A SUFI STUDY of HADITH

Haqiqat al-Tariqa min as-Sunna al-Aniqa
Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi

TRANSLATED BY SHAYKH YUSUF TALAL DELORENZO
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
A SUFI STUDY of ḤADITH
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
A SUFI STUDY of ḤADITH

Ḥaqīqat al-Ṭariqa min al-Sunna al-ʿAnīqa

MAWLĀNĀ ASHRAF ʿALĪ THĀNAWĪ

Translated by
Shaykh Yusuf Talal De Lorenzo

TURATH PUBLISHING
For My Sheikh

Mawlānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Binnori,

at whose behest I translated this work.

May Allah illuminate his resting place and
elevate his status in Jannah. Āmin.
MAWLĀṆĀ ASHRAF 'ALĪ THĀṆĀWĪ was born in the village of Thānā Bha­wan, not far to the south of Delhi, in the Indian district of Muzaffar Nagar, in the year 1863. He had his early schooling in the same village and, at age thirteen or fourteen, began his formal education a few miles away at the institution known as Dār al-'Ulūm at Deoband with some of the most gifted scholars of Islam ever to appear in the subcontinent. ¹

By the age of twenty-one, Mawlānā Thānāwī had satisfied his teachers of his facility with the classical disciplines of Islam and was graduated. In that year he became a teacher at Kānpur² and, by written recommendation of his teacher at Deoband, Mawlānā Rashid Gangohi, was accepted as a spiritual disciple to Hājī ‘Imdād Allāh, the sheikh of the Chishti order of Sufis who had sought refuge in Makka after the unsuccessful attempt to dislodge the British imperialists from India in 1857. At the end of his twenty-first year, Mawlānā Thānāwī himself went to Makka to perform the Ḥajj, and to benefit from the spiritual care of his sheikh. ³

On his return to Kānpur, Mawlānā Thānāwī busied himself with teaching and writing, alongside his spiritual exercises of dhikr and shughal, until the latter compelled him to seek once again the companionship of his sheikh at Makka. Thus, he traveled a second time to Makka where he remained for several years in the company of Hājī ‘Imdād Allāh. Shortly after Mawlānā Thānāwī returned to Kānpūr in 1897, Hājī ‘Imdād Allāh wrote to him with the following instructions:

2. Ibid., Mawlānā Thānāwī taught at both the Fayd-e-'Ām Madrasa and at Madrasa Jāmi’ al-'Ulūm in Kānpūr over a period of some fourteen years.
It is better that you go back to Thānā Bhawan. In fact, I hope that a great multitude of people will benefit from you both spiritually and academically. There, you shall bring our mosque and madrasa back to life.

On this auspicious note, Mawlānā left Kanpur and returned to his native Thānā Bhawan. True to the hopes of his sheikh, Mawlānā Thānawī revived the mosque and the madrasa at Thānā Bhawan and, for the next fifty years benefited the academic and spiritual lives of multitudes of subcontinent Muslims.

The Nature of Islamic Education in the Subcontinent

It is essential at this juncture that the reader understands something of the nature of the training and education received by Mawlānā Thānawī. In fine, the ideal advanced by Islam with regard to the education and upbringing of the individual Muslim is the achievement of moral and spiritual equilibrium. The Qur'ān says: “We have established you as a middlemost nation” (2:143). Thus, the objectives of the founders of Dār al-Ūlūm at Deoband included the blending of book learning with character building, of Shari'ā with tariqah, of the fiqh of Abū Hanifa with authentic ḥadīth, of the opinions of the pious predecessors with the revivalist scholars of succeeding ages and so on, in an attempt to tread a middle path between the various Islamic intellectual and spiritual trends and schools of thought.

As the Shari'ā and knowledge of the Qur'ān and the Sunna are the basis of all Islamic intellectual activity, the emphasis at Dār al-Ūlūm was on the teaching of the classical Islamic disciplines, beginning with Arabic grammar and proceeding with increasing complexity through subjects like rhetoric, logic, philosophy, jurisprudence, theology, and the sciences of the Qur'ān and the Sunna. While the student was engaged in the acquisition of these subjects, he was subjected to a rigorous daily schedule of classroom attendance, group-study sessions, and congregational worship in the mosque. Nearly all students boarded in the madrasa hostels or in the homes of their teachers, and there was very little time for leisurely pursuits.

The Place of Tariqa in the Madrasa System of Education

During the period of study (taḥṣīl, or acquisition), however, only the formal and essential modes of worship were encouraged. Nonetheless, it was carefully impressed upon the students that after graduation they were to seek the spiritual guidance of an accomplished sheikh. Nor were the students encouraged to prefer one tariqa to another. The important thing in the selection of a sheikh was his adherence to the Shari'ā.4

4 For Mawlānā Thānawī’s own teaching on the subject see his Qaḍ al-Sabil, “The Third Teaching.”
Indeed, to the ‘Ulama’ of Deoband the value of taşawwuf was in its translating knowledge into action, and learning into deeds. One did not pledge allegiance to a sheikh in order to become a Sufi, but in order to become a practising Muslim. It was not escapist mysticism that the ‘Ulama’ of Deoband were seeking for their students, but the way to ihsân or the complementary inner state which gives depth and added meaning to the outer state of Islam. Essentially, the revivalist movement that began in Deoband and which aimed at remedying excesses in Indian Muslim society, was propelled by a group of scholars who added emotional fervor in their practice of Islam to their deep understanding of its sources and principles. It was in this atmosphere of learning and devotion that Mawlânâ Ashraf ‘Alî Thanâawi grew and prospered.

Mawlânâ’s Writings
Mawlânâ Thanâawi’s most obvious contribution to the Muslim community of the subcontinent was his incredible output of literature on Islamic subjects.

