abominable to him than meeting God, and God too loathes to meet him."[1]

Exposition

Aslahakallah is a prayer of blessing, and in a benediction it is not necessary that the addressee be devoid of the blessing wished for him. Rather, such benedictive expressions are quite customary, even if what is invoked be already there. Hence, to pray for Imam al-Sadiq (A)wishing his welfare and betterment is not something contrary to common custom. Thus it is also correct to say 'May God forgive you' (ghafarallahu lak) and 'May God pardon you' ('afallahu 'ank) in regard to those sacred personages. Some (exegetes) have interpreted the noble verse:

﴿لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ.﴾

that God may forgive thee thy former and thy latter sins. (48:2)…

in the same sense, stating that it is like saying to someone 'May God forgive you', and it is not necessary in such benedictive expressions to take into consideration that the addressee already possesses the blessing invoked in the prayer.

Although such an interpretation seems farfetched in relation to this noble verse-and we have already discussed it under one of the earlier traditions'2 -it is basically right that mostly the actual possession of that which is invoked in such precative expressions is not taken into consideration.

لقـاء (masdar) of) with fathah on lam, or kasrah) is the verbal noun لقـي vowelized like رضـي); so لقاءة، لقاية، لقياً، لقياناً، لقيانة (all with kasrah of lam) and لقياً، لقى، لقياناً، لقيانة (all with dammah on lam) are its verbal nouns and signify sight and vision. Later on in this exposition also are we will explain the meaning of liqa' Allah, to an extent that is appropriate for these pages.

أبغض pertains to the nominal form إفعال . And بَغُضَ like كَرُمَ، نَصَرَ، فَرِحَ (The) is its trilateral root). Bughd (hate) is the antonym of hubb (love) and بغـض بغاضـة فهـو بغيـض (lexicographers explain signify its stronger degrees. Briefly, love and hate are qualities of the soul (sifat بغضة and بغضاء al-nafsaniyyah) and are opposite to each other.

Their reality, as revealed by self-examination, is evident, like all other directly experienced and psychic qualities, whose essential reality is more evident than what any description of their meaning (i.e. of the words that stand for them) can divulge. However, an explanation of the signification of the ascription of 'love' and 'hate' to God's Sacred Essence will be given later on, insha' Allah.

As to the narrator's statement, "Indeed, we detest death," he said that because he imagined death to involve liqa' Allah, or because he thought that death was liqa' Allah itself. So he imagined revulsion for death to be aversion for liqa' Allah, and hence his question. The Imam answered him that the general dislike of death is not a criterion; rather, the criterion is the actual moment of death when one observes the signs of the malakut and the other realms.

(As to the words of the Imam (A لَيْـسَ ذَلِـكَ حَيْـثُ تَذْهَـبُ: this sentence does not have an exact equivalent expression in Persian. The import of this expression here may be conveyed by such Persian expressions as گمانم رفت وگمان کردم or ذهنم رفت and so on, and the Arabic expression also implies a 'going' (dhahab) of the imagination (wahm). Arabic is replete with such expressions. Rather the common usage of 'dhahab' and expressions derived from it implies a dhahab of wahm, 'aqidah (belief) and the like, and the word 'madhhab' (going, trend, opinion, religion, creed, ideology, school of law or thought) denotes a similar meaning, which is based on metaphor, for it is derived from external and outward dhahab.

mu’ayanah is a verbal noun pertaining to the عنــد المعاينــة (As to the statement of the Imam (A form مفاعلة (The lexicographers explain its meaning as follows:)

عايَنتُ الشَّيءَ عَياناً إذا رَأيتُهُ.

The time of death is called mu’ayanah (viewing, examination, observation), because the dying person views the signs of the other world clearly. His hidden spiritual eye opens and a little of the reality of the malakut is revealed to him. Then he sees glimpses of his own attainments, works and (spiritual) condition. We shall explain in the course of a few sections that which needs exposition in the sacred tradition, putting our reliance in God.

Liqa’ Allah And Its Character

Know that the number of verses and traditions which refer to liqa’ Allah, either explicitly or implicitly, is quite large and their full details cannot be contained in this brief exposition. However, we shall briefly refer to some of them, and anyone seeking further details should refer to the Risaleh-ye liqa’ Allah of the marhum gnostic of God, al-Hajj Mirza Jawad Tabrizi (Q) wherein traditions concerning this theme have been gathered to a certain extent.

Know that some ulama and exegetes have totally blocked the path of liqa’ Allah and denied (die possibility of) direct experience of the revelations (tajalliyat) of the Divine Names and Essence. Imagining that they were affirming the transcendence of the Sacred Essence as lying beyond all anthropomorphic and physical qualities, they have interpreted all the verses and traditions mentioning liqa’ Allah as the encounter with the Last Day and Judgment, its reward and punishment.

