

Towards His Light

towards His Light

Salim ahamed kannu

Towards His Light

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

Allah a'lam (Allah knows best)

The Vessel

A great many believe what they see. They sail on
seemingly clear waters.

Very many people believe what they hear. They sail on
waters, said to be clear.

For many, understanding is knowing. They sail on waters,
murky and bitter.

For a few, seeing is knowing. They sail on waters, clear and
sweet.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In the holy Quran, Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala (S.w.t) reveals about the creation of seven samavaat. Each samavat (Sng), we take as a world with a distinct space-time connection. In two of these worlds, man is destined to live. This world with earth at its centre serves as his temporary abode. His permanent abode is in another world after eventual return to the Lord Who has created him. The other five worlds are also connected with his destiny. Thus, to man, Allah S.w.t is the Lord of all the worlds-Rabbul Alamein- to Whom belongs all praise.

1. Self expression of Al-Aleem

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Allah S.w.t expresses Himself through creation. Creation is the manifestation of His absolute knowledge, Al-'Ilm. He is Al-Aleem, the only One Who Knows. He has complete knowledge of His Being and of the creation. The Being Who is Al-Khaliq, (the Creator) is ever in the act of creation. The Being, having no beginning and no end, is the Only Truth; He is Al-Haq. Everything begins from Him, and everything ends in Him. He is Al-Awwalu wal Akhiru, the Beginning and the End. Space and time are creations of Him, and He is beyond. As such, nothingness is only a human fallacy.

2. The Rabb of 'Ilm

The word 'Alamein' is composed of three root letters of Arabic alphabet - 'Ain, Laam and Meem. Put together, they form the word- 'Ilm, indicating by divine wisdom that creation manifests sublime knowledge, 'Ilm.

3. Creation from Rahmah

Allah S.w.t creates and sustains the creation out of Rahmah (Mercy). His Arsh, the Throne is on the samavat of Rahmah. He is Ar-Rahman, the Merciful.

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In the holy Quran, He S.w.t says of Rahmah as being the responsibility of His Self upon the creation.

Rahmah, in mundane sense, refers to mother's womb. It binds and holds mother-child relationship which is a sign of underlying boundless benevolence of Ar-Rahman for His creation.

4. *Qadr* (Pre-destiny)

Creation starts with *qadr* (pre-destiny). Allah S.w.t is Al-Qadir, the Most Able, with full authority over *qadr*. Therefore, creation is not spontaneous. Besides Allah S.w.t, there is only *qadr*, the being that is ever created. Unlike Allah S.w.t Who is Single, His creation is in pair. As such, *qadr* has a dual formation - an outer one hiding an inner one.

5. Physical and spiritual worlds

Allah S.w.t is the *Nur* (the Light) of the worlds and the earth. Thus, *qadr* may be understood as the *Nur*, encompassing His Attributes. As *qadr* flows unfolding, the *Nur* gets concealed within the elusive spiritual form of His Attributes. The spiritual form is expressed outwardly in the physical form that is of

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matter. Allah S.w.t is Aldhahiru wal Batinu. He is the Manifest and the Hidden. The manifest physical world conceals a spiritual world within.

6. Attributes of Allah S.w.t

Allah S.w.t has endless number of Attributes having no bounds. They are absolute and pure. Every creation, since it starts from Him, will have a certain finite combination of His Attributes. Man is ill-equipped to know about His Being. At the same time, he is able to appreciate various forms of creation expressing His Attributes. Thus, Allah S.w.t makes His Being apparent through the being of His creation even as He S.w.t remains invisible.

The holy Prophet, Muhammed sallallahu alaihiwa sallam ('s.a.s), taught mankind ninety nine of Allah S.w.t's Attributes. They're called the Most Beautiful Names-Asmaul Husna.

7. Timed present in Timeless Present

Allah S.w.t is Al-Hayy, the Ever Living Present. The *qadr* unfolds in the Present. His Attributes go on merging in the Oneness of the Present. His Beautiful

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Names without bounds of space and time emerge therefrom. He S.w.t is Al-Ahad, the One and Only.

Our present is time-bound and our attributes are quantified and contained within time and space. The time bound present could be a second or a fraction of a second tending to zero, the timelessness. Or it could be a minute or an hour tending to eternity into that's beyond time. Zero time corresponds to spacelessness and eternity corresponds to infinity of space. Thus, the quantified present is encompassed within timeless and eternal space of the Present. Because of this connection, the time bound present is always elusive. It needs to be marked by a'mal (righteous deeds). Man sustains loss by time if his present goes wasted unmarked by good deeds. The plight of man is described in Surah Al-Asr.

103:1.By time,

103:2.Indeed, mankind is in loss

103:3. Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds, and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.

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The creation of space-time is as a flux to offer opportunities for man to transform them into worship, *Ibadah*.

“I have not created Jinns and men, but to worship Me.” (Surah Adwariyat 51:56)

8. Exploring creation

Everything of the creation is a ayat, a sign of Allah S.w.t beckoning to seek the *Nur* inside. The ayat being creation has dual form an exterior concealing an interior. The inner on revelation, further exhibits duality by hiding its interior. Thus, layers of wisdom emerge, imparting multiple levels of meaning to the ayat. At some stage, the seeker stumbles upon an unaccustomed layer hailed as a discovery or an invention. It is but physical insight. Scientific knowledge is a formation of physical insights.

9. Ruh in Nafs

The spiritual being of man is termed nafs, the holder of His Attributes- ninety nine of them. Human nafs is so blessed as to know his Rabb and to relate with Him. It has infinite and eternal qualities that surpass the bounds of space and time, but confined within

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limits of the physical being. The elusive nafs holds the Ruh-the spirit of life, made of *Nur*. Ruh is at the centre of the qalb, the heart of nafs. Ruh is the watchful, but, non-interfering carrier of the nafs.

10. Worldly life and spiritual life

Allah S.w.t in Surah Ar-Rum, explains the apparent worldly life.

30:7 They know but the outer (things) in the life of this world: but of the End of things they are heedless.

They are heedless of the hidden *Akhira* bound to every deed. One's spiritual world is hidden inside his external world. His physical being is equipped with faculties suited for interacting with the apparent world, making up his worldly life. Preoccupation with its attractions makes him lose sight of the spiritual world • eiled from the physical body and its senses.

Only the nafs or the soul which is the spiritual being, can relate with the spiritual world or *Akhira*. The nafs thus builds up one's spiritual life. Worldly life consists of deeds including thoughts committed while awake. Behind every deed lies one's *Akhira* depending on its

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being right or wrong. A nafs on spiritual path is led to differentiate right from wrong. One's *Akhira* is thus sealed by his deeds in the present.

11. External knowledge

The Arabic word 'Ilm generally refers to knowledge. Here, in this book, we will use it to specifically denote internal knowledge for easy differentiation from external knowledge. The external knowledge is what we physically gather from outside using the senses, mind and the brain, together called aqal or the rational faculty (the external eye). It ranges from basic information about bare needs to advanced excesses of luxury.

12. Sublime knowledge or 'Ilm

Everything is a ayat of Allah S.w.t. It is a piece of hidden illuminant 'Ilm beckoning to be known. It is understood by instinct by innocent people who lead a natural primitive way of life. A great many people believe what is apparent. Very many people believe what to them appear right. Many people use the rational faculty to analyze and understand the ayat.

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They end up with interpreting the attributes. Very few see the reality as Allah S.w.t guides them to the *Nur*.

The essence or the reality of *Nur* is perceived only with *Nur*. *Nur* is received in the qalb or the heart of nafs. And hence, the qalb alone is capable of seeing the reality. His Rahmah grants it to the child with pure heart which becomes contaminated in course of time.

The qalb seeing in *Nur* is the internal eye. It's the internal vision called, *basweerah* where reality is seen without a process. In *basweerah* one knows. It is internal spiritual knowledge or 'Ilm, being of the nafs, the spiritual being.

In Surah Al-Kahf, Allah S.w.t gives the example of Nabi Musa ('a.s) in order to teach the lesson that, he who sees Al-Khidr, has reached the juncture of 'Ilm. He then starts seeing through Al-Khidr.

13. The guidance to *Nur*

Allah S.w.t says in the holy Quran thus: "Allah guides to His *Nur* whom He Wills."

يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ

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The source of *Nur* is divine 'Ilm. He who sees with *Nur*, sees the reality of outward appearance. And he knows its reality as emerging from *Akhira*. The knowledge is the divine 'Ilm.

'Ilm is received by a nafs through *Ibadah* or worship, led by Allah's *Nur*. A believer starts *Ibadah* with recitation of holy Quran.

13. Siratal mustaqim

The way of 'Ilm led by *Nur* is called siratal mustaqim, the straight path. It is the internal route to one's Ruh, the *Nur* of Allah. The path is infinitely wide at end, as His *Nur* is sighted.

14. *Nur* of humanity

The holy Quran is the guidance to the *Nur* of Allah. The life of Nabi Muhammad ('s.a.s) or the *Sunnah* is the practical guide based on holy Quran. Dinul Islam is built on the basis of both Quran and *Sunnah*. A member of the Din led by *Nur* is a Muslim. His function is to serve as the *Nur* of humanity. He is, thus, so blessed.

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CHAPTER 2

Fitra - Human Nature

Gist

The relationship of man with the Creator is marked in the innate nature of man, called Fitra. It is for the knowing of his Rabb. He S.w.t can be known by knowing himself and also by knowing the creation. There is no knowledge – physical or spiritual- that is not in the fitra. Fitra comes from three sources. i. After Adam was created, Allah S.w.t taught him all names. His Beautiful Names called Asmaul Husna contain every name without exception. These Names are His pure Attributes. ii. The Lord Creator summoned all nafs from the progeny of Adam's children and took a pledge from them. It was to testify that Allah S.w.t is their Rabb. iii. Man being part of the qadr, he has the seed of qadr within him.

1. Origin of Fitra

After creating Adam ('a.s), Allah S.w.t taught him

('a.s) all names; وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا

All names are included in Asma ul Husna. Asmaul Husna are His pure Attributes or Names. The created

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worlds are from the Attributes. Thus, the nafs of Adam ('a.s) had been imparted the 'Ilm about the creations which happened to be forgotten when the earth was decreed to be man's abode. Even the Angels did not know what is in the fitra of Adam ('a.s). They said they only knew what has been taught to them.

Rabbul 'Alamein summoned every nafs from the progeny of Adam and took a covenant as regards his relation with Allah (S.w.t). Every one testified that Allah S.w.t is his Lord God. This covenant confirming the relation with the Creator that is fundamental to the relevance of one's existence is implanted in the fitra. The nafs was made to take the pledge lest they plead innocence for being unfaithful to the Rabb, on the Day of Judgment, on the ground that what was taught to Adam had not reached them.

7:172 And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware."

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Man, being part of the *qadr* before unfolding in the backdrop of time-space, has the remnants of *qadr*. The holy Quran is the textual version of *qadr* from the *qadr* kept secure as *Nur* in the tablet of 'Lawh al-Mahfooh'. Human fitra is thus connected to the holy Quran even before creation. So, Allah S.w.t in Surah Ar-Rahman has said that even prior to creation man had been taught the Quran (Ar-Rahman, 55: 2-3).

2. Fitra to know the Rabb

Pursuit of knowledge is bound to the fitra having the awareness of Allah S.w.t and the *Akhira*. Allah S.w.t in His Mercy, has been reminding of the covenant over and over the children of Adam ('a.s) as often as they try to bury the seed deep beyond reach. We are made to praise the Lord of all worlds. The opening chapter of the Quran presents the invocation as part of His Rahmah to humanity. **الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ**

“All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all worlds” (Al-Fatiha, 1:2)

“Alamein” also implies ‘Ilm, the knowledge. The nafs being of *qadr*, has always been there as the worlds, outside. Both are destined to unfold in time. He,

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Rabbil A'lameen has placed the 'Ilm of Rabb (the Lord) and the 'Ilm of A'lameen (all worlds) within the nafs so that man relates to Him via his own self as well as the world outside of him. The human nafs is so destined as to glorify himself in the Glory of Allah S.w.t. His responsibility is limitless. He has been put in the junction where the outside ocean meets with the inside ocean. He is the Majma-ul-Bahrain, the merger of the external and the internal worlds of knowledge. The nafs is so made as to contain the merger being of the best mould.

3. Open and closed fitra

Fitra is in the qalb. Knowledge, whether spiritual or material, emanates because of fitra. The sublime knowledge is revealed when qalb is open. The external knowledge that is understood by man, the bases of material advancements also emanates from it, but while it is closed.

4. Fragile clay

Allah S.w.t created the Jinnkind from smokeless fire, and the Malaikah or the Angels, from light. But, He S.w.t chose relatively insignificant clay to mould man.

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“He created man from clay like [that of] pottery.”

(Ar-Rahman, 55:14)

This is a fine clay that potter makes use of, for making vessels of various types. The material of human Nafs is mouldable into any shape and form. It has the flexibility that imparts a range from the lowest level of Shaitan to the highest position of being closest to Allah, over and above even that of the Angels. In between, he can be with the Jinns for achieving advanced material objectives as could be seen from the example of Nabi Sulaiman ('a.s). He ('a.s) had a fruitful connection with the Jinns.

The nafs of man is susceptible to be easily seduced and destroyed by Shaitan. He uses human nafs as a potter uses clay. He kindles and sets ablaze the kiln of arrogance to make brittle pots of his own that could be happily shattered to his satisfaction.

5. Mould of Shirk

Shaitan uses the flexibility of human nafs to mould idols of various forms and causes the slave

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nafs to worship those images of him. He defied Allah S.w.t using fire as his weapon.

He said fire is superior to clay and hence, he is superior to man by birth. Thus, arrogance became fire of his kiln. The nafs burns and becomes brittle in arrogance. He worships his self, its various images and the fire inside. Thus, strengthened by arrogance, he challenges and competes with fellow nafs of the likeness and they become enemy to one another as Allah S.w.t said to Adam (Surah Twaha, 20:123).

(Allah) said, "Descend from Paradise - all, [your descendants] being enemies to one another.

6. Best Mould of Ihsan

Allah S.w.t, in His Rahmah, has bestowed man with the best mould of a Nafs that is capable of attaining Ihsan, the righteous state. Man is intended to be the best of creations.

We have certainly created man in the best of stature; (At-Tin, 95:4)

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Human qalb has the capability of holding His Qalam- the holy Quran- containing His Most Beautiful Names. It surpasses time and space, as He Swt leads the Nafs to His *Nur*. The nest on the tree gets lit up. And the bird in that *Nur* views the real. It discovers its status.

The *Nur* transforms the flexibility and fragility of the clay into one of humility and purity that emits fragrance of blossom.

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CHAPTER 3

Faculties of 'Ilm

Gist

The system of human faculties is of 'Ilm. It is developed to relate to his Rabb. It has an outer physical body limiting the expression of an inner spiritual body called soul or self. The physical body encloses an externally connected understanding mechanism, the aqal or the external eye. The aqal has externally opening senses, a discerning mind and a wise operating intellect. The inner spiritual being is called nafs. It has a heart called qalb that can see and hear. It is enclosed within a chest called sadr. The qalb is the internal eye. When the nafs controls, it is joined by the physical being. So, 'Nafs' is the undivided self, responsible for the acts of individual.

1. Nafs of Musa ('a.s)

Surah Al-Qasas, describes the physical and spiritual faculties of young Musa ('a.s).

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28:14 And when he attained his full strength and was [mentally] mature, We bestowed upon him judgement and knowledge. And thus do We reward the muhsinin, the doers of good.

The full strength refers to the body, the maturity (ripeness) refers to the general state of mind, hukkm (wisdom) refers to the intellectual capacity and knowledge refers to the nafs having 'ilm. Most people can understand the physical body with the senses, mind and the human intellect. Human intellect is not merely a bundle of nerves but houses a higher level of consciousness. However, not many have the realization about the self or nafs as a faculty that is over and above the senses, brain and mind. As a rational being, without knowing oneself, he will not be able to relate to Allah S.w.t. Understanding the Nafs, Insha Allah, may lead to knowing it and knowing of his Creator.

2. Provisions of 'ilm

This world is full of His provisions, the provisions of Ar-Raziq, the Provider. They cater to the demands of

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not only the body, but also the aqal. Over and above, they are to be known by the nafs.

Al-Mulk 67:15 - "It is He who made the earth tame for you - so walk along its slopes and eat of His provision - and to Him is the resurrection."

His provisions are 'Ilm meant for consumption by different members of the Nafs so that man knows his Rabb.

3. Faculties of society

Surah Al-Kahf, ayat 18:22 contains the lesson that teaches the significance of a society where every human faculty is represented so that they function as a single entity wherein Allah S.w.t bestows protection to its people in both worlds. The people might be from different walks of life. When it functions as a homogenous whole, Allah's Rahmah brings peace and tranquility in it.

4. The external eye

The external eye is called aqal, the cognitive faculty of the nafs. Nafs generally refers to the totality of the

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physical and spiritual beings. Specifically, it is the soul, the spiritual being. The aqal of the body consists of the senses connecting it with outside world, the mind that chooses and tries to impose likes and dislikes, and the intellect that uses intelligence, advises mind and commands action to the body.

The external eye is involved in understanding the material universe, building knowledge on past experience.

5. The internal eye

The nafs has a qalb or heart that functions as the internal eye that can receive 'Ilm or divine knowledge. The qalb is capable of knowing by seeing and hearing. The knowing is called internal vision or basweera. Basweera is dependent on the purity of qalb. The qalb is within the sadr or chest of the nafs. It is separated from the aqal by the sadr except in the case of the pure.