Jâlâl al-Dîn Suyûtî (d. 911 AH) is generally known as the most prolific author in the history of Islamic scholarship, and his writings are numbered at over five hundred.5 Mawlânâ Thanâawi’s writings have been variously numbered between six and eight hundred.6 In addition, he maintained a voluminous daily correspondence with his khâlîfs and murîds, and his published lectures and public addresses number in the hundreds. Moreover, Mawlânâ’s gifted disciples undertook hundreds of other works at Mawlânâ’s insistence, and with his guidance, so that any definite accounting of the number of his works is next to impossible.

The subject matter of Mawlânâ’s works included all the classical Islamic disciplines. Mawlânâ’s Bayân al-Qurân, in three volumes, is undoubtedly the most erudite of all commentaries on the Qur’ân in the Urdu language. At the other end of the spectrum of Qur’anic scholarship, Mawlânâ’s Jamal al-Qurân became the standard textbook for students of tajwid, or the science of Qur’anic recitation, throughout the subcontinent; and remains so to this day. Mawlânâ’s other works on the various Qur’anic sciences are as numerous as they are instructive.

Likewise, Mawlânâ Thanâawi wrote with authority on subjects like hadîth, fiqh, ‘uṣûl al-fiqh, ‘aqidah, logic, philosophy, rhetoric, grammar, and much else. In the field of taşawwuf, however, the Mawlânâ’s writings are particularly interesting for their scholarship and variety. Among the works which best represent the breadth

of his vision are his *Sirat-e-Hallâj*, a biography of Mašûr al-Hallâj and an exposition of his teachings on *tašawwuf*. *Sharh Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, *Kalîd-i-Mâthnâwî*, *'Iršân-e-Hâfîz*, *Masâ'il-e-Sulûk*, *al-Takashshuf*, and *al-Tâsharruf*. These latter two works will be the subject of detailed discussion later on in this introduction.

**Mawlânâ’s Perception of Tašawwuf**

There is no denying the importance of Mawlânâ’s written work. Yet, of no less importance to the Muslims of the subcontinent was Mawlânâ Thânawi’s spiritual guidance. It had become a lamentable fact of life in India that *tašawwuf* had degenerated to such a degree that there was little to distinguish a yogi from a Sufi. The *tariqas*, or Sufi orders had become social clubs and sources of income for the chosen few. Indeed, in most orders *khilâfah* or spiritual leadership had become a matter of inheritance, like the feudal lordship, which was the bane of Indian society.

Mawlânâ Thânawi’s contribution was to re-establish in the public mind the connection between *Sharî‘a* and *tariqa*. This he accomplished to a certain extent in his writings. However, the real breakthrough in this potent field for the reform of the individual and society was made by Mawlânâ Thânawi, the sheikh and *murshid*, not by Mawlânâ Thânawi, the author and scholar.

The difference should be easy to understand. It is one thing to spread the word, and another thing entirely to be an example of the living word. Mawlânâ ʿAlî Thânawi went a step further. As the result of his attention and guidance, scores of others themselves became living examples of the word of Islam and, in turn, influenced hundreds and thousands of Muslims. The register of Mawlânâ Thânawi’s spiritual successors (*khalifahs*) includes some of the most accomplished, learned, pious, and spiritually influential Muslims of the century.⁷

In bringing the Islamic ideal of equilibrium to the field of spiritual guidance, Mawlânâ Thânawi established a number of criteria for his disciples. To begin with, all disciples were classified as belonging to one or another of the following four categories:⁸ (1) scholar and single, (2) non-scholar and single, (3) scholar and married, (4) non-scholar and married.

The reasons for such a division would have to do with the kind of opportunity a disciple had for attention to spiritual disciplines and exercises and the kind of understanding he/she brought to them. What is significant is the Mawlânâ’s acceptance of the circumstances and responsibilities of his followers, and his attempt to reasonably accommodate all those interested in pursuing a spiritual relationship. Thereafter, disciples were classified as possessing limited, average,
or advanced abilities, and for each group separate sets of disciplines and exercises, as well as reading matter, were prescribed.⁹

One exceptionally lucid work, also entitled Ḥaqīqat al-ṭariqa, or The Truth About the Way, was required reading for all of Mawlānā's disciples at the time of their entering the Sufi order.

As this work is quite brief, and yet sheds a good deal of light on Mawlānā Thānawi's teachings, it is translated here into English for the benefit of the reader.

ḤAQĪQAT AL-ṬARIQA: THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WAY

The Essence of Inner Conduct

1. Neither kashf (visions) nor kariimah (minor miracles) are required or expected.
2. On the Day of Judgment no one (other than yourself) will be responsible for your salvation.
3. There is no promise that your worldly affairs will improve (as a result of your becoming a disciple of this Sufi order), or through your tying talismans or charms around your necks, or that you will win court cases, or have an increase in income, or be cured of disease, or be granted knowledge of what is in the future.
4. Your behaviour will not be reformed merely through the attentions of your sheikh, nor will you cease to think evil thoughts. You will not automatically engage in worship without even having to resolve to do so. And your knowledge and understanding of the Qurān and Islam will not necessarily register any sort of increase.
5. There is no promise that you will attain any inner spiritual states, or even that you will find pleasure in the performance of worship or spiritual exercises, or that you will not be beset by alien thoughts while in worship. There is no guarantee that you will wash your sins away with your tears of remorse.
6. In your performance of spiritual exercises you need never see mystic lights or hear voices from the Unseen.
7. You may never have a sublime or meaningful dream or receive guidance from above.

On the contrary the real objective is to please the Almighty, and the way to achieve this objective is by complete adherence to the Sharī'ah.

Certain of the precepts of the Shari‘a have to do with the believer's outer state, like prayer, fasting, ḥajj, zakāh, marriage, divorce, discharging marital responsibilities, oaths and their expiation, buying and selling, legal procedures and giving witness, bequests, inheritance, meeting and socializing, greeting and entertaining, and so on. Knowledge of these matters is termed fiqh.

Certain others have to do with the inner state, such as one's love for the Almighty, awe of Him, remembrance of Him, acceptance of His decree, or one's decreasing love of the worldly, or lack of greed, or being conscientious in worship, or sincere in religious matters, or one's lack of contempt for others, or lack of conceit, or having control over one's temper, and so on. These matters are termed sulāk, or inner conduct.