Although such an interpretation of the general import of liqa’ is not very far-fetched in relation to certain verses and traditions, it is certainly an implausible and far-fetched interpretation in relation to some reliable supplications and traditions mentioned in trustworthy books as well as in relation to some well-accepted (mashhur) traditions which have been relied upon by great ulama.

One should know that the intent of those who have kept open the path of liqa’ Allah and the beatific vision (mushahadah) of Divine Glory and Beauty, is not that it is permissible to fathom the mystery of the Divine Essence or that it is possible to encompass in direct knowledge (‘ilm huduri) and in immediate spiritual experience the Essence, which encompasses absolutely everything.

Rather, the impossibility of fathoming the Divine mystery through universal knowledge (‘ilm al-

kulli) and by the means of rational thought and the impossibility of encompassing It in mystic experience (irfan al-shuhudi) and by the means of esoteric insight is an established matter, to which all people of the intellect (i.e. philosophers) as well as those of mystic knowledge and experience (arbab al-ma'arif wa qulub) are unanimous in agreeing. However, those who claim the possibility of such a station state:

Following the attainment of a complete and consummate state of God-fearing (taqwa), a total turning away of the heart from all the worlds and repudiation of both the realms of life (i.e. the pleasures of the world as well as that of the Hereafter), after trampling the heads of egoism and egocentrism under one's feet, and following complete attention and total absorption in God and the Names and Attributes of that Sacred Essence, after immersion in the love and passion for the Sacred Essence, and following austerities of the heart, a purity and burnish is attained by the wayfarer's heart, which receives the revelations of the Names and the Attributes.

Thereupon the thick veils that lie between the devotee and the Names and the Attributes are removed and he becomes annihilated in the Names and the Attributes, becoming "attached to the Mightiness of Sanctity and Glory" and attaining complete nearness (tadall'i) to the Essence. In this state, there is no veil between the consecrated soul of the wayfarer and the Truth except the Names and the Attributes.

For some of the wayfarers of the Path, the luminous veil of the Names and the Attributes may also be removed, whereupon they attain to the Hidden tajalliyat of the Essence, beholding themselves attached and close to the Sacred Essence, and, in this vision, they perceive the sustaining encompassment of the Truth (ihateh-ye qayyumi-ye Haqq) and their own essential annihilation (fana' al-dhati). Then, he clearly views his own being, as well as that of all other existents, as a shadow of the Divine Being.

As-in accordance with metaphysical proof-there is no veil between God and the First Creature, which is non-material and free from all forms of matter and attachments (rather, according to metaphysical proofs there is no veil for non-material beings in general), so is die heart that in its expansive and encompassing character has been elevated to the plane of non-material beings. Rather, it walks on the heads of those beings and there is no veil for it, as mentioned in this sacred tradition reported in al-Kafi and al-Tawhid:

إنَّ رُوحَ المُؤمِنِ لأَشَدُّ اتِّصالاً بِروحِ اللهِ مِن اتِّصالِ الشَّمسِ بشُعاعِها.

*Verily, the spirit of the possessor of faith is more firmly attached to the Spirit of Allah than the sun's ray is attached to it.*3

In the Munajat Sha'baniyyah, which are accepted as authentic by the ulama and whose very contents bear witness to the authenticity of their origin in those sacred personages, i.e. the Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt (A), this is how they supplicate:

اِلَهِي هَبْ لِي كَمَالَ الانْقِطَاعِ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنِرْ أَبْصَارَ قُلُوبِنَا بِضِيَاءِ نَظَرِهَا إِلَيْكَ حَتَّى تَخْرِقَ أَبْصَارُ القُلُوبِ حُجُبَ النُّورِ فَتَصِلَ إِلَى مَعْدِنِ العَظَمَةِ وَتَصِيرَ أَرْوَاحُنَا مُعَلَّقَةً بِعِزِّ قُدْسِكَ. إِلَهِي وَاجْعَلْنِي مِمَّنْ نَادَيْتَهُ فَأَجَابَكَ وَلاحَظْتَهُ فَصُعِقَ بِجَلالِكَ فَنَاجَيْتَهُ سِرّاً وَعَمِلَ لَكَ جَهْراً.

My God, grant me the utmost absorption in Thee and illuminate the vision of our hearts with the light of Thy Vision, until the sight of the hearts can penetrate the curtains of light and reach the source of Greatness and until our spirits get anchored to the threshold of Thy Sanctity. My God, make me one of those whom Thou callest and who respond to Thee, whom Thou regardest and who swoon with awe before Thy Glory, and to whom Thou whisperest secretly and who act for Thy sake openly.[4]

And while recounting the heavenly ascension (miraj) of the Noble Messenger (S) God declares in the Noble Divine Scripture:

﴿ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى. فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى.﴾

Then drew near and suspended hung, two bows' length away or nearer. (53:8-9)

This direct experience of extinction (fana') is not contrary to the impossibility of fathoming and encompassing (the Divine Essence), nor does it conflict with the verses and traditions that assert Divine transcendence. Rather, it supports and conforms them.