Ordinary people are led by the aqal. The nafs serves as servant for people of taqwa. In others the nafs is unknown or forgotten. There is a difference when

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Nafs leads as aqal becomes humble and submissive before Allah S.w.t.

6. Nafs, the holder of responsibility

The nafs often leans toward the aqal dominated by mind and body. By position, it is closer to mind and body, but distant from the intellect above. It is responsible for the individual's actions and thoughts. The personality of the individual is reflected by the nafs. Specifically, it is the quality of the qalb within the nafs that determines character. The current status of the personality which is the present mood is dependent on its relative inclination to the other components. This inclination is a factor of the purity of the qalb. When I say, "I did it", it refers specifically to my nafs, but also covers the body, the mind or the intellect. If the qalb is corrupt, the aqal leads with arrogance. The person has an aqal separated from the nafs, brought about by lack of spiritual interaction.

Qalb is the seat of fitra. One receives sublime knowledge or gathers physical knowledge because of fitra. Physical knowledge is understood by man because knowledge is seeded in human fitra. In the former case, Allah S.w.t favours His servant by

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opening up the qalb. In the latter case, the qalb need not be open. Learning by understanding is enabled from the fitra of a closed qalb wherefrom it sends physical insights.

As the Nafs leads, it leads by coordinating all faculties. The purpose of Din or religion is unanimity of purpose. It is achieved by the purification of heart for the Nafs to be in control. We will in this writing, use Nafs with capital 'N' to denote a commanding Nafs. When Nafs is in command, the aqal is in sakeena and the Nafs is in salamat.

7. The defunct nafs

The nafs is deactivated owing to submission to Shaitan. He is a sure presence even in siratal mustaqim and therefore, is as good as another faculty within man.

If the spiritual body is defunct, the nafs is represented by the totality of other components. It is kufr or disbelief. The plight of people of kufr, is stated in Surah Al-A'raf 7:179.

7:179 "And We have certainly created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind. They have hearts

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with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. Those are like livestock; rather, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless.”

We are told in Surah Al-Isra that whoever is blind here will be brought blind in the *Akhira*. They are far away from the straight path.

17:72 “And whoever is blind in this [life] will be blind in the Hereafter and more astray in way.”

The nafs that is blind here does not recognize *Akhira* in the qalb even as it is reflected in the aqal. The aqal functioning as the nafs likes heaven and detests hell. It tries to build heaven on earth, forgetting the covenant to Allah S.w.t.

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CHAPTER 4

Background of 'Ilm

Gist

Allah S.w.t forbade Adam and Hawwa, while in paradise, not to go near the lone tree of worldly knowledge which was the abode of Shaitan. They disobeyed the command and fell a prey to Shaitan's seduction.

Allah S.w.t had told Adam that they had plentiful to eat from, in the paradise and would not have to suffer hunger, thirst, nakedness and sun's heat. On earth, the sufferings of man are due to hunger and thirst in the worldly heat. The nakedness is spiritual depravation. Allah S.w.t said on earth man and shaitan would be enemy to one another which would entail nakedness of nafs. He S.w.t would send down guidance and whosoever follows it will be saved. The guidance is the holy Quran containing Rahmah to quench spiritual thirst.

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1. Tree of deceptive knowledge

In the garden in paradise, Adam and Hawwa were introduced to the deceptive tree of worldly knowledge by Shaitan. He seduced them into eating from that tree, promising an eternal life and limitless power in a world of no decay, to ensue thereby (Surah Twaha 20:120). In reality, it turned out to be a mortal life in a transitory world of corruption and decay.

Allah S.w.t forbade Adam and Hawwa, the first couple to the seeding of mankind, from approaching that lone tree in the garden of paradise where they had bountiful things to enjoy. They would suffer harm and transgression at the hands of the Shaitan in case they came closer to hearing- distance of him. They would be lured to the passions of the material world represented by the tree.

وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا
رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ
الظَّالِمِينَ

*Al-Baqara, 2:35 We said: "O Adam! dwell thou
and thy wife in the Garden; and eat of the bountiful*

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things therein as (where and when) ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression."

In the bliss of the paradise, Adam (representing Hawwa as well) had a spiritual exterior and a material interior – a spiritual body or nafs concealing the physical being, the aqal. His spiritual being was put to test, by offering to his material self, the blinding attractions of a fleeting world. Against Allah's warning, when they approached the tree, the inner aqal became inquisitive. Shaitan seduced them by whispering the prospects of eating from it. He could create division between the exterior and the interior. The inner material self could gain an upper hand for a while, and Adam lost the test. He had to forgo the blissful tranquility of paradise for the earthly travesty of pleasures.

In Surah 'Thaw Ha', 20:118-119, Allah S.w.t narrates the blessings of paradise in comparison to material world.

إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَىٰ

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20:118 *"There is therein (enough provision) for thee
not to go hungry nor to go naked,*

وَأَنَّكَ لَا تَظْمَأُ فِيهَا وَلَا تَصْحَىٰ

20:119 *"Nor to suffer from thirst, nor from the sun's
heat."*

Adam could realize the difference between life in paradise and worldly life, because of fitra implanted in the qalb. Yet, he could not desist from the temptation of the aqal. As Adam and Hawwa were tested for their obedience to the Lord, on earth, man would be put to test for his loyalty to his Rabb. Now, the test would be on the material exterior by offering *Akhira* to the spiritual nafs.

The immediate consequence of eating the forbidden fruit was that:

*their nakedness appeared to them: they began
to sew together, for their covering, leaves from the
Garden..(Surah Twaha 20:121).*

In the garden of paradise, Adam was not in the need of clothes as he was not naked. His nafs had been covered with a natural garment of paradise

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called bliss. Shaitan stripped Adam and Hawwa off their spiritual clothing, exposing the hidden material being. The initial knowledge of Adam and Hawwa was the awareness about the exposed sexual organs. Allah S.w.t causes shame to remind of the nudity owing to spiritual depravation and of the need to dress up the material being with spiritual clothing. Shaitan and his associates will reduce disbelievers to mere objects of sexual pleasures for the enjoyment of their spiritual nudity. Disbelief would strip the nafs bare of its spiritual content, filling it with sins. Sin, in turn, generates guilt reminding about the need of spiritual covering.

2. Hunger and thirst in worldly heat

On earth, man is hungry and thirsty under sun's heat. The existential demands of the body and aqal constitute hunger. It is the desire to life, property, family, religion, intellect and dignity. Hunger raises demands on food, clothing, shelter, sex, worship of God. Intellectual pursuits and self respect. They produce disposable waste. Their appeasement is essential for sustenance and perpetuation of human race.

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Excessive hunger is involved in over consumption, gluttony, lust of sex and lust of power. They produce harmful wastes such as arrogance, competition, jealousy, fear, intolerance, anger, enmity, failure, frustration, depression, melancholy etc., causing thirst. Thirst signals guilt (shame) of a sinning aqal that corrupts nafs. It is quenched using water of Rahmah. If not, nafs would end up in spiritual nudity or spiritual depravation.

The craving for a never ending life in an everlasting world of limitless power, promised by Shaitan, allures man. The aqal is relentlessly searching for it in the material world to satisfy its 'hunger' and 'thirst'. It produces deficient and wasteful external knowledge.

3. Naked worldly knowledge

The fruit being eaten by Adam is the fruit of material knowledge. It imparts energy to the aqal. As aqal became active and dominant, the physical body with private parts emerged to accommodate it. The spiritual nafs went hiding within.

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The worldly knowledge is deceptive due to its origin, and naked due to guilt of disobedience. It requires covering up with Rahmah. Allah S.w.t has sent down Rahmah for clothing the material knowledge. The holy Quran is the Rahmah which also contains in it the guidance to its use. Dressed in the garment of Rahmah, it would uncover treasures of corals to serve as human ornamentation.

However, the sublime 'Ilm is far superior. It entails only righteous deeds that take to Jannah (heaven). As such, 'hunger' and 'thirst' of nafs are its craving for jannah. The nafs wants the fish of taqwa and the water of Rahmah to cook its meal. The meal of nafs is 'Ilm that generates *Nur* to ward off 'fatigue' caused by sun's heat. The Rahmah of Allah S.w.t is the pre-requisite for 'Ilm as we have been told while Allah S.w.t describes the 'Ilm of Al-Khidr in Surah Al-Kahf.

4 . Nafs in *Akhira*

A nafs deprived of spiritual protection is a fatigued nafs. It has become so lean and insignificant that the aqal replaces it in its noble function. Thus, the physical being substitutes nafs as the accountable

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self or Nafs. The Nafs that is destined to torments of *Akhira* is the physical being, dominated by a fragmented aqal, and carrying a reduced nafs or soul. Allah S.w.t has said even the finger tip will be recreated as such, indicating that the body, with the aqal intact, is going to be the sufferer.

In the heaven, although there are different 'darajahs' for its inmates, two groups are distinctly obvious. The fore-runners are Nafs who do not carry aqal along with, and the people of the Right who retain the aqal. For the former group, fruits of 'Ilm that cater to the qalb serve as food. Fruits of wisdom that cater to the aqal will be the food for the latter group.

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CHAPTER 5

The Teacher of 'Ilm

Gist

We discern the external knowledge that is due to the aqal or external eye as mere knowledge or physical knowledge and the spiritual knowledge due to nafs as 'Ilm. 'Ilm is the superior knowledge received within as the qalb sees (and hears). The realization due to aqal involves a process of understanding. On the other hand, 'Ilm is direct knowing of a seeing qalb. 'Ilm is taught by Allah S.w.t by opening the internal eye or the qalb. The experience of the nafs is called basweera.

1. The oceans of knowledge

Allah S.w.t, in the holy Quran in Surah Al-Kahf, teaches Nabi Musa alaihi salaam ('a.s) where and how to find the sublime 'Ilm. It could be found at the junction where two water bodies or seas meet- the *majmaul bahrain*. Since it is the location of the 'Ilm,

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the seas also might be related to knowledge. Every knowledge belongs to Allah S.w.t, and the holy Quran is the guidance to His Knowledge.

Al-Ahab 46:23 “He said: The knowledge is with Allah only. I convey unto you that wherewith I have been sent,”

Thus, it is in the Quran, we should be looking for the *majmaul bahrain* of superior knowledge.

2. Al-Khidr

Musa ('a.s) claims himself to be the most learned man of his times. Allah S.w.t corrects him telling about a servant blessed with Allah's superior 'Ilm. He is to be found at *majmaul bahrain*. Allah S.w.t does not name him. We may, for the sake of narration, call him Al-Khidr.

Al-Kahf 18:65 “And they found a servant from among Our servants to whom we had given Rahmah from us and had taught him from Us a [certain] knowledge.”

Allah S.w.t has taught Al-Khidr His special 'Ilm by blessing him with Rahmah (Mercy). Therefore, Rahmah is pre-requisite for receiving this 'Ilm.

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The claim of Musa ('a.s) as to his being the most learned of all, is based on the understanding of his aqal. Allah S.w.t is pointing out that there is a deeper knowing than the understanding of aqal.

By negating the claim of Musa ('a.s), it is implied that anyone who considers himself to be man of knowledge says so out of his own ignorance.

3. 'Ilm mentioned in Ayatul Kursi

Allah S.w.t speaks of His superior 'Ilm in the middle of the ayat known as Ayatul Kursi in Surah Al-Baqara.

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ
مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ

“He knows what is before them and what is behind them while they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He wills.” (Surah Al-Baqara 2:255)

That superior 'Ilm is the knowledge of what is hidden in the future and what is hidden in the past with respect to man and jinn. No one can encompass this 'Ilm except as He Wills. Allah S.w.t witnesses from the Middle, the timeless Present where past and future merge into one. He is Al-Hayy, the Living Present. He

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is in the know of *qadr* from beginning to end without the need of time unfolding it. His is not time-bound comprehension. He S.w.t imparts this 'Ilm of His, to the extent He wishes to His favoured servant.

Musa ('a.s) follows Al-Khidr and witnesses three incidents in which Al-Khidr interferes to make amends in the *qadr* with Allah's guidance. He ('a.s) does not comprehend the logic and the justice of his actions and so, refutes. In the end, as Al-Khidr explains, we come to understand that he was seeing the unseen past and future of people in these three incidents. This is His special 'Ilm reserved for the favoured servant as revealed in Ayatul Kursi.

4. External and Internal visions

The external knowledge is the knowledge we gather through interaction with the physical world. The interaction takes place because of viewing with the external eye. As already explained, the external eye called *aqal* consists of the senses, mind and intellect. What Al-Khidr has seen is not viewable using external eye. The vision of the invisible is seen by the spiritual being using internal eye. It is total seeing where seeing itself is knowing. It does not involve time-

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related image-processing. It's called *basweera*. It happens when Allah S.w.t favours His servant by opening the internal eye, the *qalb*. The *qalb* opens in *Nur* for the *nafs* to see. The *aqal* cannot experience the vision.

5. Sublime 'Ilm

This vision imparts 'Ilm of the invisible past and the invisible future. This is direct and spontaneous realization. It is the sublime 'Ilm about the *qadr* of the *nafs* that is being focused. It's part of the absolute 'Ilm of Allah S.w.t bestowed on the blessed servant. It's the summit of *siratal mustaqim*.

6. Divine teaching technique

This knowledge or 'Ilm isn't ordinary human knowledge taught to and learned by the *aqal*. It's not learnt in time taking long laborious hours. It's instantaneous divine knowledge received in the *nafs*. Hence, it's taught to the *nafs*. Allah S.w.t teaches it through a unique way beyond human comprehension. Human skills cannot adopt this divine technique and it is not understood at par with any of the conventional man made techniques of education.

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Allah's 'Ilm cannot be taught by anyone other than Allah S.w.t. So, there is no point in believing that Al-Khidr can teach it. In the holy Quran, Allah S.w.t has not given any such assurance, either. It can only be imbibed through *basweerah* as Allah S.w.t opens the inner eye.

Allah S.w.t walks Musa ('a.s) through the whole episode of teaching spiritual 'Ilm with *basweerah*. His inner eye sees and the nafs learns by realization. It is the real experience of the nafs, living in timeless realm. It knows the characters and the circumstances without interpretation. It is the true knowledge in contrast to the partial vision of the aqal and the resultant knowledge by interpretation.

Thus, it is Allah S.w.t Himself Who teaches Musa ('a.s). Al-Khidr is a metaphorical teacher deployed for understanding the unique teaching technique of Al-Aleem. The sublime 'Ilm is imparted to the nafs, the spiritual body. It is the superior faculty that alone is capable of receiving 'Ilm. So the teaching is focused on the nafs. Nafs should know itself to occupy its superior status.

7. Teaching to the understanding of aqal

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In the latter part of the episode narrated in Surah Al-Kahf, in the three incidents what the Nafs sees the aqal doesn't see. Allah S.w.t is teaching to the aqal of Musa 'a.s that it is not equipped to know the superior 'Ilm of the Nafs.

He S.w.t uses amzal or examples for enabling intellectual understanding of the sublime 'Ilm in the case of ordinary people. The characters herein are metaphors. So, the episode needs interpretation unlike the case with *basweerah*. In Surah as-Zumur, it's revealed that Allah S.w.t uses all sorts of examples to teach His message. It is to be stored in memory and pondered upon through recollection.

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

39:27 "And We have certainly presented for the people in this Qur'an from every [kind of] example - that they might ponder"

In an earlier occasion, Musa ('a.s) was imparted the 'Ilm for rescuing his own life. It was made known to the nafs through *basweerah*. We may go through this

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episode which is narrated in Surah Al-Qasas from ayah no. 28:15 to 28:20.

It needs to be understood that the episode in the Surah Al-Kahf imparts the 'Ilm about epistemology of 'Ilm. It shows to the nafs of Musa ('a.s) the 'Ilm as to how Allah S.w.t brings up his favoured servant to the point of spiritual realization of the 'Ilm . The episode in Al-Qasas makes us better understand the teaching technique involved in *basweerah*.

8. Episode in Surah Al-Qasas

Musa ('a.s) is young, physically well-built and mentally mature having an intellect bestowed with wisdom. Allah S.w.t has blessed him elevating himself to the state of Ihsan.

Egypt, the country where he ('a.s) lives, is in chaos under the tyrannical rule of the Pharaoh. Musa ('a.s) is considered a traitor rebelling to topple the government. The chiefs conspire against him for working out a plot in which Musa ('a.s) could be charged with murdering one of his own men. Musa ('a.s) could be executed with ample evidence incorporated in the plot, besides creating division

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among his men. Suspicion can be raised on his loyalty to the followers through propaganda.

Musa ('a.s) lives the future incident of his life before hand in the basweera. Allah S.w.t, towards the end of the vision, sends an emissary showing the way of escape. Musa ('a.s) understanding the seriousness of the situation as known by the nafs, takes to Hijra forthwith.

The episode in Al-Qasas has other dimensions. They are more appropriately described in a coming chapter that deals with ghafla or heedlessness.

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CHAPTER 6

The Fish and The Sea

Gist

Nabi Musa a.s had, in his times, the highest level of external knowledge of which he was aware. Allah S.w.t teaches him (a.s) the 'Ilm that was absent in him by guiding through a basweerah which takes him up various steps of spiritual ascension. He reaches the pinnacle of taqwa and then gets transcended to an altogether different spiritual level called Ihsan. Al-Ihsan is the inexplicable state of the nafs that surpasses time.