Then, in the same way that a Muslim is to obey the rules of fiqh in his/her outward behaviour, he/she must also obey the rules of inner conduct. Moreover, it is usually as a result of some inner imbalance that irregularities occur in one's behaviour or practice of Islam. For example, a decrease in love for the Almighty might result in a lack of attention to daily prayers, or to one's saying them hurriedly. Likewise, as a result of avarice, one might not give zakāh or go on Ḫajj. Or, owing to one's self-aggrandizement, or to one's inability to check one's anger, one may commit injustice on another or usurp his/her rights. Even if one were to recognise one's fault, and then take care to correct it, the fact remains that unless some sort of inner rectification takes place, one will be sure to lapse in one's efforts to correct the problem.

Thus, for the above reasons, it should be obvious that the rectification of inner conduct is essential. Yet, the problem is that inner ailments are difficult to detect and, even if they are detected, it is no easy matter to prescribe a proper cure for them. In fact, even if the cure were to be known, the taking of the medicine is nearly always distasteful.

For these reasons an accomplished sheikh is required; one who will be able to recognise and diagnose such spiritual maladies and then prescribe for them the appropriate cure. Moreover, the sheikh should have the power to create within his disciple the ability to rectify himself/herself. For this purpose, the sheikh will require the disciple to engage in certain spiritual exercises and disciplines, such as dhikr, which in itself is a form of worship.

Basically, then, the disciple will have to do two things. The first is essential, and that is that he/she will have to adhere to the inner and outer precepts of the Shari‘a. The second is recommended, and that is that he/she engages in much dhikr. The result of the first will be the attainment of Allāh's pleasure, and closeness to Him; while the result of the second will be increase in Allāh's pleasure and closeness to Him.
This, then, is the essence of the way to inner conduct, and its essential objectives.  

Taṣawwuf and the Study of Ḥadiths
From the foregoing, the reader will have gained a clear understanding of the kind of taṣawwuf taught and practised by Mawlānā Thānawī. Further insight into his perceptions in general about taṣawwuf may be had from the author’s own introduction to this volume, and to his numerous works on the subject. Yet, however one may attempt to characterize Mawlānā Thānawī’s brand of taṣawwuf, by calling it reformist, fundamentalist, puritanical, or whatever, the fact is that it was, above all, Shari’a oriented. As the second source of the Shari’a of Islam, the Ḥadiths of the Prophet, Allah bless him and give him peace, play a tremendously important role in defining and clarifying the principles and practices of taṣawwuf. It was for this reason that Mawlānā Thānawī turned his attention to writing taṣawwuf related commentary on Ḥadith literature.

Taṣawwuf Related Commentary on Ḥadiths
It is interesting to note, furthermore, that the early Sufi writers, if ever they did comment on Ḥadiths, did so only in the context of their discussion of other subjects. Thus, while the classical Sufi writers like al-Qushairi, al-Muḥāsibī, Abū Ṭalīb al-Makki and al-Ghazzālī may have quoted profusely from Ḥadith literature, they never wrote separate works of commentary on Ḥadiths.

In fact, the reputation of Sufis with regard to Ḥadiths is somewhat tarnished. The reason for this, of course, was the admission by several well-known Sufis that they had actually fabricated Ḥadīths and then ascribed them to the Prophet, Allah bless him and give him peace, albeit with the best of intentions. Ibn Nuʿaym’s Ḥilyat al-ʿAwliya’ contains several examples of such Sufi-narrators, as do most of the works on mawḍūʿat or spurious Ḥadiths, and the works devoted to ḍuʿafā’, or the biographies of weak and unreliable narrators.

At the same time, some of the greatest scholars of Ḥadiths were themselves Sufis of one order or another. Hadith masters like Sufyān al-Thawrī, Ibn al-Mubārak, Abū Ṭahir al-Silāfī and others come immediately to mind. Later on, Ḥadith scholars of the calibre of al-Nawāwī, al-Suyūṭī, and al-ʿIrāqī were renowned as Sufis. Indeed, Hindustan had a tradition of producing Sufi scholars of Ḥadiths, like al-Ṣaghānī, Sheikh ʿAbd al-Haq Muḥaddith Dehlawī, Shāh Wali Allāh, Sheikh Ṭahir al-Pattani, Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, and many others. In fact, of Sheikh Nizām al-ʿAwliya’, perhaps the most famous of all Indian Sufis, it was written that he had

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not only read al-Šaghānī’s collection of ḥadīth entitled Mashāriq al-Anwār, but that he had committed the entire work to memory as well.\footnote{Mir Khurd, Siy¯ar al-‘Awilâya’, Urdu trans. by ‘Ijz al-Haqq Quddusi (Lahore: Markazi Urdu Board, 1980) p. 206.}

Certainly, the ‘Ulama’ of Deoband were the inheritors of this tradition. Mawlānā Ya’qūb, Mawlānā Gangohtī, Mawlānā Qāsim Nānautwī, Sheikh al-Hind, Mawlānā Anwar Kashmirī, Mawlānā Madānī, and Mawlānā Thānawī himself were all examples of Sufi muhaddithīn. Finally, scores if not hundreds of Mawlānā Thānawī’s students found fame as scholars of the ḥadīth sciences.

Mawlānā’s Works of Commentary on Ḥadīths

It is in the works of Mawlānā Thānawī alone, of all the scholars mentioned in the paragraphs above, that we find works exclusively devoted to taṣawwuf related commentary on ḥadīth texts. Among these works are the present volume, Ḥaqiqat al-ṭariqa min al-sunna al-‘anīqa, or The Truth About the Way from the Refined Sunna. In the interest of both brevity and clarity, this title has been revised by the translator to A Sufi Study of Hadiths. This work is actually a part of a much larger work entitled al-Takashshuf ‘an muhimmat al-taṣawwuf or Revealing the Important Aspects of Taṣawwuf. Another work of Mawlānā’s commentary is entitled al-Tasharruf bi ma‘rifah aḥādīth al-taṣawwuf. Before discussing these two books, however, it will be useful to note another important point.