Now see if there is any need to take resort in such far-fetched and insipid interpretations. Can one interpret this statement of Amir al-Mu'minin (A) when he says:

فَهَبْنِي، يَا إِلَهِي وَسَيِّدِي وَمَوْلايَ، صَبَرْتُ عَلَى عَذَابِكَ، فَكَيْفَ أَصْبِرُ عَلَى فِرَاقِكَ.

O my God, my Master and my Lord! Even if I were able to endure Thy chastisement, how shall I bear Thy separation?[5]

and those lamentations and wailings of the awliya' as being for the sake of houris and palaces? Shall we explain the laments of separation of those who used to declare that "we don't worship God for the fear of hell, nor for the desire of paradise, but we worship him as free men should purely because God is worthy of worship" as being on account of separation from paradise and its foods, drinks and pleasures?

Alas! What a preposterous thing to say, and what a most unseemly interpretation! Is it possible to say that the revelations of Divine Beauty on the Night of the Ascent, in the meeting wherein

no other creature was present and of whose secrets even Gabriel, the one entrusted with the Revelation, was kept out, were represented by Paradise and its raised-up mansions? That these constituted 'the lights of Divine Majesty and Glory' and the disclosure of God's favors? Were the tajalliyat experienced by the prophets (A) as mentioned in reliable supplications, bounties of the order of foods, drinks, gardens and castles?

Alas! We, wretches entrapped in the dark veils of corporeal nature and entangled in the chains of petty hopes and expectations, understand nothing except food, drink, sex and the like. And should we come across a man of vision and someone with a heart who attempts to lift the curtain from these veils, we consider it an error and affront.

As long as we remain imprisoned in the dark pit of the world of mulk, we would not be able to apprehend anything of the gnostic teachings (ma'arif) and the experiences of those adept in them. So, my dear, don't compare the awliya' to yourself and don't imagine the hearts of the prophets and those of the people of the ma'arif to be like these dismal hearts of ours. Our hearts are covered with the dusts of attachment to the world and its mundane lusts.

The impurity resulting from immersion in lusts does not allow them to become the mirror of Divine revelations wherein the beauty of the Beloved is reflected. Of course, with this egoism, this self-seeking and narcissism of ours, we shouldn't be able to make out anything of the tajalliyat of God, the Most Exalted, and His Beauty and Glory.

Given this state of ours, we should be such ones as refute the words of the awliya' and the people of marifah, and even if we should refrain outwardly from denouncing them as false, we would still consider them false in our hearts. And should there be no way for negating their truth-as when one is convinced of the truth of the statements of the Messenger and the Infallible Imams (A)-we would open the door of ta'wil and interpretation and, in a word, block the door to the knowledge (marifah) of God. Thus, we interpret this (saying of 'Ali):

مَا رَأَيْتُ شَيْئاً إلاّ وَرَأَيْتُ اللهَ مَعَهُ وَقَبْلَهُ وَفِيهِ.

I did not see a thing without beholding God with it, before it, and in it,

as implying the vision of the effects (of God's omnipotence). We explain these words of 'Ali (A):

لَمْ أَعْبُدْ رَبّاً لَمْ أَرَهُ.

I did not worship a Lord that I did not see,[6]

as implying the knowledge of universals, similar in nature to our own knowledge. We interpret the verses mentioning liqa' Allah as signifying the encounter with the Day of Judgment, and

:(take the tradition of the Prophet (S

لِي مَعَ اللهِ حَالَةٌ.

I have a state with God,

:as signifying a tender feeling of the heart, and the words of the supplication

وَارْزُقْنِي النَّظَرَ إِلَى وَجْهِكَ الكَرِيمِ.

And bestow upon me the vision of Thy Noble Face,

and all the lamentations of the awliya' and their wails of separation as arising from the pain of separation froth the houris of paradise and its fowl! And the reason behind all these interpretations is that we are not champions of this field; we understand nothing except bestial and bodily pleasures, and our nescience prompts us to repudiate all the ma arif.

This denial is the worst of all calamities, which locks upon us the door to all the higher teachings, keeps us from seeking, and make us remain satisfied at the level of bestial and beastly existence, depriving us of entry into the hidden realms and obstructing us from Divine lights. It keeps us, wretched ones that we are, totally deprived from experiencing the tajalliyat- even from faith in the reality of these spiritual states, a faith which by itself constitutes a degree of spiritual merit and which might have taken us somewhere.