1. Pilgrimage to divine Knowledge

As is understood from the sketchy narration in Surah Al-Kahf (Surah no.18 of the holy Quran), Musa ('a.s) sets out on a pilgrimage to *majmaul bahrain*, driven by thirst for divine knowledge. It is not a journey to a holy geographical location. It is similar to Isra and Mi'raj, the night journey performed by the holy Prophet, Muhammad ('s.a.s), though of a limited scope. In the case of Musa a.s, the intention behind Allah's teaching is to enlighten him of a higher realm of 'Ilm which Allah Swt hasn't yet bestowed onto him.

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At the same time, the purpose of Isra and Mi'raj has been to grant Muhammad ('s.a.s) a firsthand experience of the hidden knowledge of creations, and to meet Allah and receive guidance direct from Him.

As has been discussed already, Allah Swt, in Surah Al-Kahf, discloses His teaching technique by using amzal (examples) for human understanding. The night journey of Muhammad ('s.a.s), the *Sunnah* and, every other aspect of his life ('s.a.s) are better understood with a proper understanding of the spiritual vision taught to Musa ('a.s). Allah S.w.t walks Musa ('a.s) along siratal mustaqim to its apex.

In this pilgrimage to the holy land of 'Ilm, Musa ('a.s) is accompanied by a boy servant who carries a fish.

2. Taqwa is the best provision

وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ

Allah S.w.t exhorts to take provisions needed for the *Hajj* pilgrimage, but reminds that the best provision to be kept along is taqwa (Al-Baqara 2:197).

Taqwa is earned through the worship of Allah known as '*Ibadah*', and is carried by the nafs in the sadr. It's the gift of the servant to his Master to be presented when he meets with Him.

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3. Fish of taqwa

Taqwa is the spiritual awareness exercised by aqal, in the light of iman or devotion. It is identified by conscious deeds which further enhances it and in turn, Iman being its counterpart. Both belong to nafs. Iman is stored in qalb within sadr, and taqwa is positioned outside of sadr.

Allah S.w.t characterizes taqwa as a fish. It is the provision of sublime food for a spiritual journey. It serves as common diet to both aqal and nafs, as we will be learning from the expression of 'our meal' in ayat 18:62. As taqwa builds up deeds of the *Mutaqin* (the man of taqwa) become worship or *Ibadah* that reflects the underlying iman. Taqwa, by extension, represents the religion of Din-ul Islam with iman at its core having an observable external form comprising the five pillars of Islam viz, 1. proclamation of kalima or faith , 2. salaah or prayer 3. *Zakkaat* or poor-due 4. *Sowm* or fast, and 5. hajj or pilgrimage.

A *Mutaqin* is watchful of his deeds in the light of iman to please his Master. They are performed by the aqal guided by nafs. When taqwa is lost, the communication between aqal and nafs, is broken. It

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leads to the state of disbelief called kufr where the nafs is lost sight of.

At lower levels of iman, their communication is weak and *Ibadah* becomes callous. It is indicated by the word 'fatigue' in ayat no.62. As taqwa increases, the aqal comes closer to the nafs. At its highest, aqal is on the sadr beside taqwa. It is on the brink of experiencing a timeless tranquility.

4. Dichotomy of Nafs under master-aqal

As has been touched upon in the foregoing chapters, man is comprised of an obvious physical being and a concealed spiritual being. The physical being has aqal consisting of brain, mind and senses within body functioning as the external eye. It is the physical learning machinery . The vision of aqal is partial being based merely on the visible.

The nafs, the spiritual being of Musa ('a.s) has not yet started receiving 'Ilm. It's holding a low taqwa in the beginning of journey. So, the physical and the spiritual bodies function as separate entities . The aqal leads from front with authority over nafs. The nafs follows the master from behind, obedient and passive.

5. The servant

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The servant with the fish represents the nafs. He is a young boy as the spiritual being does not age. Musa ('a.s) is reduced to physical body controlled by aqal.

A heedless individual functions as two separate entities, the physical and the spiritual forms, the latter being subdued. The tools of nafs are far superior to aqal for receiving 'Ilm . Conflict and failure are inherent in acts as a lower faculty rules over a superior faculty. The deeds go wrong corrupting society.

6. The Mission

Musa ('a.s) avows that he is not going to rest until he reaches *majmaul bahrain* or he will pursue his mission even if it takes years. It is the declaration of an aqal of worldly inclinations.

18:60 And [mention] when Moses said to his servant, "I will not cease [traveling] until I reach the junction of the two seas or continue for a long period."

7. Resting on the rock

Musa ('a.s) and his boy servant are on the rock at the shore. They have reached *majmaul bahrain*.

However, the rock obstructs the vision. And they don't see the merging seas underneath.

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At *majmaul bahrain*, taqwa is at its peak. The aqal understands the noble status of nafs. It moves closer and finally reaches within the nafs. It stays on the sadr close to taqwa. The rock on which Musa ('a.s) and his servant rested represents the sadr of the nafs. Now, aqal is elevated to the spiritual level of nafs and they are on the same plane enabling communication between them.

8. Past and future at the Present

Allah S.w.t has let loose two seas to merge into one another, but placed a barrier between them, so that the merger is blocked by the one with the barrier. The ayaat 19 and 20 of Ar-Rahman refer to two seas of time, the past and the future. One is the limited Rahmah of this duniya while the other is the endless Rahmah of *Akhira*.

55:19 He unleashed the two seas so that they merge together,

55:20 yet between them is a barrier; they do not encroach.

The former is the physical world that connects one with the beginning of time. The latter is the spiritual world that connects him to the *Akhira*. Man is on the wavefront of the past. This ocean twins start from the

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Beginning and from the Ending. He is Al-Atwalu Al-Akhiru. The Beginning and the End are One. They merge in the timelessness and in the eternity, both being the Present. He is Al-Hayy, the Eternal Present. The fulfillment of covenant given to Rabbul Alamein at the Beginning is adjudged in the eternal Present.

The rocky shore represents the time-bound present where the ocean of the past merges with the ocean of future. It is not visible to external eye, the aqal. He S.w.t is Al-Qabit; He is Al-Basit. He is the Minimizer and the Maximizer. He takes His favoured servant at the Present from Here to Eternity in no time, by opening the internal eye. That is when he sees the merger within.

9. Dichotomy ends

Musa ('a.s) cannot see the oceans. The rock of time hinders vision. He has only the tools of external eye at his disposal. The internal vision is as He Wills.

We may recapitulate that the journey of Musa ('a.s) is not a journey in space and time to a geographical location. He does not take a land or sea route to reach the rock at *majmaul bahrain*. It is a spiritual pursuit. He ('a.s) attains the spiritual heights through various stages. At its peak the division between the

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physical and the spiritual vanishes. Before that, the humble aqal comes close to the nafs admitting its inefficiency to be in the receipt of 'Ilm.

10. Two waters of Rahmah

The external world is pervaded by the all-encompassing Rahmah of Ar-Rahman. Its waters are murky due to kufr and the resultant corruption from arrogance and indignation. The fish of taqwa suffers suffocation in this ocean. It belongs to the pure waters of Rahmah, the spiritual waters.

The spiritual ocean of *Akhira* is the internal ocean of Rahmah. Its origin is the heaven. It is the sweet scented waters of Ar-Raheem.

25:53 And He it is Who hath given independence to the two seas (though they meet); one palatable, sweet, and the other salty, bitter; and hath set a bar and a forbidding ban between them.

The confluence is not to be searched outside. It is within the nafs hidden from the external eye by the sadr. The sadr is the rock of time that obstructs its vision.

11. Musa ('a.s) in Ihsan

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One surpasses the time as Allah S.w.t blesses His servant by opening the sadr. The *Nur* of Allah S.w.t falls on the sadr, and the barrier of time gets dissolved in it. It expands and lets the internal timeless sea of Rahmah join the time-bound external. The nafs plunges in and gets dissolved in the Rahmah. It carries the aqal within for a ride in that tranquil ocean. The aqal forgets the body.

The fish finds its home. It joins the qalb. The fish of taqwa is gifted to the Master. Allah S.w.t opens up the qalb, the internal eye. It witnesses the merger- the merger of the infinite and the finite. He S.w.t is Ar-Rahmani Ar-Raheem. He is the One, Al-Ahad.

Musa ('a.s) is now a wholesome person with the merger of the physical with the spiritual. He experiences sakeena or tranquility. He ('a.s) is in the state of ihsan. Allah S.w.t thus rewards His beloved servant for his total submission to Rabbul Alamein.

12. Qalb of ignorance

In Surah Al-Fath, Allah S.w.t speaks of qalb of indignation of the infidel and of the qalb of sakeena or tranquility of the believer.

48:26 "When those who disbelieved had put into their hearts indignation - the indignation of ignorance. But

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Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and imposed upon them the word of righteousness, and they were more deserving of it and worthy of it. And ever is Allah, of all things, Knowing.”

Upon contamination of nafs, iman gets lost. The inner sea of the *Akhira* loses Rahmah. It is connected to the hell. The sadr is hardened against any scope of opening. Darkness of kufr pervades and the qalb is filled with the water of hamiya, arrogance. It is locked to *Nur*. He wallows in wretchedness.

Darkness of kufr pervades in the inner sea. At its depths, the indignant will not be able to see even his own stretched hand. He becomes oblivious of what his hand has sent ahead of him.

24:40 “Or [else, their deeds are] like the depths of darkness upon an abysmal sea, made yet more dark by wave billowing over wave, with [black] clouds above it all: depths of darkness, layer upon layer, [so that] when one holds up his hand, he can hardly see it: for he to whom God gives no light, no light whatever has he!”

13. Forgetting the fish

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The dichotomy ends with the physical being merging with nafs. Musa ('a.s) is now a complete person. Allah S.w.t breaks the time barrier to let in taqwa into the sea of timeless Rahmah. The fish is lost in its tranquil waters and forgotten. It has fulfilled its mission.

18:61 “But when they reached the junction between the two [seas], they forgot all about their fish, and it took its way into the sea and disappeared from sight.”

Musa ('a.s) transcends the level of taqwa. And taqwa is forgotten.

14. The tunnel of Nur

Allah S.w.t has led Musa (a.s) onto His *Nur*. The external sea of Rahmah joins with the inner sea of Rahmah.

Taqwa is received and led to its natural home, the sweet waters of Rahmah through a tunnel of *Nur*. Ar-Rahman, the all-encompassing Mercy has brought Musa ('a.s) to the pinnacle of taqwa. Ar-Raheem, the exceedingly Merciful gives a gorgeous welcome to His Rahmah taking along through a bountiful beam of the *Nur*.

As the time barrier of sadr has been removed, the division between the spiritual and physical beings has disappeared. Musa ('a.s) is united as a complete

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person. The external eye is rendered passive and it becomes a tool of the internal eye for viewing external material objects and as memory for storing experience. Allah S.w.t connects qalb with nafs by a tunnel of *Nur*.

Taqwa is internally *Nur*. In the transcended state, the *Nur* is exposed hiding the outer consciousness within. Thus, taqwa becomes a tunnel of *Nur* as it enters the Rahmah within.

15. The wondrous course of gifting

Allah S.w.t says the fish took a course into the sea as in a tunnel. This is a spiritual experience of the nafs which is alien to the aqal which is time bound. It experiences tranquility in the unification. The experience of the nafs is deep seated in the qalb. It can communicate by insight to the nafs that leads. The aqal wakes up due to its strange experience. Ihsan is gone. Dichotomy reappears. As they move away from *majmaul bahrain*, Musa ('a.s) feels "fatigue". It implies a declined iman. He ('a.s) asks nafs to join for *Salah* (spiritual meal). He ('a.s) knows *Ibadah* will remove fatigue. But the low status of nafs will not be able to lead *Salah*. Aqal finds that after a high level of spirituality, he has lost awareness. His *Ibadah* has

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been disrupted, because of attack by Shaitan. Shaitan has occupied the qalb preventing it to send signals to the aqal for increasing *Ibadah*. Nafs is returned to the status of the servant, He is unable to communicate with the master on his own. Now as the master enquires about taqwa, the nafs explains the experience to suit the intellectual vision of the aqal as the fish taking a wondrous course into the sea. In reality, the vision stored in the qalb is so felt and understood by the aqal.

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْهُوتَ وَمَا
أَنسَانِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا

18:63 He said, "You see, when we stayed at the rock, I forgot the fish. And none made me forget it except Satan - that I should mention it. And it took its course into the sea amazingly".

The term 'araitha-you see' denotes the explanation is meant to make aqal 'understand' what nafs has 'known'. The conversation takes place in *basweerah*. The usage of the term, though seem casual, is relevant even in actual experience. It denotes the inner dialogue involving memories of Ihsan in conflict with a deficient iman giving rise to guilt for the

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heedlessness. In Allah's Qalam, no word is excessive, and no word is deficient.

In Surah Az-zumar, Allah S.w.t compares a believer whose sadr is opened in the remembrance of Allah with a disbeliever whose sadr remains closed as a hard rock.

39:22 "So is one whose breast Allah has expanded to [accept] Islam and he is upon a light from his Lord [like one whose heart rejects it]? Then woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of Allah. Those are in manifest error."

He S.w.t opens up the sadr for Islam or peace to prevail. It's the dhikr of qalb that causes opening of sadr.

Allah S.w.t rewards Musa ('a.s) for the offering of taqwa as he 'as reaches the pinnacle of iman. He S.w.t is An-Nur. The qalb opened to the boundless sea of Rahmah sees with *Nur*. The muhsin is led by that vision of *basweerah*.

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CHAPTER 7

Ghafa, Shaitan and Iman

Gist

After attaining Ihsan, Musa (a.s) suffers a spiritual set back owing to heedlessness which gives Shaitan the opportunity to meddle with the Nafs. He gets involved in a plot that puts him being accused of murder. He repents. Allah S.w.t accepts his tauba which paves the way to receipt of 'Ilm.

Musa ('a.s) has arrived at Ihsan. But, then, he ('a.s) suffers a spiritual set back. He ('a.s) falls into a state of heedlessness, called 'ghafa'. Ghafa allows room for the Shaitan to intrude and to lead astray. Because of his interference, the nafs becomes forgetful. It could not communicate with the aqal for stepping up iman. So, taqwa could not be restored through regular *Ibadah*.

1. Forgetting to inform loss of fish

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Musa ('a.s) moves away from *majmaul bahrain*. It is a deviant journey from siratal mustaqim. Level of iman is being continually lowered. The dichotomy has reappeared. Nafs is now vulnerable to Shaitan's intervention.

7:16 [Satan] said, "Because You have put me in error, I will surely sit in wait for them on Your straight path. "

Nafs feels guilty of forgetting to inform the amazing experience of the qalb. This forgetting is different from the forgetfulness as regards the fish which is on account of transcendence. Forgetting to remind restoration of taqwa is owing to Shaitan. Allah S.w.t warns against the plan of Iblis in diverting from siratal mustaqim. The holy Quran (Surah Ale Imran, 3:8) has a supplication for protection against shurr or harm of the Shaitan.

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً

إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

3:8 "Our Lord!" (they say), "Let not our hearts deviate now after Thou hast guided us, but grant

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*us mercy from Thine own Presence; for Thou art
the Grantor of bounties without measure*

Having come to the state of Ihsan, the nafs should be the controlling faculty. However, due to Shaitan's attack, nafs is rendered ineffective in its new role. Musa ('a.s) led by the nafs is on a downward journey from *majmaul bahrain*. As the distance from *majmaul bahrain* is increased, the dichotomy between the aqal and the nafs becomes sharper. At the lowest spiritual level, the aqal is in commanding position. It asks for the morning meal that would cure fatigue.

18:62 So when they had passed beyond it, [Moses] said to his boy, "Bring us our morning meal. We have certainly suffered in this, our journey, [much] fatigue."

The aqal feels a lowered Iman (denoted by the term, fatigue), and wants to be replenished (by service of meal). The spiritual meal (the fish of taqwa) indicating morning-prayer is required by every faculty (denoted by 'our meal'). But, it has to be served by the nafs.

A total prayer is one in which the nafs leads as imam. It happens when the devotee is in the Ihsan. At lower spiritual levels, aqal leads and nafs is made

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to follow. The nafs being nobler never commands leadership. As taqwa builds, an understanding aqal becomes obedient to the spiritual leadership of the nafs. The prayer, Insha Allah, becomes fully acceptable to the Rabb.

17:78 “Establish regular prayers - at the sun's decline till the darkness of the night, and the morning prayer and reading: for the prayer and reading in the morning carry their testimony.”

During night Allah S.w.t recalls the nafs. During day, it's returned, cleansed. The day is best started with dawn prayer for maintaining iman in continuity as the nafs is fresh and clean. So, Allah S.w.t discloses the benefit of morning prayer.

Surah Al-Kahf does not reveal the happenings that have led to fatigue after the Ihsan. It is revealed in Surah Al-Qasas in ayaat 28:14 to 28:20.

2. Dimensions of episode in Al-Qasas

The episode in Al-Qasas is to be understood as having three dimensions. This episode in the life of Musa ('a.s) is part of the *qadr*. Allah S.w.t experiences this part of the *qadr* in advance by walking the nafs of

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Musa ('a.s) through *basweerah*. This is a real hard spiritual journey beyond the comprehension of the aqal. It is stored as 'Ilm in the qalb, and hence, it's not to be searched in the memory. We have already briefed this dimension which is the spiritual experience of what is in the *qadr* taking place ahead of worldly experience.

Despite the 'Ilm of *qadr* in the qalb, Musa ('a.s) lives the *qadr* in time and space- the ordinary life in the workaday world encountering the apprehensions of partial knowledge. The aqal is not capable of handling the commotions within, granted by the pressures of a turbulent external world. Resultantly, he suffers spiritual loss, committing murder falling a prey in Shaitan's plot. Then, he ('a.s) is helped by the hidden 'Ilm in the qalb in the form of insight as a warning message. Musa ('a.s) goes in exile for saving life.