In the monthly magazine of his Sufi order, al-Hādī, Mawlānā published a short article entitled “A Notice Regarding the Removal of Ambiguity Concerning Masā’il al-Taṣawwuf, al-Takashshuf, and al-Tasharruf,” in which he wrote:

\textit{Taṣawwuf} is a name for the development of the inner and outer aspects of the individual, and there is not a single Qur’ānic verse or ḥadīth text which is not in some way related to it. So, in every verse, and in every ḥadīth, one or another matter having to do with taṣawwuf is sure to be mentioned. However, in these works I have dealt only with those matters which are directly related with what is obviously a question of taṣawwuf, and that is how I have made selections of ḥadiths on which to comment.\footnote{al-Hādī, Rabi‘ II, 1352 AH.}

Both al-Tasharruf and Ḥaqiqat al-ṭariqa are collections of selected ḥadiths in which the original Arabic texts are reproduced alongside their Urdu translations, traced to their sources of origin among the major classical collections of ḥadiths, and then commented upon, in Urdu, for their taṣawwuf content. Furthermore, in Ḥaqiqat al-ṭariqa, the chapter headings are given in Persian.
The classical collection upon which Ḥaqīqat al-ṣariḥa is based is Taysir al-wuṣūl ʿilā al-aḥadīth Jāmiʿ al-Uṣūl, by al-Shaybānī, which is itself an abridgement of the Jāmiʿ al-Uṣūl by al-Jazaʿīrī. Moreover, the order of the hadiths selected for commentary in Ḥaqīqat al-ṣariḥa follows the order of that work. These hadiths are taken almost exclusively from theṣīḥah al-sittah, or the six most authentic orthodox collections. Thus, Mawlānā Thānawī never deals with the subject of the authenticity of the hadiths he selected for inclusion in Ḥaqīqat al-ṣariḥa. The publisher of this translation, however, has deemed it appropriate to provide such information in order to quell doubts or reservations about the provenance of the hadiths in this volume.

It may be appropriate to mention that this work seems to have been written especially for inclusion in the larger work, al-Takashshuf, as the date given at the end of both works is 1327.13 It will not be out of place, therefore, to take a brief look at al-Takashshuf.

To begin with, al-Takashshuf was not designed as a separate work. It is, rather, a collection of shorter works brought together for the purpose of providing Mawlānā’s disciples with a basic reader in the most important aspects of ṭaṣawwuf. The book is, moreover, divided into three parts for disciples of limited, average and advanced abilities.

Part One of al-Takashshuf has thirty pages, Part Two has fourteen, and Part Three has six hundred and seventy pages. Furthermore, in his introduction to the work, Mawlānā recommends that the book be used as a text in formal lessons, rather than merely read in solitude. Thus, it is clear that the book embodies the most essential, as well as many of the most advanced and sensitive, of Mawlānā’s teachings about ṭaṣawwuf.

As to its contents, the first two parts of al-Takashshuf include extracts from several of Mawlānā’s works. The contents of the third part, for disciples of advanced ability, include the following works:

1. al-Anwār wa al-tajallī (abridged). This is a short philosophical discourse, in Arabic and Persian, on the levels of existence and the comprehensiveness of human beings.
4. ʿIṛfān-e-Ḥāfīz: a commentary on the points of ṭaṣawwuf raised in the poetry of the Diwān of Hāfīz Shirāzī, from the beginning of the collection to the radīf al-dāl.14

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13 Thānawī, op. cit., p. 31 and p. 698.
14 Radīf, in Arabic, Persian and Urdu poetry, refers to the consonance of a poem’s rhyme. It is the
5. *Haqiqat al-tariqa*: *tasawwuf* related commentary on ḥadīths of the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace.

6. *al-Nukat al-da'iqqa fi mā yata'allaq bi al-Ḥaqiqqa*: a discussion of the legal authority for certain practices of the Sufis which are not expressly mentioned in the Qur'an or the Sunna.

7. *Tā'yīd al-Ḥaqīqa bi al-ʿāyāt al-ʿatīqa*: commentary on selected verses of the Qur'an which touch upon *tasawwuf* related subjects.

Let us now consider the second work, *al-Tasharruf*. To begin with, *al-Tasharruf* was not written as a separate work. Rather, over a period of ten years, from 1343 to 1353 AH (1925–1935 CE), it appeared as a monthly feature in the Urdu language journal, *al-Hādi*. Thereafter, the material was collected and published in a single volume.

Essentially, the work is based on other works of ḥadīth, and is composed of four parts, as outlined below:

1. *Taṣawwuf* based commentary on selected ḥadīths from Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIraqī's *Takhrij aḥadīth al-ʿIhya*, which is itself a work in which the ḥadīths quoted by al-Ghazzālī in his *ʿIhyaʿ ulum al-dīn* are traced to their sources and authenticated by al-ʿIraqī.

2. *Taṣawwuf* based commentary on the ḥadīths mentioned by Mawlānā Rūmī in the *Mathnawi*.

3. *Taṣawwuf* based commentary on ḥadīths mentioned by al-Sakhāwī in his *al-Maqāṣid al-faṣana*.


Those familiar with these works will know that they include all manner of ḥadīths. It is well known that al-Ghazzālī was not a ḥadīth scholar, and his *ʿIhya* includes much that is doubtful and even spurious. Likewise, the poetic license used in the *Mathnawi* may well be said to include the ḥadīths it quotes or refers to, as the repetition of the last rhyming word or vowel in any rhyming scheme, most notably used in the Persian and Urdu ghazal.