We even evade the (theoretical) knowledge, which might have served as the seed of (mystic) experience, and completely close our eyes and ears, stuffing the cotton of neglect into our ears lest a word of truth should enter them. If we hear any of the truths from the mouth of a passionate 'arif or a heart-broken wayfarer, or a theosopher (Hakim al-muta'allih), immediately we make him the target of all kinds of curses and insults, calling him an apostate and a profligate, refraining not from any kind of slander and backbiting in regard to him, because our ears cannot bear to hear his words and self-love prevents us from realizing our own inadequacies.

Alas, we bequeath a book as waqf, binding its user with the condition that he should curse, hundred times a day, the mathum Mullah Muhsin Fayd (Kashani)! We call Sadr al-Muta'allihin (Mullah Sadra), who is the foremost of the adherents of tawhid, a heretic (zindiq) and do not stop at any insult in regard to him. There is no trace of any inclination towards Sufism in all of his books. Rather, he has written a book entitled Kasr asnam al jahiliyyah fi al-radd 'ala al-Sufiyyah ("Demolition of the idols of the Jahiliyyah, on the refutation of the Sufis"); yet we call him "a Sufi through and through."

We leave those who are of a known character and have been cursed by the tongues of God and

His Messenger (S) and call down curses upon those who loudly proclaim their faith in God, in the Messenger and the Imams of guidance (A). I know that these curses and insults do not harm their station in the least, or, rather, perhaps, increase their fair reward with God and cause the elevation of their degrees. But these things are injurious for ourselves and may result in depriving us of Divine assistance and bring about our failure.

Our shaykh, an accomplished ‘arif that he was (i.e. Shahabadi), may my soul be his ransom, used to say: “Never call down curses (la’n) on anybody, though he be a kafir concerning whom you do not know how he made the transit from this world to the next, and unless an infallible wali informs you concerning his condition after death. For it is possible that he may have attained faith before the time of death. Hence let your curse be of a general character.”

Here is one who has such a sacred spirit that he would not permit anyone who has died an apparent unbeliever to be insulted, for the probability that he might have acquired faith at the time of death, and there are the like of us! And only to God do I take my complaint (وإلـــى الله المشتكـــى) that the preacher of a certain city, though a man of learning and merit, used to say in the presence of scholars and the learned that so and so “used to read the Qur’an despite being a metaphysician.” It is like saying, “So and so believed in God and Resurrection despite being a prophet”! I, too, do not put much of a store by mere knowledge, and a learning that does not bring faith with it is the greatest of veils. However, one has to approach a veil in order to tear it into shreds.

The sciences are seeds of (spiritual) experience. Although it is possible, at times, that one may attain to higher spiritual stations without encountering the veils of learned jargon and the sciences, but such a thing is unusual, contrary to the wont of natural law and happens only rarely. Hence, the way to God-seeking is that one should at the outset devote his time to the remembrance of God and acquire the knowledge of God and the Names and Attributes of that Sacred Essence, the usual way from the adept (mashayikh) of that science.

Then, by the means of theoretical and practical exercises and austerities, he should open his heart to the ma’arif, and this will undoubtedly yield results. If he is not one of those familiar with the learned jargon, he can obtain results through the remembrance of the Beloved and by preoccupying his heart and mind with that Sacred Essence.

Of certain, this preoccupation of the heart and inward attention will become the means of his guidance, and God, the Exalted, will assist him. The concealing curtains will rise from before his eyes and he will somewhat retreat, from those vulgar forms of skepticism. And, perhaps, he may find his way to the ma’arif with the special grace of God Almighty. Indeed, He is the Lord of bounties (وإلى الله المشتكى).

This sacred tradition indicates that at the time of confronting death some of his stations and conditions become revealed to man. This matter is in conformity with a kind of metaphysical proof and in agreement with the experience of mystics as well as with traditions and other reports. As long as man is preoccupied with the cultivation of this mundane realm and the face of his heart is turned towards this habitat and the intoxicant of carnal nature has made him unconscious and the opiates of lust and power stupefy him, he remains totally in the dark concerning the (malakuti) forms of his conduct and morals and blind to their effects in the malakut of the heart.

But when the reelings of death and its pressures seize him, he attains a measure of detachment from this world. And if he is a man of faith and of conviction whose heart has been turned towards these realms, at the last moments his heart naturally turns towards that world and the spiritual inductors and the angels of God assigned over it (i.e. the heart) also induct him towards that world. After this induction and that detachment, a part of the world of barzakh is revealed to him and a window to the world of the Hidden is opened upon him. Then his own state and station is disclosed to him to some extent, as is narrated from Amir al-Mu'minin (A) that he said:

حَرَامٌ عَلى نَفسٍ أنْ تخرُجَ مِن الدّنيَا حتَّى تعْلَمَ أنَّه مِن أهْلِ الجَنَّة هَيَ أمْ مِن أهْلِ النّارِ.