The third dimension involves inner dynamics. In this chapter, we may, Insha Allah, deal with it to have an understanding of the spiritual degradation Musa ('a.s) has undergone.

3. Inner dynamics

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We have come to understand that Musa ('a.s) was young when he reaches Ihsan.

a. The personality of Musa (as) (Ayat 28;14)

He (as) is physically well-built, having a mature mind and an intellect with the capacity of judgement. As a muhsin, he is blessed with 'Ilm. Allah S.w.t has bountifully rewarded him. However, notwithstanding the stature of nafs, one is prone to Shaitan's attack, if opportunity is offered by a callous aqal. We have seen Allah S.w.t alerting Nabi Muhammad ('s.a.s) to intensify *Ibadah* as his ('s.a.s) sadr has received expansion (Surah Ash-Sharh).

b. Basweera of External Pressures (28:15)

Allah S.w.t metaphorically narrates the inner turbulence of Nabi Musa ('a.s) as his nafs experiences the episode. The nafs knows the characters seen in the *basweerah*. Our understanding, however, comes via interpretation. It is real internal experience compared to the apparent reality of worldly life, experienced by the aqal, within the time-frame.

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The city with heedless people represents the faculties under the control of the nafs, the administrator. The two fighting men within appears as one from the side of Musa ('a.s), and the other one from his enemies' side.

28:15 And he entered the city at a time of inattention by its people and found therein two men fighting: one from his faction and one from among his enemy. And the one from his faction called for help to him against the one from his enemy, so Moses struck him and [unintentionally] killed him. [Moses] said, "This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is a manifest, misleading enemy."

Here the mind is fighting the intellect, a tussle between emotional faculty and rational faculty. The mind, instigated by the Shaitan, desires to engage body for an act that is forbidden. As it is unwise, intellect opposes, hence the fight. Mind calls for the help of the master nafs. It takes mind's side, defeating the brain. Nafs gives nod to the body to go ahead, thus finishing intelligence.

c. Tauba (Ayat 28:16)

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Allah S.w.t exposes the real enemy, the Shaitan to Musa ('a.s).

7:201 Indeed, those who fear Allah - when an impulse touches them from Satan, they remember [Him] and at once they have insight.

Nafs feels guilty for killing hukkm (wisdom), the friend, for a sinful act prompted by Shaitan. So Musa ('a.s) (the nafs) retracts and sincerely repents. Allah S.w.t accepts his tauba.

He asks for forgiveness because he has wronged the totality of Nafs who is answerable for sins before Allah S.w.t. The total Nafs includes every member of the physical and spiritual bodies. *Ibadah* brings Nafs to the fore granting it spiritual leadership for ensuring righteous life by a collective Nafs. A shattered Nafs is always prone to sins led by a mind of arrogance and worldly attachments that forbids *Ibadah* for sustaining the sinful life.

28:17 He said, "My Lord, for the favor You bestowed upon me, I will never be an assistant to the criminals."

Relieved nafs finds itself fresh in the morning. Its iman has increased. For the favour Allah S.w.t has

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bestowed, he will be able to identify the Shaitan in disguise. The nafs is 'fearful and vigilant' because of renewed taqwa by the grace of Allah S.w.t.

d. Sinking iman (Ayat 28;18,19)

28:18 And morning found him in the city, fearing, vigilant, when behold! he who had appealed to him the day before cried out to him for help. Moses said unto him:" Lo! thou art indeed a mere trouble maker".

The nafs finds the mind again in a tussle with another one whom it identifies as Shaitan in disguise. It calls mind a clear trouble maker, but tries to catch hold of Shaitan, ' the enemy to both of them' - the nafs and the mind. The Nafs knows if Shaitan is ousted, mind would be back to righteousness.

28:19 Then, when he decided to lay hold of the man who was an enemy to both of them, that man said: "O Moses! Is it thy intention to slay me as thou slewest a man yesterday? Thy intention is none other than to become a powerful violent man in the land, and not to be one who sets things right!"

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Shaitan accuses nafs of attempting to become a tyrant by finishing off every member of the aqal as it has the other day finished off hukku, the judging capacity by mistake. Without hukku, nafs is going to commit the same mistake of killing the friend for foe. Shaitan evidently pretends to be a member of the total nafs which, ironically, is a fact with most who don't keep taqwa.

e. The morning message (Ayat 28;20)

Nafs is at its wits' end. But, because of the regained iman, the qalb sends message about conspiracy from outside, indicating a hostile sensory system. With a lame intellect, the sensory members have now become chiefs of administration. They want to work under the command of mind, as advised by Shaitan, which would corrupt nafs leaving no scope of repair.

28:20 And a man came from the farthest end of the city, running. He said, "O Moses, indeed the chiefs are conferring over you [intending] to kill you, so leave [the city]; indeed, I am to you of the sincere advisors."

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The well-wisher i.e., the man came running, is the insight from the qalb (the farthest faculty under nafs) that has seen the invisible future of Musa ('a.s). Allah S.w.t thus shows Musa ('a.s) how He S.w.t saves him from being lost in corruption. He S.w.t is ala kulli shaihin qadir, capable of doing all things.

The nafs goes in exile, itself becoming the silent spectator. It loses communication with the aqal which accounts for loss of memory (in informing loss of taqwa, the fish). Shaitan loses interest as his target has deserted spiritual leadership. And as such, the inner composure returns with the nafs resurfacing. The aqal regains leadership role. It is now the master, Musa (as). The nafs is again the servant boy.

f. The morning meal (Ayat 18:62)

In the morning freshness, the master aqal could feel fatigue out of ghafla and asks for meal. The servant nafs responds narrating about loss of taqwa and the befallen ghafla which allowed opportunity for Shaitan to attack and dismember its faculties. Shaitan has rendered nafs inactive causing forgetfulness and the inevitable break in communication.

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CHAPTER 8

Sunnah

Gist:

On acceptance of tauba, Musa a.s is guided to retrace the path abandoned by him because of intervention from Shaitan. The Sunnah of the Nabi is thereby established by his repeating the spiritual living following the guidance of Allah S.w.t.

Musa ('a.s) continues to be with the internal vision, learning 'Ilm from Allah S.w.t. Allah S.w.t causes him to move away from '*majmaul bahrain*'. He is led to live a heedless life after having submitted his taqwa in lieu of a higher spiritual state. His nafs has gone beyond the state of a *Mutaqin*. Now, he is lowered to a state of the ordinary humdrum without awareness. His level of iman has come to an all time low. The status of nafs is lowered to a subservient role.

The tragedy has happened because of the attack of Shaitan on the nafs. It has caused nafs forget the escape of fish. The fish is the indicator of

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majmaul bahrain. Its unnoticed escape could subvert the purpose of his life ('a.s).

Nafs, as the custodian of taqwa, has failed in its duty of notifying aqal about the loss of taqwa. This notification (insight). is the only source of information about spiritual happenings invisible to aqal. Shaitan has made the nafs to fail in its duty. He has attacked at the very first opportunity that came handy. On account of this, Musa ('a.s) could not keep up taqwa and hence, gets stranded in the wilderness of 'dhullum'. The aqal has become indignant and arrogant.

1. Decline of Ihsan

Allah S.w.t in Surah At-Tin has revealed that man although is capable of achieving peaks of spiritual realization, he could be turned into the lowest of low.

(95:4). "We have created man in the best mould; (95:5) Then We turned him into the lowest of low"

Musa ('a.s) after attaining the state of being in Ihsan (ahsani taqweem), has been turned into the lowest of low states.

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2. Keeping closeness to Allah S.w.t

Allah S.w.t is teaching Musa ('a.s) that even after Ihsan, a devotee could be led by Shaitan to a life of kufr unless he keeps closeness to Allah S.w.t enhancing *Ibadah*.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ
وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

O you who have believed, fear Allah and seek the means [of nearness] to Him and strive in His cause that you may succeed.

The qalb otherwise, goes bereft of iman falling further into heedlessness in every walk of life.

3. Remedy revealed

Allah S.w.t opened up the sadr of the holy Prophet, Muhammad ('s.a.s) easing the burden of the mission. Then provides guidance to step up *Ibadah* in the free time so that he('s.a.s) doesn't succumb to heedless easiness. In Surah ash-Sharh (94:6-7) , Allah S.w.t has said:

Most certainly, there is ease with hardship.

So, whenever you are free, strive in devotion,

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4. Establishing *Sunnah*

The present state of Musa ('a.s) is that of dichotomy. His aqal treats nafs as servant. So, nafs cannot take the position of guidance. By nature, it's noble. Humility is its trait owing to submission to Allah S.w.t. The will is wielded by aqal. He becomes a Muslim who submits the will to Allah S.w.t. Therefore, the believing aqal is directed to be patient and humble for elevating nafs to the leading role of imam, itself following from behind with obedience. At that stage, the aqal receives guidance from nafs. It's the 'Ilm of spiritual insight.

The nafs could convey the spiritual position as response to the request from aqal for meal. The thought of meal has arisen as Allah S.w.t causes Musa ('a.s) suffer a spiritual fatigue. The meal is taqwa in the form of regular *Ibadah* matching with iman. The spiritual meal revitalizes aqal and steps up iman curing fatigue.

Now, the nafs reveals escape of taqwa, the meal of fish. It has gone into the sea of Rahmah in an amazing manner. The aqal of Musa ('a.s) understands the significance of the escape of fish. It was indicating

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the junction of meeting of two oceans. Musa ('a.s) and his servant were staying on a rock when the fish got through as in a tunnel. Because of the rock they could not see the oceans. The fish was pointing to *majmaul bahrain*, Musa ('a.s) and his servant are looking for. So they retrace their footprints back to *majmaul bahrain*.

*[Moses] said, "That is what we were seeking."
So they returned, following their footprints.*

Allah S.w.t has walked Musa ('a.s) along a spiritual path that led to the pinnacle of taqwa and thence transcending that state into the state of Ihsan. His sadr was opened and closed. He has been brought to the original state of low iman from where he could proclaim himself to be the most learned person of his times. Now, Allah S.w.t asks Musa ('a.s) to repeat on his own what has been taught to his nafs. The aqal remembers the stages of ascension up the ladder of taqwa. They constitute the Din of Islam. They are the guidance in the holy Book revealed to Musa as, prescribed to be followed by his people. Allah S.w.t makes him walk through those guidance in a *basweerah*, the vision of the inner eye. The acts performed by him constitute his *Sunnah*. Now Allah

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S.w.t asks him to repeat them from memory, and thus makes him follow his own *Sunnah* ahead of his sahabah. Musa ('a.s) repeats them in the *basweerah*. Both his aqal and nafs become conversant with the guidance of Allah S.w.t. Thus, the Sunna of Nabi Musa ('a.s) is established as the poise between the lives herein and hereafter.

5. The Footprints

The re-tracking involves the footprints of both nafs and aqal. The aqal is patient and persistent in Ibadaha, keeping closeness to nafs.

Retracking doesn't mean a mere backward covering of the stranded portion. It means restarting the spiritual expedition from his present spiritual level or from where he has set out initially. It could be altogether a whole journey by itself considering the spiritual lowliness. The footprints are stamped with guidance from the holy scripture sent down to Musa ('a.s) containing the 'Ilm of Allah S.w.t and the guidance to the 'Ilm.

5:44 Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light.

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CHAPTER 9

The seven paths

Gist

Nabi Sunnah is the practical guide of the guidance to 'Ilm in the holy Quran. The Quran itself is the guidance to its 'Ilm. It is Huda as well as Rahmah to the Mutaqin. The Quran reveals seven steps of ascension to the 'Ilm to the seeker of Nur. A Mutaqin becomes a muhsin, a servant of righteous deeds. He receives 'Ilm as Allah guides to His Nur to the extent He Wills.

Allah S.w.t, in Surah Al-Muminoon, speaks of seven *twarayiq* or seven paths above us. They are like the seven heavens or samavaat, a *abdu* or servant may be able to traverse in reaching to his Rabb.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَائِقَ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غَافِلِينَ

23:17 And We have created above you seven layered heavens, and never have We been of [Our] creation unaware.

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Musa ('a.s) has trodden six paths and reached *majmaul bahrain*. However, he missed the seventh *twariq* of sublime knowledge owing to Shaitan's handiwork. He (a,'s) is retracing the six *twarayiq* and then completes the seventh, as he is guided to *Nur*.

The opening Surah, Al-Fatiha is the prayer for admittance to His sublime 'Ilm. Al-Fatiha is composed of seven verses indicating seven *twarayiq* to be pursued for knowing the holy book, thus, simultaneously knowing the Rabb. The seven ayaat of Al-Fatiha are like the seven samavaat one above the other with earth at the centre. Allah S.w.t has placed the *twarayiq* one above the other, surrounding human qalb.

In Surah Ar-Rahman, Allah S.w.t explains them by using amzal- examples. These two Surahs disclose seven *twarayiq* or orbits to be covered in the pursuit of 'Ilm.

They are i. Shahadah ii. *bayan* iii. Islam iv. Iman v. Taqwa vi. Pilgrimage, and vii. 'Ilm. Going through these *twarayiq* a believer attains salvation through 'Ilm or *Nur*.

1. The Believer

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An individual turns into a believer on proclamation of Shahadah. Shahadah is the proclamation of faith in Oneness of Allah S.w.t and the faith in his messenger.

In the holy Quran, Ar-Rahman says that His Rahmah has taught the Quran prior to man's creation. It is revealed by the sequence of verses 2 and 3.

عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ

55:3 Created man, 55:2 Taught the Qur'an,

Adam and his progeny are initially part of the *qadr*. As Adam was created as part of the *qadr*, Allah S.w.t had taught him all names. All names and the assertion, 'all of them' imply His Beautiful Names-Asmaul Husna, as there is no name that's not encompassed in Asmaul Husna.

The holy Quran is *qadr* kept secure as *Nur* in the tablet' of '*Lawh Al-Mahfoolh*' which is the secondary source of creation. Every man carries the *qadr* within him as it unfolds as creation. The 'Ilm in the Quran is so embedded within. Thus, man has been granted the capacity to nurture and grow the seed as it germinates in Rahmah. Allah S.w.t using

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the example of Musa ('a.s), teaches how to grow the seed into a straight fruit bearing tree.

The progeny of Adam, hence, bear the seed of His teaching within them. But they were not taught direct by Allah S.w.t. So, He S.w.t summoned them together and made to affirm their relationship with their Lord, Rabbul 'Alamein. All identified their Rabb and testified in recognition of Him. Allah S.w.t took this pledge as Al-Awwal, the Beginning. He shall take stock of the trust placed on us on the day of Judgement so as to decide the *Akhira* of each one of us. No one shall be able to plead innocence on ground of being unaware. They cannot also say that what was taught to Adam hasn't reached them. Further, Ar-Rahman has been sending messengers from time to time to remind them of the binding covenant. Thus, even while being part of *qadr*, the 'Ilm, the sole truth of human existence has been implanted in every nafs (Al-Araf 7:172).

The pledge encompasses the reminder to the purpose of human creation. Hence, after being born on earth, Ar-Rahman teaches the dhikr of shahadat kalima, 'La ilaha illallallah' in-order that we shall not

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be forgetful of the purpose of life. By alluding to man's creation, Allah S.w.t teaches shahadah as the first *twariq* of 'Ilm. In His supreme wisdom, the teaching of the Quran precedes creation of man. Allah S.w.t has already started teaching us the 'Ilm in holy Quran.

A devotee may make use of his inborn capability to interact with the Quran, only if he has niyyah or dedication for learning. Musa ('a.s) exhibits the determination when he has proclaimed he would not give up until *majmaul bahrain* is reached.

The first ayat of Al-Fatiha i.e., Bismillahi Ar-Rahmani Ar-Raheem, is the greatest of all niyyah for starting any feat. It is the outermost orbit or *twariq* to learning 'Ilm. The creation starts with Bismillahi Ar-Rahmani Ar-Raheem, the first verse having its creation prior to man.

In the latter half of shahada i.e., 'Muhammad Rasoolulla', Allah S.w.t has taken care that the holy Prophet, Muhammad ('s.a.s) is not raised to the status of the worshiped, despite the intimate love of the ummah for him (s.a.s). Unlike the first half, the latter part indicates the determination for adopting

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the practical guidance to the 'Ilm of Quran from the *Sunnah*.

La ilaha illallah uses three root letters viz, Alif, Lam and Hah which make up the word, Ilah meaning God. He S.w.t is as-Samad Who is not in need of a letter outside of Ilah to make the proclamation of His Unity.

2. The Eloquent Believer

عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ

55:4 Taught him bayan (eloquence)

The believer now vehemently expresses himself. The best form of expression is the praise of Allah.

Allah S.w.t has taught man *bayan*. *bayan* is the capability to communication. It is granted as a natural, inborn trait to human beings. He communicates through expression. This has been made possible because of the *qadr* within. All human languages are the result of *bayan*.

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In the first Chapter of this book, we have made certain surmises as to the creation and unfolding of *qadr*. The holy Quran is *qadr* in '*Lawh Al-Mahfoolh*'. It serves as creation as it unfolds in time. Allah S.w.t has revealed that He S.w.t is the *Nur* of the worlds and the earth. So, *qadr* is *Nur* concealing combinations of the attributes of Allah S.w.t. As *qadr* unfolds, the *Nur* is hidden within the attributes. The combined attributes of Allah is manifested as the external world whereas Himself, Subuhanalla, holds limitless attributes in their purity.