15 ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Khawājī, *Miftāḥ al-Sunna* (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1974) p. 162. However, Imām al-Ghazzālī knew he was not a scholar of ḥadīths. Yet, the way in which āyats and ḥadīths are quoted to establish a point in the *ʿIhya* is first an āyat or āyāt, then *ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan*, and so on. So the latter though weak do not function as proof but are only included for corroboration. Much the same way that the Mawlānā uses ḥadīths in his work. As he himself said: "In fact, the great majority of Sufi sayings believed popularly to be the words of the Messenger have equivalents, at least in meaning, in the authentic ḥadīths of the Messenger. Therefore, to generalise about the Sufis narrating and popularising spurious material in the name of ḥadīths is decidedly unfair and unwarranted."
well. Finally, both *al-Maqāṣid al-Hasana* and *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaghīr* are collections of popularly quoted hadiths and, almost by definition, include what is authentic and what is not.

Nevertheless, Mawlānā’s treatment of these hadiths was to compare their import with the established principles of the Shari‘a. If the meaning was acceptable, and if the hadith scholars had not rejected the hadiths outright, then Mawlānā included it among the hadiths of *al-Tasharruf* for commentary. In terms of their content, however, the two books are quite similar. Thus, a reading of this volume will provide the reader with a very good idea of what the other book is all about.

What follows is an English translation of *Haqīqat al-ṭariqa*. Moreover, it is hoped that the information provided in this brief introduction will suffice as a starting point for the reader who is perhaps unfamiliar with the works of Mawlānā Ashraf ‘Ali Thānawī. I have little doubt that such readers, and all those interested in the subject of *taṣawwuf* will want to look deeper into Mawlānā’s works after reading what he has written in the pages that follow.

This, then, has been a brief introduction to one aspect of the works of Mawlānā Ashraf ‘Ali Thānawī, may Allāh grant him mercy everlasting! Indeed the scope for serious work on the subject of his life, or on any aspect of his works, is vast indeed.

In closing, I should like to record my debt to my teacher, Mawlānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Binnorī, himself a great muḥaddith and faqīh, as well as a Mujāz-e-Ṣuhbat* from Mawlānā Thānawī himself. It was a great personal blessing to have had the opportunity to read the hadiths in this volume with Mawlānā Binnorī and it was at his direction, and with his encouragement, that I undertook this translation.\(^{17}\) May Allāh grant eternal peace to his soul, and to the soul of Mawlānā Thānawī, and to all of the true followers of the Prophet Muḥammad, his family, and his companions!

YUSUF DELORENZO
Virginia USA, 2009

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16 This term denotes a person who, though he/she may be from another order (in my teacher’s case, the Naqshbandi order) has nonetheless been granted permission, mujāz, to instruct aspirants from another order. In other words, Mawlānā Thānawī gave his own murīds permission to learn taṣawwuf from Mawlānā Binnorī or, more literally, to benefit from his company, ṣuhbat. YTD.

17 I must also record here my gratitude to Yahya Batha of Turath Publishing who urged me to revive the translation of this work, after it had languished in manuscript form since 1975. I am likewise indebted to Mawlānā Mohammed Mohamedy who translated the final quarter of this book when it was discovered that the original translation had gone missing. Without the help of these two dedicated individuals, this important work may never have seen the light of day in the English language. May Allāh reward them handsomely in this world and the next. YTD.
It is essential that all Muslims, having seen to the correctness of their beliefs and practice (or outer conduct), also attend to the correctness of their inner conduct. Countless Qur'anic verses and hadiths prove conclusively that this is also essential, though many of those who attend only to externals are heedless of this matter. Certainly, everyone knows that the Qur'an and the Sunna contain mention of the virtues of things such as abstinence, contentment, humility, sincerity, patience, gratitude, love for the Divine, acceptance of fate, trust, and so forth. Indeed, the Muslim is encouraged by these texts to acquire these qualities and to avoid their opposites, such as greed, pride, hypocrisy, rancour, lust, jealousy, and so forth. Then, can there possibly remain any doubt as to the command or prohibition of these matters by the Shari'a? This is what is meant by the reformation of inner conduct. This is the primary goal of the Sufi way. It also happens to be an indisputable obligation.

In addition, experience has proved, and indeed it is the way Allâh has approved, that the single most important factor in the process of inner reformation is that of one's companionship with, and service and obedience to, those who have themselves been reformed. Wherever actual companionship is not feasible, abstract companionship, even in the form of one's reading the biographies of the great Sufis, can conceivably suffice in its place. This is the secret behind the frequent urgings of the Qur'an and hadiths toward the companionship of the good, and their warnings against the companionship of the wicked. For this reason, too, the stories of Allâh's special servants are repeated throughout the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunna.

18 I should record here that Mawlânâ Binnori once told me that in the absence of anything else, one may take the Ka'bah in Makka as one's spiritual guide. YTD.
Another fact borne out by experience is that one’s companionship of the pious, whether actual or abstract, can only be of benefit when accompanied by conviction and attachment. Otherwise one may spend a lifetime with the best of people and never benefit from their company. Moreover, in the same way that the companionship of refined people is beneficial, the companionship of corrupt people is detrimental.

In our own times, owing to the general lack of knowledge about Islam, and to the predominance of selfish desires, most people never even consider reforming their inner selves. And then, even if they do think of it and seek out the company of a spiritual guide, most of them are barred, owing to imbalances between what they know and what they practise, from making any real progress on the Sufi way. The majority of such people are either too severe or too lax in their approach to Islam. Those who are too severe and narrow-minded often misconstrue the words, deeds, and states of the Sufi masters. Then, having decided for themselves that these things are contrary to the Sunna, the narrow-minded ones shun the Sufi masters and thus remain deprived of their blessings. In fact, it sometimes happens that, owing to their disrespectful and insulting behaviour towards the masters, these narrow-minded people place their well being in serious jeopardy. On the other hand, those who are lax or weak in faith often become the followers of ignorant Sufis who subscribe to false doctrines. Then, without weighing the words, deeds, and states of these Sufi pretenders on the scales of the Shari‘a, they accept everything they tell them. In this manner, when they decide to serve and accompany ignorant sheikhs, they are actually throwing their religion away.