It is prohibited that any soul should leave this world without, knowing whether it belongs to the people of paradise or the people of hell?[7]

In this context, there is a sacred tradition which we will mention in its entirety despite its length because it contains good news for the adherents of the wilayah of the Master of the Masters (Mawla al-mawali, i.e. 'Ali ibn Abi Talib) and those holding on to the skirts of the magnanimity of the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A). This hadith has been narrated by the venerable Fayd Kashani in his book Ilm al-yaqin:

قَالَ: وَفِي كِتَابِ الحُسَيْنِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ الأَهْوَازِيِّ عَنْ عَبَّادِ بْنِ مَرْوَانَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: مِنْكُمْ وَاللهِ يُقْبَلُ وَلَكُمْ وَاللهِ يُغْفَرُ. إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ بَيْنَ أَحَدِكُمْ وَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَغْتَبِطَ وَيَرَى السُّرُورَ وَقُرَّةَ العَيْنِ إلاّ أَنْ تَبْلُغَ نَفْسُهُ هَا هُنَا – وَأَوْمَأَ بِيَدِهِ إِلَى حَلْقِهِ – ثُمَّ قَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: إِنَّهُ إِذَا كَانَ ذَلِكَ وَاحْتَضَرَ حَضَرَهُ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَعَلِيٌّ وَالأَئِمَّةُ وَجِبْرَئِيلُ وَمِيكَائِيلُ وَمَلَكُ المَوْتِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ. فَيَدْنُو مِنْهُ جِبْرَئِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ فَيَقُولُ لِرَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ يُحِبُّكُمْ أَهْلَ البَيْتِ فَأَحِبَّهُ. فَيَقُولُ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: يَا جِبْرَئِيلُ، إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ يُحِبُّ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَأَهْلَ بَيْتِهِ فَأَحِبَّهُ. فَيَقُولُ جِبْرَئِيلُ: يَا مَلَكَ المَوْتِ، إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ يُحِبُّ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَآلَ رَسُولِهِ فَأَحِبَّهُ وَارْفِقْ بِهِ. فَيَدْنُو مِنْهُ مَلَكُ المَوْتِ فَيَقُولُ لَهُ: يَا عَبْدَ اللهِ، أَخَذْتَ فِكَاكَ رَقَبَتِكَ؟ أَخَذْتَ أَمَانَ بَرَائَتِكَ؟

تَمَسَّكْتَ بِالعِصْمَةِ الكُبْرَى فِي الحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيا؟ قَالَ: فَيُوَفِّقُهُ (فَيَرْفَعُهُ) اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَيَقُولُ: نَعَمْ. فَيَقُولُ (لَهُ): وَمَا ذَاكَ؟ فَيَقُولُ: وَلايَةُ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ. فَيَقُولُ: صَدَقْتَ! أَمَّا الَّذِي كُنْتَ تَحْذَرُهُ فَقَدْ آمَنَكَ اللهُ مِنْهُ، وَأَمَّا الَّذِي كُنْتَ تَرجُو فَقَدْ أَدْرَكْتَهُ. أَبْشِرْ بِالسَّلَفِ الصَّالِحِ مُرَافَقَةَ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَعِلِيٍّ وَالأَئِمَّةَ مِنْ وُلْدِهِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلامُ. ثُمَّ يَسِلُّ نَفْسَهُ سَلاًّ رَفِيقاً، ثُمَّ يَنْزِلُ بِكَفَنِهِ مِنَ الجَنَّةِ وَحَنُوطِهِ حَنُوطٍ كَالمِسْكِ الأَذْفَرِ، فَيُكَفَّنُ بِذَلِكَ الكَفَنِ وَيُحَنَّطُ بِذَلِكَ الحَنُوطِ، ثُمَّ يُكْسَى حُلَّةً صَفْرَاءَ مِنْ حُلَلِ الجَنَّةِ. فَإِذَا وُضِعَ فِي قَبْرِهِ فَتَحَ اللهُ لَهُ بَاباً مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الجَنَّةِ يَدْخُلُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ رَوْحِهَا وَرَيْحَانِهَا. ثُمَّ يُقَالُ لَهُ: نَمْ نَوْمَةَ العَرُوسِ عَلَى فِرَاشِهَا، أَبْشِرْ بِرَوْحٍ وَرَيْحَانٍ وَجَنَّةِ نَعِيمٍ وَرَبٍّ غَيْرِ غَضْبَانَ.

وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الكَافِرَ الوَفَاةُ حَضَرَهُ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَعَلِيٌّ وَالأَئِمَّةُ وَجِبْرَئِيلُ وَمِيكَائِيلُ وَمَلَكُ المَوْتِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلامُ. فَيَدْنُو مِنْهُ جِبْرَئِيلُ فَيَقُولُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ، إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ مُبْغِضاً لَكُمْ أَهْلَ البَيْتِ فَأَبْغِضْهُ. فَيَقُولُ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: يَا جِبْرَئِيلُ، إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ يُبْغِضُ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَأَهْلَ بَيْتِ رَسُولِهِ فَأَبْغِضْهُ. وَيَقُولُ جِبْرَئِيلُ: يَا مَلَكَ المَوْتِ، إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ يُبْغِضُ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَأَهْلَ بَيْتِ رَسُولِهِ فَأَبْغِضْهُ وَاعْنُفْ عَلَيْهِ. فَيَدْنُو مِنْهُ مَلَكُ المَوْتِ فَيَقُولُ: يَا عَبْدَ اللهِ، أَخَذْتَ فِكَاكَ رَقَبَتِكَ؟ أَخَذْتَ أَمَانَ بَرَائَتِكَ؟ تَمَسَّكْتَ بِالعِصْمَةِ الكُبْرَى فِي الحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيا؟ فَيَقُولُ: لا. فَيَقُولُ: أَبْشِرْ يَا عَدُوَّ اللهِ بِسَخَطِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَعَذَابِهِ وَالنَّارِ. أَمَّا الَّذِي كُنْتُ تَرْجُو فَقَدْ فَاتَكَ، وَأَمَّا الَّذِي كُنْتَ تَحْذَرُ فَقَدْ نَزَلَ بِكَ. ثُمَّ يَسِلُّ نَفْسَهُ سَلّاً عَنِيفاً، ثُمَّ يُوكِلُ بِرُوحِهِ ثَلاثَمِائَةِ شَيْطَانٍ يَبْزُقُونَ فِي وَجْهِهِ، وَيَتَأَذَّى بِرِيحِهِ. فَإِذَا وُضِعَ فِي قَبْرِهِ فُتِحَ لَهُ بَابٌ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ النَّارِ فَيَدْخُلُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ قَيْحِ رِيحِهَا وَلَهَبِهَا.

It is narrated in the Book of al-Husayn ibn Said al-Ahwazi, from ‘Abbad ibn Marwan that he said: I heard Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) say, “By God, your works will be accepted and your sins will be forgiven. There is nothing that intervenes between anyone of you and his becoming the object of envy and his seeing the delight and experiencing the comfort of your eyes except the moment when your soul reaches this point.” And saying this, he pointed with his hand to his throat. Then he (A) said, “And when that moment arrives, at the time of death, the Messenger of Allah (S) ‘Ali, the Imams, Gabriel, Michael and the Angel of Death (A) become present before him. Then Gabriel8 (A) approaches him and says to the Messenger of Allah (S), ‘This one used to love you, Ahl al-Bayt, so hold him dear.’ Whereupon the Messenger of Allah (S) says, ‘O Gabriel, indeed this one used to love God, His Messenger and his Household, and I (too) hold him dear.’ Then Gabriel says (to the Angel of Death): ‘O Angel of Death, this one used to love Allah, His Messenger and the Household of the Messenger, so hold him dear and be gentle to him.’

Then the Angel of Death (A) says (to the dying person), ‘O creature of God, have you secured your release and your security and amnesty? Did you hold on to the great handhold in the life of the world, whereupon, with God’s succor, he declares, “Yes.’ ‘What is it?’ the Angel of Death asks him. ‘(It is) the wilayah of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (A),’ he replies. The Angel says, ‘You have told the truth. God has granted you security from what you were frightened of and you have attained what you used to hope for. Receive the good news of the companionship of the

righteous predecessors and of the Messenger of Allah (S) and the Imams of his progeny (A).' Then he gently withdraws his soul and brings down his shroud from paradise, and his balm (hunut) is that of fragrant musk. Then he wraps him in that shroud and embalms him with that hunut and clothes him in a yellow dress from among the garments of paradise. Then, when he is laid in his grave, a door from among the doors of paradise is opened for him and its freshness and fragrance enters upon him. Then he is told, 'Sleep, like the sleep of a bride on her bed. Receive the glad news of the freshness and fragrance of the Garden of bounties and of an unwrathful Lord.'

(Imam al-Sadiq (A) continued) And when an unbeliever encounters the moment of death, the Messenger of Allah (S) 'Ali, the Imams, Gabriel, Michael and the Angel of Death (A) become present before him. Then Gabriel approaches him and says, 'O Messenger of Allah, verily this one used to detest you, Ahl al-Bayt, so hold him in resentment.' Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (S) says, 'O Gabriel, indeed this one used to hate God, His Messenger and the Messenger's Household, so you too be resentful towards him.' Thereat Gabriel declares, 'O Angel of Death, indeed this one used to hate God, His Messenger, and the Household of His Messenger (A) so you too be resentful of him and be harsh towards him.'