In man, the nafs or spiritual body is the combination of the attributes. The *Nur* is hidden inside nafs in the qalb. The thirst for knowledge and hence *bayan*, originates because of the *Nur* that beckons to be known. This *Nur*, we identify as Ruh. Thus, Ruh holding the seed of *qadr* creates the urge for 'Ilm. *Bayan* takes the first practical step towards its accomplishment.

The *qadr* in the qalb has two parts- the general *qadr* encompassing the specific one. The general *qadr* lets to know the external world resulting in external knowledge. The specific *qadr* is one's own

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pre-destiny, bound to *Akhira*. Its unravelling grants internal knowledge or 'Ilm .

Bayan has two aspects corresponding to the two levels of *qadr*. *bayan* connects aqal to the outside world, thus getting exposed to external knowledge. The *bayan* of the holy Quran connects aqal with nafs or qalb revealing 'Ilm.

Both types of *bayan* spring from the seed of *qadr* in the Ruh. Allah S.w.t has sent down the holy Quran for recitation. The first revelation to Muhammad ('s.a.s) was to recite (Surah Al-'Alaq).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

*96:1 In the name of Allah Who is Arrahmani
Arraheem; Recite in the name of your Lord Who
created you.*

Recitation is the beginning of *bayan* with Allah's Qalam. Being the *qadr*, the holy Quran explains everything. So, 'Ilm received on the basis of *bayan* with holy Quran is absolutely necessary for a balanced, harmonious development of external knowledge.

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The second verse in Al-Fatiha says the praise belongs to Allah S.w.t who is the Rabb of all worlds.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds;

The purpose of creation of man is *Ibadah*, the worship of Allah S.w.t. Hence, man is bestowed with the inborn talent of *bayan* to praise the Lord of all worlds, thus fulfilling the purpose of creation.

All worlds mean the external as well as internal worlds of man. Both are manifestations of His 'Ilm. The supreme form of worship ensues from appreciation of His manifested 'Ilm. It happens when Allah S.w.t bestows his favoured servant with His sublime 'Ilm. The seed germinates and grows into 'Ilm as iman, taqwa and Ihsan, and further as 'Ilm which is *Nur* itself. Recitation of Quran with regularity (once a month) from beginning to end, is essential for establishing a strong bond with *Nur* in the pursuit of 'Ilm. Hence, recitation of at least the opening Surah ie, Al-Fatiha is needed for a *Salah* or prayer to be valid. Thus, by practicing the obligatory prayers alone one can cling to iman.

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3. The Obedient Believer

The believer turns obedient in the worldly life. He keeps off its filth by being closer to the Rahmah of Ar-Rahman through adherence to Shariah laws. He returns to the Rahmah of Ar-Raheem asking pardon or *taw bah* for flawed obedience. Thus, he becomes spiritually obedient to Ar-Rahmani Ar-Raheem.

The obedience is extended to the fourth stage to include discipline in the observance of the pillars of Islam. It targets external disciplining of the physical being by abstaining from what is prescribed haram and by doing what is commanded to be done. Non-adherence to shariah takes off one's *Nur*.

Allah S.w.t has disciplined the sun and the moon as laid down in the Quran, even before the creation of man. He has brought about order in their movements to serve as ideal models of obedience for the sake of man. As we know, a slight aberration in their timing or functioning can cause colossal destruction. Their life sustaining service at the command of Allah S.w.t is the most marvelous inimitable example of obedience to the command of the Master who is Al-Jabbar, the most Compelling.

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لَشَّمْسٌ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ

55:5 The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation, (Surah Ar-Rahman)

By meticulously obeying Allah S.w.t's guidance, His servant not only receives Rahmah of this world, but ensures Rahmah of *Akhira*. So, the third verse of Al-Fatiha is the dhikr of Ar-Rahmani Ar-Raheem.

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

1:3 The Merciful, the exceedingly Merciful

Man is on the wave front of Rahmah of the world meeting the ocean of Rahmah from *Akhira*. He S.w.t is Ghafoorum Raheem, Ra'fuum Raheem, A'fuum Raheem, and Tawwabu Raheem. His mercy on the Day of Judgement will have no bounds as none can be as submissive to the orders of Allah S.w.t as the sun and the moon. In Surah An-Nisa, Allah Swt reveals man has been created weak.

4:28 And Allah wants to lighten for you [your difficulties]; and mankind was created weak.

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Together the sun and the moon cause day and night alternating with each other as the sunrise and sunset alternate with the rising and setting of the moon. Both the risings and settings are equally important for life's sustenance on earth. As earth is related to sun and moon, Nafs is connected to Angels in front and behind that keep on changing positions causing the internal rising and setting.

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ

Lord of both points of sunrise and sunset.

Dinul Islam is structured to inculcate order and discipline in man through observance of Islamic practices and prescriptions of shariah. It has its origin from Allah S.w.t with the first guidance at the beginning of times. It continues with the last revelation of Al-Quran till end of time, and with numerous revelations from time to time in between, all based on the Oneness of the Creator contained in the dhikr 'La Ilaha Illaallh', there is no god except Allah S.w.t.

Observance of obligatory Islamic practices leads to building up of iman. These fundamental practices are known as the five pillars of Islam. They

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are i. Proclaiming *Shahadat kalimah* (oath of faith)ii. *Salah* (Five times prayer) iii. *Zakkat* (Giving away the poor-due) iv. *Sowm* (Fast during Ramadan) and v. *Hajj* (the pilgrimage to the holy place of worship in Makka). They form the a'mal or deeds of *Ibadah* in case they have iman underneath.

There is no meaning to the observance of Islam unless it is based on devotion or iman. Therefore, iman is simultaneously built with one's Islam originating from shahadah. One's Islam combined with iman constitutes the length and breadth of his Dinul Islam. Together they make up the foundation of the Din, individually as well as collectively. Therefore, Islamic practices lead to strengthening of iman and vice versa.

This is the *twariq* which Iblis could not pass owing to his arrogance. The sujood or prostration becomes *Ibadah* because Allah S.w.t has commanded so. In the case of Iblis, he was wanted to prostrate before Adam as a token of reverence to the excellent creation of man. The failure to obey the laws of Allah would make one's *Ibadah*

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unacceptable. There is no submission without obedience.

4. *Abdu* or the Devotional Believer

In this stage, devotion or *Iman* builds up in the believer's heart or *qalb*. He sees *Akhira*. And he prostrates before the Malik of the Day of Requittance.

The fourth inner *twariq* is that of *sujud* or prostration which requires submission of will to Allah S.w.t. *Sujud* has been taught to the *najm* (vines or stars or both) and the trees before man set foot on earth.

وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ

55:6 The vine and the tree both prostrate (to Allah)

The submission of vines and trees creates the atmosphere for sustenance of animal life including man. Deeds of *Ibadah* improve the environment making it conducive to life. Submission implies humility and in *Salah*, the *abdu* falls in prostration before Allah surrendering his ego. He follows the

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Master's command in paying the poor due, zakat, with piety. It is the state of emotional closeness to Allah S.w.t where the aqal moves closer to the nafs.

The stage of submission is represented by the middle verse of the opening Surah that exhorts the Malik of the Day of Judgement. The *abdu* (slave) to his Malik(Master) is a mu'min in the middle *tawariq* . He develops iman that protects on the Day of Qyamah.

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

Sovereign of the Day of Recompense.

It is also the stage of deeds and rewards. At this stage, the devotee gets connected to his *Akhira*. The *abdu* returns to the master often in tauba. Now and then, he experiences the exceeding bounty of Rahma of Ar-Raheem.

Iman is the initial state of the sublime 'Ilm. The first three stages are meaningless without iman. This is because iman belongs to the nafs and the stages previous to it need not be part of spiritual realm unless and until there is underlying iman.

5. *Mutaqin* or the Conscious Believer

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وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ

55:7 And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance

أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ

55:8 That you not transgress within the balance.

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ

55:9 And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.

The fifth *twariq* is maintenance of perfect balance or mizan in transactions. Allah S.w.t has raised the sky in perfect balance to serve as example proclaiming the importance of keeping justice in every form of relationship. Virtuous deeds of a conscious aqal that is reflective of iman in the qalb mark the *twariq*.

Correctness of measurement in transactions is meticulously observed with a heart fearful for Allah's weighing. Allah S.w.t says not a mustard seed's weight of a'mal will be left out on the Day of Judgement just as not a mustard seed's weight of evil done will not go unnoticed.

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فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ

99:7 *So whoever does an atom's weight of
good will see it,*

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

99:8 *And whoever does an atom's weight of
evil will see it. (Surah Al-Zalzalah)*

Mizan, the wondrous scale that balances the affairs of sky, serves as the example of attention to be exercised in human acts and dealings. It comes from taqwa, the consciousness about Allah S.w.t carried by nafs. It is the product of iman. Allah Swt has prescribed fast in the month of Ramadan so that the mumín builds taqwa. Taqwa is reflected by an attentive intellect. It is *Nurtured* by acts of a'mal. A mu'mín who exercises caution in all his deeds with the fear of Allah S.w.t is turned into a *Mutaqín*. A Prophet receives revelation from Allah S.w.t as a *Mutaqín*. The holy Quran provides guidance to the *Mutaqín* for furtherance of his 'Ilm (Al-Baqara 2:2).

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

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2:2 This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those who are mutaqin.

The first and foremost of all relationships is the one that is with Allah S.w.t. Mizan in the transactions with Him (S.w.t) is set up by taqwa. Taqwa expresses itself as worship and prayer. As such, the fifth verse of Al-Fatiha is the declaration establishing the covenant that, other than Allah S.w.t, there's no one to be worshipped and there's no one to be prayed to.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

1:5 It is You we worship and You we ask for help.

This is the *twareeq* where the aqal exercises caution in *Ibadah* which has two parts, i. worship and ii. parayer. Ghafla or heedlessness leads astray from taqwa.

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ
مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْعُدُوِّ وَالْأَصَالِ وَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

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7:205 And remember your Lord within yourself in humility and in fear without being apparent in speech - in the mornings and the evenings. And do not be among the heedless (Surah Al-Araf).

6. Haaj or the Pilgrim-Believer

This is the *twareeq*, we have seen Nabi Musa ('a.s) as undertaking on the command of Allah Swt for receipt of 'Ilm. The *Mutaqin* is on an internal spiritual pursuit with the parayer to be guided to the Siratal Mustaqim. He has taqwa to be gifted to Lord Almighty when he is led to *Nur*.

وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ

And the earth He laid [out] for the creatures. (Al-Rahman 55:10)

It is the *twareeq* of the earth that is organised for man. He is gifted to walk on its shoulders and to eat its provisions (Al-Mulk 67:15).

There are plentiful provisions along innumerable paths, most crowded with great attractions, leading astray into wilderness. A *Mutaqin* holds fast onto His rope made from observance of the foregoing *twareeq*. His life is now a holy journey,

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attentive only of Allah's liking. He is closest to his nafs by holding on to haq and sabur, truth and patience. He relentlessly keeps the prayer to be guided along the straight path of *Nur* which is the seventh *twariq*.

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

1:6 Guide us to the straight path

7. 'Alim or the Knowing

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

1:7 The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.

The last verse in Surah Al-Fatiha refers to the path that guides unto Him, distinct from the paths of the munafiq and the mushrik. It is the straight path of 'Ilm led by *Nur*.

Verse 11 of Surah Ar-Rahman illustrates the last *twariq* as the path being blessed with fruits, dates, grains and aromatic plants for the consumption of His servant.

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فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ

*55:11 Therein is fruit and palm trees having
sheaths [of dates]*

وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ

*55:12 And grain having husks and scented
plants.*

The believer enjoys the 'Ilm of Iman and taqwa in the fourth and fifth *twarayiq*, and he intensifies his journey towards the Light of Allah in the sixth *twariq*. Allah S.w.t may favour him with the state of Ihsan before being guided to His 'Ilm. The seventh and the final *twariq* has, thus, two parts, the first of which ie, Ihsan is attained by Musa a.s on his onward spiritual pursuit, and the latter part of it ie, 'Ilm (by knowing himself in toto) is received in the return journey as he retraces spiritual ascension from the bottom level.

7a. 'Ilm of iman

The fruits grown on earth are delicious and dear to the mind. They are assimilated forthwith providing instant energy. Likewise, there are ayaat in the holy Quran which are the source of direct 'Ilm. It

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generates ‘Ilm of iman in the nafs as mind communicates with nafs. It’s short lived. Its source is in ayaat *muhukumah*. This is the *twariq* of people of vision, oulul abswar. They readily assimilate the fruits of ‘Ilm as and when received from the Provider, Ar-Raziq, enjoying upheavals of Iman. They have a heart softened by iman for the ayaat of the holy Quran as well as of the nature.

There is knowledge built on emotion-based devotion. It is derived from material resources without an involving nafs, as there is no Iman in the qalb. It is the *twariq* of mushrik. They create emotional stories about Allah S.w.t, and attach many material things as His attributes. They are the people who are easily led astray following the beliefs of the majority.

7b. ‘Ilm of taqwa

The dates protected in sheaths refer to conscious devotion where intellect takes advice from the nafs. It is ‘Ilm, related to taqwa. Its source is ayaat *muhukumah* containing shariah. It is the ‘Ilm that lasts long with practice. It is hukku or the wisdom of judgment in every transaction arising from association of intellect with Iman. It fulfils one’s Din. It

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is from the straight tree of Dinul Islam encompassing belief, *bayan*, obedience, Iman and Taqwa.

This is the *twariq* of oulul albab, the people of understanding. When a mizal from the Quran is interpreted to them, they immediately imbibe its meaning. In the same manner, they understand the ayaat of outside world. They have a intellect sharpened by taqwa. Nevertheless, in societies where evil abounds they tend to go by the majority concepts, and could be deviant.

External knowledge developed by the rational faculty is used for misguiding people for material gains. This is the *twariq* of the munafiq. Their rational faculty is devoid of any communication with the nafs. It is the knowledge of sophistication of the arrogant who loves power through oppression. They are the people on whom the wrath of Allah S.w.t befalls.

7c. ‘Ilm of Ihsan

The grains need collection, cleaning and husk removal before being cooked and eaten. It requires patience. The source of grains is the amzal in ayaat mutashabihat. They are insights received in the qalb

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by virtue of incessant *bayan*. They are cooked in the qalb with Rahmah using *Nur*. It happens as Allah Swt bestows His *Nur*, opening up sadr. What qalb cooks is 'Ilm, the food of Nafs, which, on assimilation, generates *Nur*. The *Nur* is distributed as 'amalu salihat' or righteous deeds. It is as though a plant from a grain of seed, *Nurtured* by Rahmah produces seven ears each bearing a hundred grains, mostly given away. A muhsin is a natural breeder of righteous deeds. They spread fragrance of the inflorescence that bloom in the heart.

Ayaat are stars that a traveler or a navigator makes use of, for guidance of direction, by connecting them together. Insights are ayaat, received by a Nafs that dives into Rahmah, the holy Quran. They are connected with lines of external knowledge to reveal the real 'Ilm in them.

The qalb of muhsin shines with *Nur*. He is in siratal mustaqim, the straight path unto Him, lighted by *Nur*. It is the sweet scented path of those on whom Allah S.w.t has bestowed His Grace recognizable by humility, patience and kindness. None of the munafiqoon or mushrikoon will be in the path.

CHAPTER 10

Light upon Light

Gist

This chapter mainly focuses on Ayatul Kursi and Ayah An-Nur for explaining the phenomenon of ultimate knowledge to which the holy Quran guides a human being. He finds his own self in totality, thus knowing his Rabb. It is the qalb that is enshrouded in Nur sees the Ruh of Nur. The qalb ceases to exist as it is set ablaze by Light upon Light for the Arsh to descend.

Musa ('a.s) is on a *basweerah*, Allah Swt shows his nafs as separated from the physical being which is led by the aqal. Musa ('a.s) and his servant (representing the aqal and the nafs respectively) retrace their footsteps to *majmaul bahrain* at the threshold of 'Ilm. At this point of spirituality, the aqal is on the sadr within nafs. And together they witnessed Al-Khidr.

18:65 And they found a servant from among Our servants to whom we had given mercy from us and had taught him from Us a [certain] knowledge.

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We have earlier found the relation between the knowledge of Al-Khidr and of Allah S.w.t from the statement in the middle of the ayat, Ayatul Kursi. Therefore, we may go to Ayatul Kursi to draw some more insight on that connection.

1. Structure of Ayatul Kursi

Ayatul Kursi is the ayat about Allah S.w.t having ten parts. Allah S.w.t is introducing Himself to His servant. It contains those of His attributes which man has been equipped internally to know, but according as the Nafs is capable of.

Upon creation of Adam, Allah S.w.t taught him all names of which even Angels had no idea. It is 'Asmaul Husna' that encompass all names. The holy Prophet Muhammad ('s.a.s) taught the ummah ninety nine Beautiful Names from Asmaul Husna in order that we recollect what has been inlaid concealed within.

In Ayatul Kursi, Allah S.w.t teaches ten of basic characteristics connected to Asmaul Husna so that by learning them the seeker will be able to know himself by contrast with Allah S.w.t. For example, the second

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part of the ayat says neither weariness overtakes Him nor sleep. By contrast, human beings get fatigue by labour and sleep is essential for recouping from tiredness. Thus man is made to know his limited self in conjunction with the 'Ilm of His boundless traits, and, in turn, by knowing himself, he is made to know his Rabb.

Ayatul Kursi – by structure

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence.

لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ

Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep.