In view of all this, I have felt it necessary to show the reality of the Sufi way in the light of the Qur‘an and the Sunna, so that hereafter people will no longer deny the perfections of the true Sufi masters, or become the followers of those who pretend to be masters. It is also my wish to remove the doubts harboured by many of our narrow-minded Muslim brothers, many of whom are even scholars, who suppose the Sufi masters to be degenerate, and their ways contrary to the Shari‘a, and who imagine that there is no basis whatsoever for the Sufi way in orthodox Islam. Finally, I hope to remedy the notions of those whose faith is weak, and who suppose impostors to be masters in spite of their breach of the Shari‘a. Thus, the difference between truth and falsehood may be rightly measured: in conformance with the standards of the Qur‘an and the Sunna. And in all this it is Allah from whom I seek assistance.

Ashraf ‘Alī Thānawī

19 The Prophet, Allah bless him and give him peace, said that Allah most High said, “Whoever causes discomfort to a friend (waif) of Mine, on such a one I declare war.”
Author's Introduction

The true objective of the "inner way," as I mentioned in the preface, is the reformation of inner conduct. In the language of the Sufis, this inner conduct is termed akhlāq wa maqāmāt, or character and stations. Furthermore, as every primary objective is attended by related matters of secondary importance, the aforementioned objective of the Sufis is likewise attended by a great number of related matters of secondary importance. Some of these matters, being of the nature of fruits over which we have no control, are called ahwāl or states. Those matters that are known to produce these fruits, or at least help in producing them, are called ashghāl or practices. Those matters, regardless of whether or not we have control over them, which indicate the presence of those fruits are called ālāmāt or signs. Matters which aim at erasing doubts, remedying inner infirmities, or explaining methods of practice are called tālimāt or teachings. Matters in the form of textual evidence from the Qurān and ḥadiths which give good tidings to those who possess praiseworthy characters or perform meritorious deeds are called fāḍā'il or virtues. Matters over which we have control and which are second nature to the Sufis are called rūsūm or customs. Matters which are purely of an academic nature are called masā'īl or questions. Matters of a spoken nature are called ṣayāl or sayings. The explanations of those matters which to all outward appearances seem to transgress the limits of what is permitted by the Shari'ā but which in reality do not, are called tawjihāt or interpretations; and if those matters do actually transgress the limits of the Shari'ā, then the admonition which is then required is called ʾislāḥ or reform. Those few
remaining matters which do not fit under any of the above-mentioned headings may be termed *mutafarriqāt* or miscellaneous.

Then, to sum up, the list of these primary and secondary matters is as follows: (1) Character, (2) States, (3) Practices, (4) Signs, (5) Teachings, (6) Virtues, (7) Habits, (8) Customs, (9) Questions, (10) Sayings, (11) Interpretations, (12) Corrections, (13) Miscellaneous.

As those of the above-mentioned subjects that have been clearly and specifically mentioned in the Qurʾān and the Sunna are not likely to present any difficulties, there is no need for their repetition here. Satisfactory discussions of those subjects are to be found in all the major works of the Sufis. This book is concerned only with treating those subjects which are not specifically mentioned in the Qurʾān or ḥadīths and which are, indeed, likely to present difficulties to the average Muslim. Therefore, each ḥadīth in this collection will be followed by its translation and, under a separate heading, by brief commentary concerning the authentication of the relevant, problematic, *tasawwuf* related subject. Though this work does not claim to be comprehensive, it does nonetheless cover many significant subjects. After reading this book, the gifted reader should not have any difficulty in using his/her own powers of reason to come to a proper understanding of the subjects which are not specifically mentioned in these pages.

Undoubtedly, it would have been proper to arrange the ḥadīths in this collection in some kind of logical order. However, for my own ease, and for the purpose of keeping the reader’s interest alive, I have chosen not to observe any particular sequence. For the reader's convenience, however, each commentary note has been given two headings: (1) a general heading taken from the list of thirteen primary and secondary matters mentioned above; (2) a particular heading introducing the subject to be discussed in relation to the ḥadīth.

*Ashraf ‘Alī Thānawī*
A SUFI STUDY of ḤADITH

A Translation of At-Tasharruf and Ḥaqīqat at-Ṭariqa
In the ḥadith related on the authority of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb concerning the arrival of the Angel Jibril and his questions about the fundamentals of Islam, the Messenger of Allâh said, “Of a certainty, he is Jibril descended in the form of Dihyā al-Kalbi.” This ḥadith was related by Nasā’ī.  

*Questions: Simulation*

The appearance of an essence in another (or in another’s) form, despite the abiding of its own prior state and attributes, is termed simulation or *tamaththul*, while the form itself is called the simulated form. In dreams and in spiritual visions most things appear in simulated form. Occasionally, however, a miracle occurs and simulation takes place in the ordinary waking world. The ḥadith above, in which Jibril appears in human form, having assumed the appearance of Dihyā al-Kalbi, is ample proof of this phenomenon. It should be remembered here that Jibril was not actually transformed into a man.

The occurrence of simulation is also verified in the following verse of the Qur’ān: “Then we sent unto her our spirit, and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man.” This, in no way, attests to the validity of the erroneous doctrine of the transmigration of souls. In simulation the state of the essence remains exactly as it was, whereas in transmigration this is not the case.

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20 *Sunan an-Nasā’ī: 4994*
21 Al-Qur’ān, 19:17
It is related on the authority of Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-`As that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “The true emigrant (muhajir) is a person who leaves behind everything that Allah has forbidden.” This hadith was related by Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, and Nasai.²²

Questions: Meaning as the True Object

According to the Sufis, may they enjoy the mercy of Allah ﷻ, external form is of no value unless it is accompanied by inner significance. Thus, the true object of our deeds is their inner significance or reality. From the hadith above it is evident that the person who migrates, the muhajir, in the outward sense of leaving home to settle elsewhere, but who pays no heed to the inner significance of abandoning all that is contrary to the pleasure of Allah ﷻ, cannot be called a true muhajir. Nonetheless, no one should assume from the hadith above that externals are without value. The proper way to approach the matter is to realise that Allah has created for every inner meaning a corresponding external form, and that without form the acquisition of inner significance is impossible.