Then the Angel of Death approaches the dying person and says, 'O creature of God, did you secure your release and your security and amnesty? Did you hold on to the great handhold in the life of the world?' He answers, 'No.' Whereupon the Angel of Death tells him, 'O enemy of God! Receive the tiding of God's wrath and of His punishment and fire. You have lost what you hoped for and that which you used to be afraid of has descended upon you.' Then the Angel draws his soul violently and hands it over to three hundred devils who throw their spittle on his face and he is tormented with its stench. And when he is laid in his grave, a door from among the doors of hell is opened for him and its blaze and flames enter upon him."[9]

It should be known that the barzakh of everyone is representative of his condition on the Day of Resurrection and that the world of barzakh is an intermediate world between this world and the world of Resurrection, where there is a window opening towards paradise or hell, as mentioned in this noble tradition. The famous prophetic tradition:

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القَبْرُ إِمَّا رَوْضَةٌ مِنْ رِيَاضِ الجِنَانِ أَوْ حُفْرَةٌ مِنْ حُفَرِ النِّيرَانِ.

The grave is either a garden from among the gardens of paradise or a pit from among the pits of the Fire,[10]

refers to the same matter. Hence, at the time of death and confrontation with it, man observes the effects and forms of his works and hears the news of paradise or hell from the Angel of Death. And when these things become revealed to him, he also observes the effects produced by his works and deeds in his heart, such as luminosity and expansiveness and openness of the breast, or their opposites such as darkness and constriction of the breast and its narrowness. Then, when confronted with barzakh, the heart becomes prepared to experience the subtle breezes of Divine Grace and Beauty in it.

Therein emerge the signs of the tajalliyat of Divine Grace and Beauty if he is a man of faith and felicity. Then the desire for liqa' Allah emerges in his heart and the fire of yearning for the Beloved's Beauty is lit in it, if he had partaken of virtuous conduct, love and Divine passion, and none except God knows what delights and beneficences lie in this tajalli and desire.

If he had been one of the faithful and the righteous, he will be bestowed of the beneficence of God, the Exalted, in proportion to his faith and good works and he will get an immediate glimpse of it at the time of death. 'Thereupon, the eagerness for death and encounter with Divine beneficence arise in him and he leaves this world with delight and ecstasy and in relief and freshness. The corporeal eyes and the earthly organs of taste do not have the strength to bear the pleasures of this ecstasy and delight.

But if he should be one of the wretched, an infidel, an unbeliever or a hypocrite, and perpetrator of ugly and evil deeds, he will, in accordance with the measure of his evil share and misconduct in the world, discover the effects of Divine Wrath and Might and see the abode of die wretched. Such terror and convulsions will seize him that nothing will be more hateful for him than the revelations of Divine Glory and Might. As a result of this hate and hostility, he will experience such an affliction, anguish, darkness and pain that none except God's Sacred Essence can know the extent of its intensity.

This is for persons who have in this world repudiated the truth and been hypocrites and enemies of God and His awliya'. A representative part of the hell becomes revealed also to the sinners and those guilty of major sins in proportion to the evil character of their misconduct, and in this state there is nothing more loathsome for them than to leave this world. And so they are transferred from it violently and harshly, with hardship and pain, and such a regret grips their hearts that it knows no measure.

This description shows that at the time of death man beholds that which had been in him and of which he was unaware. At that time the tips of the concealed part of his being become

visible to him. The life of the world was a concealing curtain that hid our defects and was a veil for the people of the ma'arif.

Now that this curtain has been lifted and this veil has been removed, man observes a representative part of that which lay in him and that which he himself had prepared. In the other realms, man will not face any punishment or chastisement except on account of that which he earns in this world. He will have a direct vision of the (malakuti) forms of the righteous works and virtuous conduct that he had performed and the right convictions that he had held in this world, together with the gifts that God will bestow upon him out of His own favor and munificence. Under the noble verse:

﴿فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَه. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَه.﴾

And whoso doth good an atom's weight will see it, and whoso doth ill an atom's weight will see it. (99:7-8)

the following statement (of Ibn Mas'ud) is quoted in Tafsir al-Safi from Majma'al-bayan:11

هِيَ أَحْكَمُ آيَةٍ فِي القُرْآنِ، وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ يُسَمِّيهَا الجَامِعَةَ.

It is the 'firmest' of the verses of the Qur'an, and the Messenger of Allah (S) -used to call it "al-jami'ah."

Hence we should know that if we cultivate the love of God, the Exalted, and His awliya' in this world and put on the collar of obedience to that Sacred Essence around our necks and receive the burnish of Divine light in our hearts, at the time of death this inward reality will be revealed to us in its beautiful (malakuti) form.

Contrarily, if our hearts take on a mundane aspect and turn away from God, the seed of the enmity of God and the awliya' may come to be gradually sown in them. Then, at the sight of death, this enmity will reveal its intensity and divulge its terrible and strange qualities, as you have seen.