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ

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*Who is it that can intercede with Him except by
His permission?*

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ

*He knows what is [presently] before them and
what will be after them,*

وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ

*and they encompass not a thing of His
knowledge except for what He wills.*

وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ

*His Kursi extends over the heavens and the
earth,*

وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا

and their preservation tires Him not.

وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

And He is the Most High, the Most Great.

Ayatul Kursi has the structure of five spheres
one upon the other having a common centre. More

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simply, it may be understood as having five concentric rings, one above the other. One half of a ring represents one trait while its other half represents the complementary trait in the same ayat. Thus, half of the outermost ring represents part 1 of the ayat and its second half represents part 10 of the ayat. The innermost ring ie, the fifth one contains in its two halves the 5th and the 6th parts. The 5th part says 'He knows what is before them '. The sixth part implies 'He knows what is behind them'. Allah S.w.t, therefore, is the witness at the centre of them representing five samavaat. The five rings also represent five faculties of the human being viz, 1. the qalb, 2. the sadr, 3.the nafs, 4.the aqal and 5.the physical body. Man is created as the samavaat have been created.

The holy Prophet ('s.a.s) said that the blessed human qalb has the capacity for holding the Arsh of Allah S.w.t. As it happens, the sadr encompassing qalb, will hold the samavat of water or Rahmah. It is stated in the holy Quran that His Arsh is on water. And that blessed nafs would be holding the paradise. The next samavat of aqal, nurturing imagination, feelings, emotions, ideas and thoughts, is the

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enlightened executive machinery, taking the place of the world of Angels, the A'lamul Arwah. The outermost samavat of body and senses are so disciplined as to match with the corresponding natural world outside (of man and jinn), to which they are exposed.

The qalb is the inner most ring where the Rahmah of the duniyah merges with the Rahmah of *Akhira*. It has the capability of knowing the unseen future connected to *Akhira* and the unseen past connected to the Beginning of the being, owing to the Ruh which is the witness at centre.

2. The Ruh

Ruh, breathed into the nafs by Allah S.w.t, is the pure uninterfering vehicle of the Nafs (as nafs leads). It is the spirit of life, the angel, created from *Nur*. Death occurs as Allah S.w.t calls it back. The Nafs is in total *basweerah* when nafs carrying aqal finds its Ruh. Thus, every distinction amongst the faculties vanishes.

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In the glorious Quran in Surah Al-Isra, Allah S.w.t says, of Ruh, only very little knowledge is divulged to man. It is revealed that Ruh is from His command.

The question as to the mystery of Ruh was posed by the Jews in a stealthy way. So, Allah S.w.t has revealed that very little knowledge in the ayaat of the kind referred to as ayaatu mutashabiha which is beyond the reach of the external eye. The eyes of kufr can not have the inner vision of knowing that very little hidden in such ayaat of the noble Quran. Allah S.w.t said that those impure at heart cannot touch the 'Ilm contained in it. (Surah Al-Waqiya.56:755– 56:80)

That little knowledge about Ruh is discernible from Ayatul Kursi, as we have seen. The finding of Ruh by its Nafs is described in Ayat An-Nur of Surah An-Nur. In Surah Mujadila 58:22, Allah S.w.t says that believers are such that He S.w.t has inscribed iman on their hearts and has strengthened them with a Ruh from Him.

أُولَٰئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ

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58:22 Allah has inscribed faith on their hearts, and has supported them with a Ru from Him.

As the Nafs sees its vehicle within, it becomes wholesome, and gets strengthened by that spirit. Allah S.w.t has created seven samavaat over man (Al-Muminoon 23:17). The total Nafs experiences the truth guided by Ruh, being blessedly positioned at the centre of creations.

3. Al-Khidr, the Nafs led by Nur

In the episode in Al- Kahf, at *majmaul Bahrain*, Musa a.s and his servant together find Al-Khidr, the Ruh. The qalb is opened witnessing the timeless merger of the two Rahmahs. It witnesses the Ruh which is the common centre of the qalb and the samavaat. It is always in the Present witnessing the *majmaul bahrain* where Al-Awwal and Al-Akhir merge into one; where Ar-Rahman and Ar-Raheem merge into one. It witnesses the past and future, and delivers its vision as Allah Swt wills.

Ruh is the integral part of qalb during the life of the dhuniya. As such, it's part of the nafs. As nafs sees the qalb and the Ruh, Musa ('a.s) turns into an

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integral Nafs. He ('a.s), knows himself. He knows his Rabb. And now Nafs is led by the Ruh, its natural vehicle Allah S.w.t has appointed, but missed by it.

The *basweerah* of Nafs is alien to the understanding of the aqal. The aqal becomes detached, and Musa ('a.s) is now his physical body under control of the aqal. The aqal wants to learn the sublime 'Ilm.

4. Teaching Aqal the 'Ilm of Nafs

We shall recollect that Musa ('a.s), is experiencing inner vision, walking the episode as Allah S.w.t teaches him. It was the aqal of Musa ('a.s) that made the declaration that he would not rest until *majmaul bahrain* is reached.

Therefore, Allah S.w.t is teaching his aqal (in the context, it's Musa ('a.s)) the capacity of the nafs in seeing through the Ruh what the aqal is incapable of achieving.

Initially, Musa ('a.s) was the master aqal accompanied by a servant nafs. The present situation puts Musa ('a.s) in the role of the accompanying servant to the masterly Nafs. The master is carried by

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Ruh and accompanied by aqal. At this state, the Nafs and Ruh are one, personified as Al-Khidr.

The aqal of Musa ('a.s) asks Al-Khidr (ie, the Nafs of Musa ('a.s) led by Ruh) if he can teach that rightful knowledge.

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُعَلِّمَ مِنَّمَا عَلَّمْتَ
رُشْدًا

18:66 Moses said to him, "May I follow you on [the condition] that you teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgement?"

In the reply, he teaches aqal, and through him Allah S.w.t teaches us, the first lesson.

قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا

18:67 He said, "Indeed, with me you will never be able to have patience.

وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَى مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا

18:68 And how can you have patience for what you do not encompass in knowledge?"

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Al-Khidr says, the aqal will never comprehend the knowledge of the Ruh because it is by nature impatient, being put to function on partial information. Impatience is the product of ignorance. By trying to be patient, the aqal tends to step backward allowing space for the nafs to go ahead of it and be the controlling factor. The aqal has to hold onto truth to be patient (Surah Al-Asr). The truth in this case is the self realization of the aqal as to its limitation.

The aqal gives the assurance that he will be patient if Allah S.w.t wills.

Musa ('a.s) (his aqal) is not to interfere in the affairs of Al-Khidr (his Nafs led by Ruh) , but will be a loyal servant of him. As and when the aqal tries to be master, Nafs loses *basweerah*. It loses the guidance of the Ruh and hence, Musa ('a.s) would suffer spiritual degeneration.

However, the aqal inspite of itself, loses patience and breaks the pledge as he could not understand the logic or justification behind the acts of Al-Khidr in respect of the three incidents, he bears witness to. Allah S.w.t warns that the covenant given to Him by us, which is in the fitra, is bound to be

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forgotten in our deeds, if the aqal doesn't inculcate patience by following His guidance.

18:71 So they set out, until when they had embarked on the ship, al-Khidr tore it open. [Moses] said, "Have you torn it open to drown its people? You have certainly done a grave thing."

Nafs takes aqal along. Musa ('a.s) is in total basweera. His external eye is open and passive, and merged into the internal eye. Nafs gives command to the body to slice the bottom of boat. The aqal doesn't understand the wisdom. It becomes active and uses its intellect. Because of the intervention, *basweerah* is broken. Nafs warns (by insight) about resultant loss of 'Ilm. The aqal retracts.

Allah S.w.t highlights the importance of tauba by people who are led by aqal. They should be returning to Allah S.w.t as often as the aqal comes to realize its wrong doings.

18:73 [Moses] said, "Do not blame me for what I forgot and do not cover me in my matter with difficulty."

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Nafs relates break of pledge to impatience that stems from ignorance. But, aqal attributes it to forgetfulness. Forgetfulness is the trait of aqal owing to ignorance. Divine 'Ilm is unrelated to memory.

18:74 So they set out, until when they met a boy, al-Khidr killed him. [Moses] said, "Have you killed a pure soul for other than [having killed] a soul? You have certainly done a deplorable thing."

Fanthwalaqa (meaning 'they set out')- implies *basweerah* re-established. Nafs commands to kill a boy. The body executes the order. The aqal doesn't understand the wisdom and hence, becomes active reacting with moral rage for violating shariah law. Allah S.w.t teaches that obedience to law is prerequisite for people of aqal in achieving the state of 'Ilm. However, people of 'Ilm themselves are on a plane that is above sharia. Their acts are spontaneous and naturally infallible being based on Allah's command.. The aqal, following Al-Khidr, could witness the act of Allah S.w.t taking a nafs unto Himself, but understands it as murder. For others who witness the alleged killing, it would appear as an accident. It is an act of Rahmah where three souls are saved from hell fire. Allah S.w.t teaches us that

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children given out of His Rahmah could be taken off owing to the same Rahmah. Because we lead an ignorant life, we tend to think Allah S.w.t being unjust in case of occurrence of such malady in our midst.

Conversely, in Surah Al-Qasas, the Shaitan replaces the Ruh as Musa ('a.s) is in a state of ghafla (led by the aqal) when the murder takes place. Here, the nafs acts instigated by Shaitan, as Musa a.s has been unaware of himself. As his consciousness has returned, he a.s says it must have been done by Shaitan because he has not done any murder as to the understanding of his aqal. But, the ordinary people present there view it as a case of murder. He is compelled to go in exile.

Al-Khidr warns, a second time, of the loss of 'Ilm on intervention by the aqal.

18:76 [Moses] said, "If I should ask you about anything after this, then do not keep me as a companion. You have obtained from me an excuse."

Aqal retracts, but doesn't see its deficiency. And, so, accuses Nafs of being eager to avoid it by finding fault on its fallibility.

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18:77 So they set out, until when they came to the people of a town, they asked its people for food, but they refused to offer them hospitality. And they found therein a wall about to collapse, so al-Khidh r restored it. [Moses] said, "If you wished, you could have taken for it a payment."

This is because, even while following the Nafs for learning 'Ilm, the aqal believes in the rationality of intellect as being superior to the 'Ilm of Nafs of what he has no idea.

Basweera is reestablished for a third time. The people of the town are selfish and miserly. Yet, the Nafs directs to set right a falling wall there, free of charge. The aqal criticises for being foolish in volunteering a free act to an undeserving community.

18:78 Al-Khidh r] said, "This is parting between me and you. I will inform you of the interpretation of that about which you could not have patience."

The aqal could not keep his word for the third time owing to its impatience. The aqal is informed of the related aspects of the *qadr* that it is incapable of viewing, but the Ruh could know and lead the Nafs to

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committing acts beyond its comprehension. The guidance from Ruh is discontinued. The aqal having become aware of its limitations and of the superiority of the Nafs, keeps a humble position for the Nafs to come to Ihsan.

18:79 As for the ship, it belonged to poor people working at sea. So I intended to cause defect in it as there was after them a king who seized every [good] ship by force.

The Nafs shows the invisible aspects of the *qadr*, for aqal's understanding sending insights.

Al-Khidr is asking the aqal to board on the boat of the Din that takes him to *Akhira*. The boat is on the waters of rahmah of duniya from where he can net the fish of taqwa that imparts energy to sail to the wave front where the other ocean of Ar-Raheem meets.

The poor men are people with a susceptible Din under a transgressive King, who doesn't tolerate other faiths. So the Nafs ('I') instructs to make amends in the external form of their Din so that it is protected till such time as it acquires strength to fight a Jihad against oppression.

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The aqal is accusing the Nafs of bidah in the religion. The Ruh being *Nur* doesn't get involved in the decision. So, the Nafs speaks in the first person.

18:80 And as for the boy, his parents were believers, and we feared that he would overburden them by transgression and disbelief.

The boy represents a nafs that's vulnerable to corruption from practices of shirk whereas the person is outwardly virtuous (a mushrik of excellent character by common standards). The nafs doesn't want to lead even as the humble aqal makes way for it, to be in the forefront. It is influenced by infidels outside. This is the case with a large section of people known as *oulul albab* or people of understanding in secular countries. They readily believe, without critical analysis, what has been presented to them. And hence they are vulnerable to evil as evil abounds. This is the reason ascribed for establishing Shariah rule.

The substitution of nafs is seen as killing by the aqal and so, it accuses Nafs of having committed murder.

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18:81 So we intended that their Lord should substitute for them one better than him in purity and nearer to mercy.

Here, 'we' represents Nafs and the leading Ruh who wish for a better nafs to replace the existing one. But, it is the will of the aqal's Rabb (their Lord) that replaces the present nafs with one better. In case Allah S.w.t wills otherwise, death ensues.

The wall represents a failing protection in respect of two helpless nafs (two orphan boys), by the family, from a corrupt community. The treasure symbolises inherited righteous deeds (a'malu as-salih).

Allah S.w.t wanted the susceptible orphans to be guided to, for strengthening their Din (repairs to wall) so that they lead a life of taqwa as and when maturity is reached.

18:82 And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure for them, and their father had been righteous. So your Lord intended that they reach maturity and extract their treasure, as a mercy from

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your Lord. And I did it not of my own accord. That is the interpretation of that about which you could not have patience."

Allah S.w.t discloses three kinds of action on the 'Ilm received by His Messengers due to Basweera. As such, the Messengers are granted three types of 'Ilm.

In the first incident, Allah S.w.t allows His Messenger to take the decision by revealing part of the connected *qadr* which otherwise remains hidden. Decision is left to the Messenger as it is the case of securing a weak Din. Allah S.w.t allows his ('a.s) will to function based on the level of Rahmah.

In the second incident, Allah S.w.t allows His Messenger to consult with the guiding *Nur* on revealing the hidden part of *qadr* because here Allah's will is directly involved in replacing the nafs of the person.

In the final incident, it's Allah's will that is applied. The Nafs acts according as it has been commanded.

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Through these three incidents, Allah S.w.t introduces aqal to the fitra, held in the qalb by the Nafs, in the light of Ruh. Because of the fitra, Nafs is capable of imbibing the most supreme knowledge. Aqal's knowledge is based on logic which is applied on the visible past experience. It is not compatible with the 'Ilm based on the unseen. It is aqal's responsibility to be subservient to the Nafs for enabling receipt of that 'Ilm. Allah S.w.t leads to his *Nur* whom He wills.

Al-Khidr is none but Musa ('a.s) with Nafs led by Ruh, the *Nur* of Allah. He ('a.s) is the Messenger of Allah S.w.t, acting on His behalf. So, Allah S.w.t says, 'atheehu Allah wa atheehu Ar-Rasool', obey Allah and obey the Rasool. By obeying the Rasool, one obeys Allah S.w.t.

In Surah Twaha, verse 20:40-41, Allah S.w.t mentions about the upbringing of Musa a.s. through various trials teaching him (a.s) the divine 'Ilm of His. He a.s was thus fashioned for the Prophetic mission of leading the Israelites. His immediate feat is to confront and save them from the clutches of the tyrant, Pharaoh.

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20:40 And you killed someone, but We saved you from retaliation and tried you with a [severe] trial. And you remained [some] years among the people of Madyan. Then you came [here] at the decreed time, O Moses.

20:41 I have fashioned you for Myself.

5. The watch dog on the cave

18:22 They will say there were three, the fourth of them being their dog; and they will say there were five, the sixth of them being their dog - guessing at the unseen; and they will say there were seven, and the eighth of them was their dog. Say, [O Prophet], "My Lord is most knowing of their number. None knows them except a few. So do not argue about them except with an obvious argument and do not inquire about them among [the speculators] from anyone."

In Surah Al-Kahf, Allah S.w.t teaches Nabi Muhammad ('s.a.s) not to indulge in meaningless arguments about matters of information that are of no use by citing the example of the argumentation about the number of people who Allah has put to sleep for

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three hundred years exceeded by nine in the cave (Surah Al-Kahf 18:22).

Some will say they're three and fourth of them being the dog. And some will say five and the sixth of them being their dog. Here, Allah S.w.t skips the probability of them being four with a dog. Again the probability, of their number being six with dog as the seventh member, is omitted.

Obviously, He S.w.t is conveying 'Ilm in place of meaningless information that leads to arguments eventually strengthening one's ego or vanity at the cost of humility in submission.

Allah S.w.t accepted their prayer for help and rescued them from the chasing disbelievers because there has been no discord amongst them. They're all united by tawheed. Allah S.w.t is asking how can we divide them into many when they function as single entity chanting the dhikr, 'La ilaha illa-Allah'. Allah S.w.t, at the same time, leaves us with the freedom to think about them as being four or six with the dog as respectively the fifth or the seventh member. Therefore, we find them as a single body of four led by a Nafs followed by physical body, mind and

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intellect. They could also be six led by a qalb with the physical and spiritual beings following it. Individual faculties in that case could be i. the body that stands in strength, ii. the senses that connects with the outer world, iii. the mind that sees, iv. the intellect that thinks, v. the nafs in Ihsan and vi. the sadr that relates to time.

Allah S.w.t reveals that the dog is an integral part of the team, holding them together. It is the watch dog of Ruh. As the Nafs finds the Ruh, they unite into one led by the Ruh, the *Nur* of Allah. The dog that leads the way is the mizal of the Ruh of Allah at the centre of the qalb.

إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَى أَنْ
يَهْدِيَنِي رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَذَا رَشَدًا

18:24 Except [when adding], "If Allah wills."
And remember your Lord when you forget [it] and say,
"Perhaps my Lord will guide me to what is nearer
than this to right conduct." (Surah Al-Kahf)

Allah S.w.t teaches the holy Prophet not to be concerned about the questions of disbelievers in case Allah S.w.t chooses not to send down the answers. It

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is also taught how to answer to them by adding, “Insha Allah” in the case of a promise. The reply to them is that the Rabb may guide the holy Prophet to something better. That something is already present in the revelation connected to the people of the cave, but concealed from the disbeliever. The episode from the life of Musa ('a.s), revealing the way to the *Nur*, is another among them.

6. Light upon Light

Ayah An-Noor

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا
مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ
يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ
زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ
لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيمٌ

24:35 Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a

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blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things (Surah An-Nur).

Allah S.w.t opens the ayat, ayat An-*Nur* with the statement that He S.w.t is the *Nur* of the samavaat and the earth. We take the samavaat to mean the worlds of His creation. The creation starts with *qadr*. Everything created comes from Him and to Him, everything is returned. Every little creation is a combination of His attributes. *Qadr* is His *Nur* encompassing the attributes. As *qadr* unfolds as space and time, *Nur* is concealed within the attributes. The attributes determines character. It is the essence of the object identified by a name. Allah S.w.t, after the creation of Adam, taught him all the names which reflect Allah S.w.t. Man has his nafs as his self, the essence. It consists of varying combinations of His Beautiful Names . The *Nur* is hidden in the nafs within the qalb.

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We have already seen that Ruh is at the centre of the qalb. The centre coincides with the centre of the samavaat.

Allah S.w.t being the *Nur* of the worlds and the earth, even the smallest particle conceals that *Nur*. According to physicists, the photon is one of the nineteen smallest wave-particles that make up the universe. Because of the *Nur*, the light has an absolute velocity besides a velocity that is relative. It also accounts for the dual nature exhibited in the inexplicable double slit experiment.

As one is led by the *Nur*, he has received the most supreme knowledge, the sublime 'Ilm. In ayat An-*Nur*, Allah S.w.t by means of mizal or example, explains the way to His *Nur*, the Ruh.

He S.w.t says, the example of His *Nur* is like that of the *mishkat* or the niche (of a light source) containing *as-zujajat* or the glass cover which is like a bright star! Within the *zujajat* is the misbah or the lamp. The lamp is ignited using a special kind of oil from a blessed olive tree which is neither of the east nor of the west. The oil emits light without the need

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for kindling it. No fire would be able to touch it. As it approaches the lamp there will be Light upon Light!

Thus, Allah S.w.t says that He guides one to His *Nur* if He wills. But the example of the lamp is cited for people who use their aqal for understanding. Allah S.w.t is differentiating between knowing and understanding. The understanding of the aqal is different from knowing the 'Ilm as has been explained in the amzal of Musa a.s and Al-Khidr. It is the I'm of insight or *basweerah*.

The niche of lamp, Al-mishkah stands for the sadr of Nafs. The Az-zujajah, the glass cover of the lamp within the mishkah represents qalb. The qalb shines like a bright light star. It starts emitting *Nur* even as the lamp is not kindled.

As Allah's *Nur* falls on the sadr, it's enlarged beyond time and space revealing the qalb. The qalb starts emitting *Nur* like the bright star that guides a traveler or a navigator. The vision or experience of Nafs in the brilliance of *Nur* is *basweera*. The servant of Allah S.w.t is in Ihsan.

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He receives guidance that is the grains of insights to grow 'Ilm. Allah S.w.t speaks of kindling the glorious lamp of qalb using a special olive oil. It is extracted from the ripe fruits of a special olive tree. The olive tree neither stands in the east nor in the west. It is always enshrouded in fullest light without casting a shadow. As such, it's not a tree of this world receiving light of the sun.

The tree is the holy Quran in '*Lawh Al-Mahfoolh*', securely placed enshrouded in the *Nur* of Allah S.w.t. It is the *qadr* wherein everything is written. The Arabic Quran is its textual form descended to the human world in *lailatul qadr*, in the night of the *qadr*. Allah S.w.t describes about the holy Quran in *Lawh Al-Mahfoolh* in Surah Al-waqia:

The ayaat of the holy Quran are like stars leading the night traveler on land and in sea. They guide from the darkness of ignorance to the light of 'Ilm. Like the stars, the ayaat are all interconnected having sent by a Single Source. They may look similar, but are dissimilar owing to their positions. Those blessed to be admitted in the paradise would say of the fruits there as similar to the ones on earth.

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Allah Swt says they are different though appear similar. The ayaat like the fruits of paradise are grown in *Nur* so that they are to be known with *Nur*

So, Allah S.w.t swear by the stars and reveals about the great oath of the holy Quran protected in the Book in *Lawh Al-Mahfoolh*.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ
الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

6:97 And it is He who placed for you the stars that you may be guided by them through the darknesses of the land and sea. We have detailed the signs for a people who know (Surah Al-A'nam).

The Angels who have access to it are guided by the stars. No impure from among man can touch it. It is inaccessible to the jinn. The shayateen who try to steal a look at it is driven away by stoning. The people pure at heart alone are allowed to receive the 'Ilm of the Quran. They carry a *Lawh Al-Mahfoolh* in their heart as the one protected in the samavat above. They're the ones, Allah S.w.t has led to His *Nur*. Others will have only a peripheral knowledge from the interpretation of the amzal. The disbeliever

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cannot touch even the surface meaning. Upon the holy Prophet being guided to the *Nur*, Allah S.w.t says:

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي
مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَّشَاءُ
مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

Ash-Shura 42:52 And thus We have revealed to you a Ruh from Our command. You did not know what is the Book or [what is] faith, but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. And indeed, [O Muhammad], you guide to a straight path –

The holy Quran is the *Nur* with which Allah S.w.t guides one to His *Nur* to be guided by that *Nur* which is the Ruh from His command breathed into every nafs.

The misbah, the lamp is kindled by the olive oil extracted from the fruits of the tree, namely, the Quran. It doesn't require fire for its kindling. So, it's indicated hereby that jinns have no access to the sublime 'Ilm in the Quran that ignites itself at the sight

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of the Ruh. The sublime 'Ilm is the source of *Nur*; it's the Rahmah of *Akhira*. Allah S.w.t, in Surah Luqman reveals that the holy Quran is the guidance and Rahmah to the muhsinin.

Luqman 31:3 As guidance and mercy for the muhsinin

The 'Ilm contained in the ayaat of the holy Book is extracted by a qalb shining in *Nur*, as the oil contained in the cells of the olive fruits is brought out by crushing and pressing. The brilliance of the qalb is attributed to the *Nur* produced from 'Ilm of Ihsan. The holy Quran at that state has served as a plant bearing fruits of grain that the qalb cooks in Rahmah to produce the food of Nafs, the 'Ilm. The food generates *Nur* imparting fragrance to the Nafs - the fragrance of paradise (Surah Al-waqiya :89) Now, it's a tree of olive. The sublime 'Ilm extracted by the qalb brings it to its centre which is the pinnacle of enlightenment- *Nurun ala Nur- Nur upon Nur*.

7. The *Nur* of the Unseen

As Allah S.w.t has created man in the best mould, he will be subjected to Ihsan at least once, ie,

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at the time of death. As Ruh departs, the aqal disappears behind Nafs, and the Nafs witnesses Ruh for the first time if Allah S.w.t has not led him to His *Nur* earlier. Allah S.w.t narrates the ending of Pharaoh when he came to seeing the reality of his own *qadr*, and testifying his belated belief in Allah, the One and Only.

Younus 10:90 And We took the Children of Israel across the sea, and Pharaoh and his soldiers pursued them in tyranny and enmity until, when drowning overtook him, he said, "I believe that there is no deity except that in whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of the Muslims

In Surah Al-waqiya, ayaat 83 and 85 copied here, Allah S.w.t says that as Ruh departs at the moment of death, Nafs witnesses helplessly.

فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ

*56:83 Then why, when the soul at death
reaches the throat*

وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ

56:84 And you are at that time looking on

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وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ

*56:85 And We are nearer to him than you, but
you do not see -*

Allah S.w.t Who is An-Nur, is closer to the departing Ruh, the Spirit created from Nur than the Nafs. But the Nafs could not see Allah S.w.t even while He is closer to the Ruh even though Ruh is closest to the Nafs, being the spirit of life. In Surah Qaf, He Swt says He is closer than the jugular vein that attaches body with Ruh.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ
أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

*Surah Qaf, 50:16 Indeed, We have created man and
know what his nafs whispers to him, and We are
closer to him than [his] jugular vein*

In Surah A'raf, ayat 143, Musa ('a.s) begs to Allah S.w.t that he a.s be allowed a glance of His Countenance. Allah S.w.t replies that even the mountain would not stand His sight.

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6:143 And when Moses arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, "My Lord, show me [Yourself] that I may look at You." [Allah] said, "You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it should remain in place, then you will see Me." But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He rendered it level, and Moses fell unconscious. And when he awoke, he said, "Exalted are You! I have repented to You, and I am the first of the believers."

And as the mountain collapsed, Musa ('a.s) repents for not being modest before Allah S.w.t.

In Surah Al-Anam ayat 6:103, Allah Swt categorically affirms that He cannot be seen in *basweerah*.

لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

Surah Al-A'nam, 6:103 Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision; and He is the Subtle, the Acquainted.

The mother of the believers Ayisha (r.a) asks Rasoolullah 's.a.s.whether he (s.a.s) has seen Allah S.w.t during his ('s.a.s) night journey of

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isra and m'raj. Rasoolullah ('s.a.s) replies, how could he ('s.a.s) have seen when it has been all Light only.

Allah S.w.t is the sole Truth, the Being. Every being emanates from Him and returns to Him. In Surah Ar-Rahman, Allah S.w.t says when everyone has been returned to Him, He remains as the eternal single Presence. *'Everyone who is on it has to perish. And your Lord's Countenance will remain, full of Majesty, full of Honour. (Surah 55:26 and 27).*

He guides whom He wishes, to His *Nur*. As Nafs of the servant finds the *Nur*, the Nafs and Ruh become one. The Nafs gets transformed into *Nur*. He is now the light of guidance. Others are guided by the understanding of amzal or examples in the holy Quran, derived from their interpretation.

CHAPTER 11

Al-Ihsan

Gist

The state of Ihsan as explained by Sasoolullah (s.a.s) is dealt with in this Chapter. It also touches upon the totality of the experience in which all human faculties function in perfect unison as a single entity for receipt of the divine 'Ilm.

1. Ihsan in Hadith

The state of Ihsan has been explained by the holy Prophet ('s.a.s), in answering the questions on the fundamentals of Din, asked by Angel, Jibreel ('a.s). Rasoolullah ('s.a.s) has answered them to teach Din to humanity. On Ihsan, it is replied as *Ibadah* as though seeing Allah S.w.t. And he ('s.a.s), adds that even if the devotee cannot see Allah S.w.t, Allah S.w.t is seeing him.

The above disclosure has three parts. i. Our acts or deeds of submission should be as though seeing Allah, ii. We cannot see Allah, and iii. Allah is seeing us.

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It's not possible for a servant of Allah to pretend to be seeing Him who is the Unseen. Any such imaginative conjecture about Allah would be tantamount to shirk. The aqal understands its limitation, ie, the fact in part ii statement. Whatever he sees are only creations of which he is a part. The aqal bears witness to the truth of this vision, proclaiming the first part of shahadah which is 'La ilaha', meaning there is no god. All around are only creations. It understands the limitation in the vision and becomes submissive. It withdraws and asks Nafs to see. As the Nafs is in control, the inner eye is opened. The qalb finds the *Nur* within, the Watcher. Nafs turns itself into the watcher and completes the shahada, saying 'Illallah'.

The dhikr '*La ilaha illallah*' is capable of placing a devotee in Ihsan. This dhikr as well as the dhikr of Allah Akbar are not chanted in the hereafter where one lives seeing the reality, in bliss.

2. Totality of Nafs

As the sadr expands the Rahmah of duniya meets with Rahmah of *Akhira*. The Nafs gets purified

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blessed with boundless mercy. The person transcends into the timeless state of Ihsan.

Al-Ihsan is the state of total Nafs where there is no separation of the spiritual and the physical faculties. The inner dialogue ceases. Ihsan is lost as the stresses on aqal break the unison of Nafs.

2. Ihsan in *Salah*

Salaat is prescribed obligatory because the first three *twarayiq* are incorporated in it. The devotee becomes the slave of Allah-His *abdu*. Further, in its fullest experience, the *abdu* is led into Ihsan as Nafs starts leading the prayer, other faculties following in 'suff'.

3. Identity of muhsin

In Ihsan, a patient aqal joins nafs. Arrogance seldom shows up its face. It is the state identified by humility and kindness in actions expressed by the Rahmah of qalb.

إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Surah Al-'Araf 7:56 ...Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the muhsinin..

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The Rahmah of Allah is close to the muhsins. The deeds while in Ihsan will be spontaneously righteous.

4. Righteous deeds

A righteous deed may not be recognised as a good deed from the ordinary view point arising out of aqal. It is made clear in the second episode connected with Al-Khidr where a boy is killed. This action saves three souls from being corrupted in course of time leading to perils of hell fire. But, according to the understanding of the aqal, it's an evil act unexpected of a person of divine 'Ilm. The obvious contradiction is due to the aqal's inefficiency of appreciating the reality of basweera. This has already been discussed in a foregoing chapter.

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CHAPTER 12

Basweerah

Gist

Allah S.w.t brings to Ihsan his favoured servant as He intends to teach His sublime knowledge to him. As the qalb sees what is the invisible in the state of Ihsan, it is called basweerah. The vision itself is 'Ilm because there is no timebound understanding is involved. This chapter explains various forms of the vision.

The internal vision in Ihsan is known as basweera. As viewing itself is knowing *basweerah* is 'Ilm. It is the sublime 'Ilm of the unseen past or the unseen future or both, received internally in the timeless state.

As the 'Ilm is transmitted to the aqal for action it is recognised or understood as insight or instinct. Allah Swt guides to His *Nur* if He wills to share His sublime knowledge to a favoured servant of Him. As he is guided he is in Ihsan receiving baswayira (pl.of *basweerah*). If the aqal interferes because of external stress or being impatient, *basweerah* is broken.

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Insights or baswayira transmitted outward to the people, is called Wahy.

1. 'Ilm as He Wills

We have seen that Al-Khidr has been teaching the aqal of Musa ('a.s) certain lessons, it cannot normally comprehend due to its limitations, set by Allah Swt, to the receipt of His divine knowledge. The aqal witnesses three incidents as Al-Khidr takes it along. It is one with the Nafs in unison with Ruh (Al-khidr) in total basweerah. The aqal sees what Al-Khidr does, but not the unseen 'Ilm. In the end, Al-Khidr explains the baswayira not understood by the aqal.

In the first incident where the boat is damaged, the Nafs takes up the responsibility for impairing it. The boat represents the Din of a small community having a Iman too weak (indicated by mention of 'the poor people') to check the aggression of the commanding community.

Allah Swt has blessed the community with His Din which contains means of its protection based on Iman, taqwa and Ilm which only needs to be

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implemented..It is our responsibility to safeguard the belief system from the transgression of evil forces.

Here, 'I', the Nafs takes the decision to make amends in the Din, without sacrificing the cardinal principle of tawheed, and allowing room for recovery at a conducive time later. The Nafs represents the Messenger of Allah. Thus, in the first incident, Allah Swt grants the freedom to the Messenger to act on his own accord. In case the Din has been strong, the Nafs will have taken a decision to fight jihad as we are shown in the *basweerah* of Muhammad sas narrated in Surah Ya Seen.

In the second incident where the boy has been slain, it is 'we' meaning the Nafs and Ruh together who take up the responsibility. The Ruh who is closer to Allah Swt, sees the prospects of substituting the nafs of the boy with one that is conscious of fitra. So they, together, decide to kill the vulnerable nafs of a person who has a mature mind and a wise intellect. The aqal leading the nafs accounts for his present level of Iman.

The environment is filled with evil. The person is a believer who gets easily influenced by the

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surroundings which are beyond his control. Here, Allah Swt does not grant permission to His Messenger to take a decision on the basis of revealed *basweerah* as he can go wrong.

The interpretation of three nafs being saved by killing the boy may also be acceptable. However, the interpretation restricting to one nafs seems more suitable as the reference to 'boy' symbolises nafs. Moreover, Allah Swt has said no one will carry the burden of another. One's faith is his individual responsibility.

In the third incident, where the wall is repaired even without remuneration, it has been revealed that it is Allah Swt who gave the command to do so. It is 'your Lord' and not we, the Nafs and the Ruh, which took the decision. The wall was hiding treasures belonging to two orphans ie, the amalu swalih deposited by the father who was salih. In Surah Al-Asr, Allah Swt says believers who do amalu swalih will not be losers. Allah Swt has promised paradise for the believers who do righteous deeds. وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

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Surah Al-Baqara, 2:25 And give good tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds that they will have gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow.

Had their father been alive they would have received proper guidance. He Swt, Who has taken upon Himself Rahmah as responsibility, would not allow the orphan children of a salih to be led astray. So, Allah Swt commands His Messenger to protect them from the bad influence of a corrupt society till they attain maturity. Here, no power is granted to Al-Khidr for making the decision.

The guidance based on the 'Ilm of the Prophet 's.a.s form part of the ahadith. That Ilm is from the holy Quran, Allah Swt has said obey Allah; obey Rasool. So, it is, eventually, 'Ilm from Allah.