It is related on the authority of Abdullah ibn Mas`ud that when the Companions ﷺ said: “O Messenger of Allah ﷺ! There are times when we find ourselves thinking of things that, rather than speak of them it would be more desirable to be burned to charcoal, or to plummet to earth from high in the sky”, the Messenger ﷺ replied, “That is precisely what perfect faith is all about.” This hadith was related by Muslim.²³

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²² Bukhari: 10, 6484; Abu Dawud: 2481; Nasai: 4999; Ibn Majah: 3934. Muslim (40, 41, 42) has only the beginning portion of the hadith.

²³ Abu Dawud: 5112, Muslim: 133. Muslim’s report does not have the question put to the noble Mes-
Teachings: Disregarding the Shadows of Doubt

Among the things which most frustrate the traveller on the Sufi way are one's exaggerated attempts to free one's mind of vague and ill-defined suspicions, or waswasa, and one's feeling sorry for oneself when these attempts prove unsuccessful. In accordance with the basic wisdoms conveyed in this ḥadith, Sufi masters treat this problem by first explaining to their disciples that these things are harmless, and then by asking the disciples to ignore such thoughts when they occur. If this is done, then in a very short time the traveller will cease to be troubled by waswasa.

ḤADĪTH 4

عن عوف بن مالك الأشجعي رضي الله عنه قال: كُنْا عَنْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اِللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُسَئِّحَةَ أوْ يَزِينَةَ أوْ يُسَئِّحَةَ فَقَالَ: "أَلَا تَبَيَّنُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟" فِسْتَطِنَا أَيْدِيًا وَقَلْنا: علِي所说的: "أَلَا يَتُبْعِرُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟" فِسْتَطِنَا أَيْدِيًا وَقَلْنا: علِي所说: "أَلَا يَتُبْعِرُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟" فِسْتَطِنَا أَيْدِيًا وَقَلْنا: علِى所说: "أَلَا يَتُبْعِرُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟" فِسْتَطِنَا أَيْدِيًا وَقَلْنا: علِي所说: "أَلَا يَتُبْعِرُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟" فِسْتَطِنَا أَيْدِيًا وَقَلْنا: علِي所说: "أَلَا يَتُبْعِرُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟" فِسْتَطِنَا أَيْدِيًا وَقَلْنا: علِي

It is related on the authority of ‘Awf ibn Mālik al-Asja‘ī that he said, “We were in the company of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, nine, eight, or seven of us, when he ﷺ said, ‘Will you not pledge your allegiance to the Messenger of Allāh?’ As we had only recently pledged our allegiance to him, we said, ‘We have already pledged ourselves to you, O Messenger!’ Yet again he asked us, ‘Will you not pledge yourselves to the Messenger of Allāh?’ So we extended our hands and said, ‘To what are we to pledge ourselves, O Messenger of Allāh?’ He replied, ‘That you worship Allāh ﷺ and not associate anything with Him. That you perform the five daily prayers. And that you hear and obey.’ Then he whispered something to us. He said, ‘And do not ask anyone for anything.’ Since then, I have seen people of that group drop their whips [while mounted] and not ask anyone to hand it up to them.” This ḥadith was related by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and al-Nasā‘ī.24

senger ﷺ by the Companions; it is only reported by Abū Dāwūd and Aḥmad. Our author has merged the two narrations into one.

Questions: Bay'ah
The type of pledge or bay'ah taken by Sufis, which amounts to an agreement to obey the injunctions of the Shari'a and to faithfully perform certain inward and outward practices, is often made the target of criticism by the narrow-minded. According to these critics, bay'ah is the same as bid'ah or blameworthy innovation because there is nothing in the Qur'an or the Sunna to support it. The only kinds of bay'ah that they recognise are the bay'ah of Islam (conversion to Islam from another faith), and the bay'ah of jihâd. However, in the hadith above, the type of bay'ah mentioned is spiritual bay'ah because the ones pledging themselves were Companions. Undoubtedly, then, this was not the bay'ah of Islam. It is also clear from the text that this was not bay'ah of jihâd. Rather, in view of the pledge made by these Companions to obey certain injunctions and to perform certain practices, it is obvious that the bay'ah of the Sufis does indeed have its precedent in the Sunna.

Practices: Private Instruction
Most Sufi masters are in the habit of taking their disciples aside for private instruction. Sometimes this is done for the purpose of keeping complex matters out of the reach of those who might not appreciate or fathom them, and sometimes because, when special attention is a sign of favour, the disciple will be more likely to take the teachings to heart. Another factor in this kind of private or individualized instruction is that it precludes the possibility of another's overhearing and then taking it upon himself to follow in practice whatever was discussed, even when that practice is unsuited for his condition or circumstances. Anyway, the basis for all of this is found in the hadith above.

Questions: Exaggeration in Carrying Out the Orders of a Master
The natural disposition of most disciples is such that they, when it comes to carrying out the orders of their masters, go to such lengths that they pay as much attention to the letter of the master's words as they do to their meaning. This condition is described in the latter part of the hadith above. Obviously, the intended meaning here was to prohibit those Companions from asking for anything that belonged to others, and not to prohibit them from asking for their own things. Nonetheless, as the words of the prohibition admitted of a literal meaning, even though the context clearly indicated that the literal meaning was not the intended meaning, the Companions chose not to ask even for their own possessions. In another hadith it is related that while the Messenger ﷺ was giving the Friday khutba, a man came and stood at the doorway of the mosque.
When the Messenger ﷺ told the man to sit down, he immediately complied by sitting in the doorway. Of course, what the Messenger ﷺ meant was that the man should come inside, find a place, and then sit down and listen, not that he should sit right then and there, blocking the entrance to the mosque. The kind of obedience and respect illustrated here, however, is of utmost importance for anyone who hopes to benefit spiritually from a master.