Hence one of the most important things for man is to take care to cultivate a Divine state in the heart and orient its face toward God, His awliya', and the abode of His favor. This can be attained by contemplating the bounties and favors of the Sacred Essence and devoting oneself to His obedience and worship. But one should not rely upon oneself and one's works.

At all times, especially in moments of solitude, one must tearfully and humbly implore God to put His love in his heart and to illuminate his heart with the light of His knowledge and love, purging it of the love of the world and of everything other than Him.

Of course, this prayer is a substanceless and verbal exercise in the beginning, for it is very

difficult to desire the removal of the world's love from one's heart when it is full of intense love for it. But after a period of contemplation, perseverance, and making the heart understand the fair results of the love of God and the evil results of the love of the world, it is hoped that it will .be realized, God willing

The Significance Of 'Love' And 'Hate' When Ascribed To God

Know that love, hate and the like, which in the language of the Qur'an and noble traditions have been ascribed to God-exalted is His Glory-are not to be taken in their ordinary sense. For such qualities signify psychic affections (infi'al al-nafsani), and God, the Exalted, is above and free of them. Since an elaborate discussion of this issue is outside the scope of this brief exposition, we will confine ourselves to a passing reference.

It should be known that there are in man qualities and states which on descent from the Hidden and non-material realms and on reaching the realm of corporeal nature-which is the realm of differentiation (farq), or rather that of differentiation within differentiation (farq al-farq)-assume a form which is different from that of the Hidden immaterial forms in its effects and properties. Thus, the Platonists consider all material existents to be manifestations of Hidden spirits and to be reflections of celestial realities and analogies of the Platonic Ideas. They hold that the essential archetypes of the accidents and qualities, which have a non-substantial existence in this world, exist by themselves in that world (as independent substances).

On this basis, we may say that the archetypes of these qualities and states, which in the corporeal world are accompanied with an affective and variable character, have an ideal form free of all inadequacies in the Hidden immaterial realms, especially in the world of Divine Names and the station of Unity. The meanings of the terms when referred to the immaterial realm, or the Divine plane, is different from those in this world.

For instance, should the tajalliyat of Beneficence (rahmaniyyah), Mercy (rahimiyyah), which are also called tajalliyat of Beauty (jamal), Gentleness (lutf), Love (hubb) and Intimacy (uns), be manifested in this world, they would take the form of love, mercy and gentleness that are accompanied by affection (infi'al), and this is due to the extremely narrow character of this world. It is mentioned in a hadith that out of hundred portions of Divine Mercy (rahmah) only one portion has been sent down in this world that comprises all the manifestations of compassion that find actualization in this world, such as the compassion between children and parents and the like. Similarly, the tajalliyat of Divine Compulsion (qahriyyah) and Mastership (malikiyyah), which belong to the tajalliyat of Glory (jalal), are manifested in this world in the

form of hatred (bughd) and rage (ghadhab).

To sum up, the inward aspect of love, hatred, and anger is Divine Compassion and Omnipotence and the tajalliyat of Beauty and Glory, which exist by themselves and in which change, affection, and multiplicity do not find any way. Thus the loves and antipathies that exist in this world are manifestations of Divine Compassion and Omnipotence, and since a manifestation (mazhar) depends on that which it manifests (zahir) and since the zahir is revealed in the mazhar, it is not improper to apply the same terms to the two of them. On this basis, the hatred of God, the Exalted, towards a creature is manifestation of Omnipotence and Vengeance, and His love manifestation of Compassion and Munificence. And God is the All-knowing.

Notes

1. Al-Kulayni, Furu' al-Kafi; iii, 134.
2. See the exposition of the twenty-first hadith.
3. Usul al-Kafi, ii, "Kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab ukhuwwat al-mu'minin", hadith no. 4.
4. Mafatih al-jinan, "al-Munajat al-Sha'baniyyah."
5. Mafatih al-jinan, "Du'a' Kumayl".
6. Al -Shaykh al-Saduq, Kitab al-Tawhid, 305.
7. Fayd al-Kashani, Ilm al yaqin, ii, 853.
8. This sentence of the tradition is narrated in the following form in its version of Furu 'al-Kafi, iii, p. 131: "Then 'Ali (A)approaches him and says: "O Messenger of Allah, this one used to love us, Ahl al-Bayt, so hold him dear," and the Messenger of Allah (S)says: O Gabriel… "Later in this narration-which is more reliable and precise-it is 'Ali who says to the Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, this one used to hate us, Ahl al-Bayt, so hold him in resentment." (Trans.)
9. 'Ilm al-yaqin, ii, pp. 854, 856.
10. Sunan al-Tirmidhi, iv, 640, "Kitab sifat al-Qiyamah"; al-Jami' al-saghir, i, 63.
11. Al-Tabrisi, Majma 'al-bayan (Qumm 1403), v, 527.