The guidance that is based on the Prophet's ('s.a.s) 'Ilm in conjunction with the 'Ilm of the unseen received through Ruh constitutes ahadithu qudsi. They are not readily traceable in the Quran.

The guidance from Allah Swt, revealed in His words constitute Wahy. They are the ayaat of the Quran brought by Jibreel ('a.s).

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2. *Basweerah* of Muhammad s.a.s

In Surah Ya seen, Allah Swt asks the holy Prophet, Muhammad ('s.a.s) to cite the example of the city (ayaat 36:13 to 36:20,) which has been destroyed for having rejected three apostles of Allah Swt.

Allah Swt firstly teaches Nabi Muhammad sas the lesson through *basweerah*. What the Prophet sas has seen and known is revealed as amzal in ayaat for our understanding.

a. Human Prophets

إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَهُكُم
مُرْسَلُونَ

Ya Sin, 36:14 When We sent to them two but they denied them, so We strengthened them with a third, and they said, "Indeed, we are messengers to you.

The people of the city rejected the apostles saying they are only humans like them (ayat 15). Ordinary people are not able to comprehend the inner state of

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the Prophet with the help of a lower faculty that is incompetent

b. Omen of the city

In ayat 15 and 16, the apostles make a sincere appeal (fulfilling mission of the 1st apostle). In ayat no.17, they address the intellect pointing out that their selfless mission has meant only good for the people. (rational approach indicating mission of the second apostle). But, the people consider the apostles as bad omen and threaten to stone them. The apostles reply that they themselves are their bad omen (teaches 'Ilm symbolised by the third apostle).

Allah Swt teaches that fate of a city or town has been decided by its people when they choose to reject Allah's apostles. City is also the mizal for the individual Nafs consisting of physical and spiritual beings, and therefore, the destiny of a Nafs is his own making. وَمَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ جُنْدٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا كُنَّا مُنْزِلِينَ

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Ya Sin, 36:28 And We did not send down upon his people after him any soldiers from the heaven, nor would We have done so.

He Swt says that if He decides to destroy a town, He does not send an army but only a 'Shout' from Him would do.

It is to be noted by contrast that He Swt has sent an army of Angels to assist Rasoolullah sas in the battle of Badr, against Maccan mushriks, as He Swt does not intend destruction of Macca.

c. Three-in-one Prophet

The *basweerah* narrated in 'Ya Seen' teaches the mission of Muhammad ('s.a.s) as having three-fold responsibility. Rasoolullah ('s.a.s) is the Guide to achieving maturity of mind, judgement of intellect and 'Ilm of Nafs. He is *ghulukul adheem*, of excellent character- the exquisite model to every one. He ('s.a.s) is three rasools in one. He ('s.a.s) is the Prophet of religion (representing Din). Secondly, he ('s.a.s) is the Prophet of Khilafah (representing

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Hukkm). Thirdly, he ('s.a.s) is the Prophet of Ulahmah (representing 'Ilm).

d. Wahy from *Basweerah*

The man from the farthest part of the city addresses the city dwellers as 'O! my people!'. The people of Macca are likewise closer to the qalb of Nabi 's.a.s and hence, are of the 'city' (Nafs), worthy of being addressed as 'O! my people'.

Man from the farthest end of the city is a muhsin on an errand of da'wa. He is delivering the ayaat of Allah Swt and is full of sympathy for the disbelievers, wanting to earnestly connect with them with Rahmah. Through ayaat 36:20-36:25, Allah Swt reveals the kindness and nobility involved in da'wa of a muhsin using spiritual insights from a qalb full of Rahmah.

اتَّبِعُوا مَنْ لَا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

*Ya Sin 36:21 Follow those who do not ask of you
[any] payment, and they are [rightly] guided.*

He preaches with kindness, wisdom and l'Im. Allah Swt is presenting the model of a da' wee.

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Since *basweerah* is directed towards the people outside it turns into Wahy which are ayaat of the holy scripture or holy Quran in the case of Muhammad 's.a.s. Wahy is personified as a muhsin carrying out da'wa on the ayaat.

وَمَا لِي لَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

Surah Ya Sin, 36:22 And why should I not worship He who created me and to whom you will be returned?

أَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً إِنْ يُرَدَّنِ الرَّحْمَنُ بِضُرٍّ لَا تُغْنِ عَنِّي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُنْقِذُونِ

36:23 Should I take other than Him [false] deities [while], if the Most Merciful intends for me some adversity, their intercession will not avail me at all, nor can they save me?

إِنِّي إِذَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

36:24 Indeed, I would then be in manifest error.

إِنِّي آمَنْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمَعُونِ

36:25 Indeed, I have believed in your Lord, so listen to me."

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Wahy (as the muhsin) appears before the people of the city as the third Prophet with 'Ilm has been deployed as the first two are unable to make any progress. They have been trying to impart guidance using methods filled with love and affection (from iman) and hikma or wisdom (from taqwa).

The preacher is slain while conducting da'wa. Allah Swt includes the da'wee amongst the Shuhadah, and right away admits into paradise. 'Ilm turns out to be the first casualty in a non-accepting society. 'Ilm, thus, is liable to be martyred ahead of other components of the Din. In a belligerent society, Muhsins, lead the Shuhdah. It is in the excellent mould, Al-Muzawwir has chosen to shape them.

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُو

36:26 It was said, "Enter Paradise." He said, "I wish my people could know

Rasoolullah s.a.s had a different mission of transforming the world as the end-time Prophet. He was ordained to take to Hijrah to avoid the onslaught on 'Ilm ie, the Wahy.

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3. Instincts

Baswayira are recognised as instincts as they are received by aqal. If one is not able to comprehend them, it is as though he is blind.

The Wahy received by Rasoolullah s.a.s are meant to become the insights of believers.

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ عَمِيَ
فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيفٍ

.Al-Anam 6:104 There have come to you baswayirah from your Lord. So whoever will see does so for [the benefit of] his soul, and whoever is blind [does harm] against it. And [say], "I am not a guardian over you

Whoever makes use of those insights, do so for the guidance of his own nafs. Such nafs will ascend levels of 'Ilm and if Allah S.w.t Wills, he may attain its supreme height that is of baswayirah. Those who reject will have a nafs that is blind by itself.

4. *Basweerah* in Surah Al-Qasas

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In Surah Al-Qasas, Musa ('a.s) who is a muhsin, falls into ghafla subjecting himself to the attack of Shaitan who targets the Nafs. He ('a.s) becomes a divided personality. The Nafs has tried to regain its control for bringing internal composure. But, he has already succumbed to Shaitan and lost hukku, the rational faculty. Shaitan makes strong offensive tactics using desires of the mind involving the senses. And the Nafs having a low morale would have been irrecoverably lost to Shaitan. At this juncture, Allah S.w.t sends 'a man from the farthest part of the city' with message to Nafs (Musa ('a.s)) to rescue himself. The Nafs becomes aware and withdraws. Shaitan loses his interest having lost sight of the Nafs. Thus, the atmosphere is set for aqal to regain leadership from the faculties of whims and desires.

The man with message represents the spiritual insight. The qalb is the farthest part of the city that is the totality of Nafs. Allah Swt has brought Musa ('a.s) to Ihsan. His nafs witnesses taqwa joining Rahmah, and as a consequence it is connected to the qalb by a tunnel of *Nur*. It breaks before nafs could find its totality. Yet, he ('a.s) receives *basweerah* for rescuing

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the nafs from destruction even as his nafs has not had the favour of meeting Ruh.

5. *Basweerah* of- Rasools vs muhsins

Messenger of Allah Swt who is in Ihsan witnesses the Ruh within the qalb. This, Allah Swt has described as the phenomenon of *Nurun Ala Nur*, for our understanding. The Nafs of Allah's Messenger is an integral whole with self identifying all of its members.

Allah Swt has said He may guide anyone to His *Nur* as He wills. The totality of *basweerah* may be granted to any of His favoured servants, even if that servant is not a Messenger. However, the I'Im of a Messenger would be far superior in keeping with the heaviness of the assignment. In Surah An-Najm, we find Muhammad (s.a.s) experiencing the strongest of *baswayirah* supported by Jibreel a.s (Surah An-Najm 53:5-18). The internal eye has been seeing a vision of greatest power that equips Rasoolullah to carry out the mission of the end time Prophet for whole of humanity.

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We have already seen three different types of 'Ilm, in terms of assignment of responsibility, being granted to Al-Khidr as warranted by the changing circumstances.

In Sura Al-Jinn, Rasoolullah ('s.a.s) tells the Jinn kind that Allah Swt may divulge any secret knowledge that is with Him to a chosen Messenger. Yet, he could be banned from disclosing such unseen part of the *qadr*. The Angels would be keeping watch over the Messenger.

عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا

Surah Al-Jinn 72:26 [[He is] Knower of the unseen,
and He does not disclose His [knowledge of the]
unseen to anyone

إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ
خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا

72:27 Except whom He has approved of
messengers, and indeed, He sends before each
messenger and behind him observers

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It can be seen that Musa (a.s) is blessed with *basweerah* even before his Prophethood. The tussle in the town and the insight to rescue his life by resorting to Hijra are part of the *basweerah* prior to His adornment of Prophet's garment. Allah Swt has put him in the state of Ihsan although he has not had full self- knowledge. The implication is that the even though state of Ihsan is achievable by a nafs as Allah Swt wills, the I'Im of *basweerah* will be limited if unsupported by Ruh. In the case of Apostles, they are further strengthened by specially authorised Angels, like Jibreel a.s in the case of Muhammad (s.a.s) and 'Isa ('a.s).

The baswayirah narrated in Surah Ya Seen and Al-Kahf are part of the teachings of Allah Swt to the Nabi Muhammad 's.a.s and Nabi Musa a.s respectively. The *basweerah* narrated in Al-Qasas, Allah Swt may bestow on any Nafs of

Ihsan as He Swt wills. It is these insights that are used in interpreting ayaat mutashabiha containing amzal.

6. Ayaat muhukmah and mutashabiha

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The holy Quran explains everything through two kinds of ayaat- ayaat muhkamat that constitute its heart, the ummul kitab, and ayaat mutashabihat, the obscure verses camouflaging 'Ilm. Ayaat muhkumat are of plain guidance about which there cannot be any doubt. Being the heart of the holy Quran, they define the Din.

The amzal or examples are in ayaat mutashabihat requiring interpretation. These ayaat look familiar to aqal's understanding, but belong to the higher realm of 'Ilm . They mean differently from what is comprehended by the aqal. Ayaat mutashabiha are understood by the aqal of ordinary people as they are interpreted by people of 'Ilm. They're, however, known by the Nafs of Muhsinin led by *Nur* of Allah. It is their direct 'Ilm.

7. Spirit of Instinct or Insight from Ruh

Insights are spirits (angels) of 'Ilm descending upon the qalb. Allah Swt sends such spiritual insights from the Ruh to the Nafs of a muhsin. They

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are 'Ilm to be acted upon by the Nafs and has no power over the nafs unless Allah Swt intends them to be Nasarullah, the spirits of help.

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ

*Surah An-Nasr 110:1 When comes Allah's help and
victory*

8. Physical insights

The urge to pursue external knowledge belongs to the nafs. It is prompted by *Nur* within the creations, visible or invisible. Physical knowledge pursued under the guidance of a leading Nafs is based on haq and most fruitful. The products of expeditions are blessed with Rahmah. The community grasps corals. Otherwise, it depends on the person making use of their fruits.

As the exploration deepens the researcher receives physical insights when he is in tandem with the qalb which is the store house of knowledge. The insights visit qalb as jinns of knowledge descend upon it.

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These dots are used by aqal for connecting with lines of knowledge at hand to open up new vistas.

What the qalb has accumulated alone is reflected in the understanding of aqal. A disbeliever's qalb burries the fitra beyond reach of its fatigued nafs.

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ
أَذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا

فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي
الصُّدُورِ

Surah Al-Haj 22:46 Have they not journeyed in the land that their hearts might understand and their ears might listen? For indeed it is not the eyes that are blinded; it is rather the hearts in the breasts that are rendered blind..

Disbelievers, with their closed qalb and ears, can see and understand only the the physical ruins when they journey in the abandoned towns destroyed by Allah. They are incapable of knowing the underlying spiritual cause. It is only when the qalb is open (*basweerah*), it sees the reality of unseen past.

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On creation of Adam, Allah Swt commanded Iblis to prostrate before him, indicating that the jinns would be put to the service of man whose functional field is delimited to earth. It is part of their *Ibadah* to be in the service of humankind in their permissible higher expeditions beyond the limits of earth. The followers of Iblis, the shayaatin, lead astray people of both species corrupting both worlds. In Surah Ar-Rahman, subsequent to the verse symbolising 'Ilm as well as material knowledge, He Swt refers to the creation of the man and the creation of jinn.

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ

*Surah Ar-Rahman 55:14 He created man from clay
like [that of] pottery.*

وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ

*55:15 And He created the jinn from a smokeless
flame of fire.*

فَيَايَ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

*55:16 So which of the favors of your Lord would you
deny?*

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It is indicated that the man and the jinn are created to serve as clay and fire do for the Potter. The clay may be turned into ringing pot in the fire or glowing bowl of 'Ilm in the *Nur* according as the path chosen by nafs.

9. Insights of Poets

Allah S.w.t, in Surah Al-Shuarah, says that on sinful nafs Shayatin descend with lies. The closed qalb lends its ears to the whispers of Shaitan.

تَنْزَلُ عَلَى كُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ

Surah Al-Shuarah 26:222 *They descend upon all
sinful self-deceivers*

يُلْقُونَ السَّمْعَ وَأَكْثُرُهُمْ كَاذِبُونَ

26:223 *who readily lend ear [to every falsehood],
and most of whom lie to others as well.*

Similarly, the poets (except those who have faith and do righteous deeds (22:227)) are prone to the deception of Shayatin. Their world of imagination is created by insights of whispers of Shaitan. They wander in whims and fancies getting others to

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follow and loiter in those valleys of falsehood and hypocrisy imparted by imagination.

وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ

26:224 *And as for the poets [they, too, are prone to deceive themselves: and so, only] those who are lost in grievous error would follow them.*

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ

(26:225) *Art thou not aware that they roam confusedly through all the valleys [of words and thoughts],*

وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ

(26:226) *and that they [so often] say what they do not do [or feel]?*

10. Pearls and corals from two seas

The physical as well as the spiritual insights both belong to Allah's bounty of pearls and corals for man from the Rahmah of physical and spiritual seas. In

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Surah Ar-Rahman, Allah S.w.t speaks of two waters merging with one another. But because of the burzaq of the sadr we are unaware.

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ

*Ar-Rahman 55:19 He released the two seas, meeting
[side by side];*

بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ

*55:20 Between them is a barrier [so] neither of them
transgresses.*

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

*55:21 So which of the favors of your Lord would you
deny?*

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ

55:22 From both of them emerge pearl and coral.

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

*55:23 So which of the favors of your Lord would you
deny?*

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The Rahmah of the material world merges with the Rahmah of *Akhira* as sadr expands in *Nur*, generated by the 'Ilm, the holy Quran being the source. Allah S.w.t is Ar-Rahmani Ar-Raheem. Sadr is the barrier that prevents nafs from experiencing the merger because sadr functions within time.

11. Amzal

'Ilm belongs to the spiritual being which the aqal will not be able to know. Allah S.w.t uses symbolic language using metaphors to transfer 'Ilm into the format of interpretation, it is capable of handling. The method is called amzal or the method of metaphors which are stored in memory. They are used in da'wa for the understanding of the people.

12. The trijunction

The nafs in Ihsan is at the tri-junction of *majmaul bahrain* where two seas of time meet at the shore of the divine Present. Al-Khidr in Ihsan is ever there. It's not to be searched for, in any land of space or time. Man is the rock-hard sadr that Allah Swt, if He

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Wills, would transcend to Al-Khidr-the pinnacle of 'Ilm.

An-Nur 24:35 يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ
الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

The samavaat and the earth are the expression of His 'Ilm, flowing from the *qadr* of His Attributes. The holy Quran is the textual *qadr* of His Attributes Which are the most Beaautiful Names. Human aqal is not capable of describing it even if the oceans are turned into ink and the trees into pens.

وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَامٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

Surah Luqman 31:27 And if whatever trees upon the earth were pens and the sea [was ink], replenished thereafter by seven [more] seas, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.

But, the human nafs is provided with the capability of holding His Qalam that contains His Words. It happens as Allah Swt Wills, leading his servant to

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His *Nur*, but only when he is truthful in his *bayan* of the holy Book.

When a servant is guided to *Nur*, he sees Allah's *Nur* as part of himself whereby he is transformed into *Nur*. He interprets Allah's *amzal* to the people who understand them through *aqal*. Those led to the *Nur*, sail on the waters of *Rahmah* from *Akhira*, and others led by the understanding of *amzal* sail on the waters of *Rahmah* of this *duniya*. Both sail to the same destination, the direction of the former being clear and sweet, while that of the latter, murky and bitter. The ships of faith belong to Him. They are pegged to *Rahmah* as mountains are pegged to earth.

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ

*55:24 And to Him belong the ships [with sails]
elevated in the sea like mountains.*

Allah Swt is Al-Basit wal Qabit. He expands His 'Ilm as *Rahmah*. He reduces His 'Ilm into *Nur*. The *Nur* in the *Rahmah* beckons to be known by the human *nafs*. Allah leads to His *Nur* whom He wills. And the favoured enters His *Rahmah*.

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يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ

Surah Al-Insan 76:31 He admits whom He wills into
His Rahmah;

Astaghfirullah...