Hadīth 5

‘A‘īsha  said, “Never once in his life did the Messenger of Allah ﷺ touch the hand of a woman who was not related to him. He did, however, take bay‘ah from them, orally. And when a woman had pledged herself, he would then say to her, ‘Go. I have accepted your pledge.’” This hadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, and Abū Dāwūd.25

Corrections: Taking Bay‘ah from Women

It is the practice of certain ignorant and uncircumspect Sufis to hold the hands of women while formally taking bay‘ah from them. This is completely improper, as it is prohibited to touch an unrelated woman unnecessarily. The hadīth above clearly refutes this practice. Who could be more chaste than the Messenger of Allah ﷺ? Then, when he was so careful about such matters, how can we possibly allow ourselves to be lax about them? When bay‘ah is actually no more than an agreement, the spoken word will certainly suffice. The masters of latter times have made it their practice, for the purpose of strengthening the master-disciple bond, to hold, when taking formal bay‘ah, one end of a cloth in their own hands while the female disciple holds the other end. There is really nothing wrong with this practice. Similarly, if it becomes necessary for a man to take bay‘ah from a female master, the same method may be used. However, since it is the Sunna for men to offer their hands when taking bay‘ah, it is better whenever possible that they do so in that way.


**Hadith 6**

It is related on the authority of Abū Hurairah (RA) that he went to the marketplace and asked the people there, “Why do I see you here, when the legacy of Muhammad (SAW) is being distributed in the mosque?” Hearing this, the people in the marketplace went away. In a short while, however, they returned, saying, “We saw nothing being distributed there. All we saw were a few people reciting the Qur'an.” Abū Huraira (RA) replied, “So! There you have the legacy of Muhammad (SAW).” This hadith was related by Imam Razzīn.26

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Practices: The Use of Equivocal Language

In the works of most Sufi masters one can find any number of ambiguous passages which, after one has been made aware of their true meaning, actually begin to make a great deal of sense. At times this kind of veiled language is used involuntarily when the master is under the influence of some spiritual state, though usually it is used either for the purpose of keeping subtleties beyond the reach of those who might not understand them, or for increasing the desire of the true seeker. This is because vagueness is something that is known to increase desire; and that which has been desired greatly will generally have a greater effect on the inner being. Anyway, that there is a basis for the use of this kind of language is clearly attested to in this hadith. Here, for the purpose of increasing the people's desire, Abū Huraira (RA) was ambiguous to the extent that some people came back and told him that he was mistaken. But when he explained to them the true meaning of his words, they realised at once that he had spoken the truth. We should, therefore, never be sceptical about the vague or ambiguous words of the true Sufi masters, and we should certainly never criticise or speak insoltingly of them.

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**Hadith 7**

Ubayy ibn Ka'b related that there was a man from among the Anṣār whose home was the furthest from the center of Madīna, but who never missed a prayer with the Messenger of Allāh. Ubayy said, "As we all felt compassion for the man, one day I said to him, 'Why don't you buy yourself a donkey and spare yourself the trouble of walking among the reptiles and through desert heat?' His reply was, 'By Allāh! Because I do not wish that my house should be any closer to the house of Muḥammad.' I was so annoyed at the man's reply that I went to the Messenger of Allāh and told him what the man had said. When the Messenger called the man, he repeated what he'd said before. But he added that he hoped to receive a reward in heaven for every step to and from the mosque. So the Messenger said to him, 'You will indeed receive the reward you hope for.'" This hadith was related by Muslim.27

Practices: Speaking Equivocally
The commentary written for the last hadith (hadith [6]) applies equally to this hadith. Here, the man from the Anṣār expressed himself in such a harsh manner that Ubayy was genuinely annoyed with him. Still, for reasons known best to himself, the man's words were designed to conceal his true feelings, and state. When questioned by the Messenger, however, he explained the true meaning behind his words. The poet said: "To our friends we can speak our hearts. Why try and hide pain from a doctor?" Finally, unless there is a good reason for it, no one should intentionally use equivocal language.

Hadith 8

The commentary written for the last hadith (hadith [6]) applies equally to this hadith. Here, the man from the Anṣār expressed himself in such a harsh manner that 'Ubayy was genuinely annoyed with him. Still, for reasons known best to himself, the man's words were designed to conceal his true feelings, and state. When questioned by the Messenger, however, he explained the true meaning behind his words. The poet said: "To our friends we can speak our hearts. Why try and hide pain from a doctor?" Finally, unless there is a good reason for it, no one should intentionally use equivocal language.

Hadith 8

عن حنظلة بن الربع الأسدي رضي الله عنه - كاتب رسول الله صل الله عليه وسلمه

27 Muslim: 663, Abū Dāwūd: 557, Ibn Mājah: 783
It is related that Ḣanẓalāh ibn al-Rabī‘ al-‘Usaydi, scribe to the Messenger, said, “Abū Bakr met me and asked how I was. In reply, I said, ‘Ḥanẓalāh has become a hypocrite.’ Abū Bakr was astonished and said, ‘Glory be to Allāh! What are you saying?’ I replied, ‘When we are with the Messenger of Allāh and he reminds us of the Fire and the Gardens of Paradise, at that moment it is as if we are seeing those things with our own eyes. But when we go out from where he is, we again become so involved with our spouses, our children and our property that we forget everything else.’ Abū Bakr replied, ‘By Allāh! I find the same things happening to me.’ So the two of us went to the Messenger and told him what we had admitted to each other. Then the Messenger of Allāh said to us, ‘By the One Who holds my life in His hands! If you were to remain in the states you attain while you are in my company, the angels would embrace you in your beds and on the streets! But, O Ḣanẓalāh, there is a time for this and a time for that.’ He repeated this three times.” This ḥadith was related by Imāms Muslim and Tirmidhi.28

Practices: Calling Oneself a Disbeliever

In the writings of the Sufi masters we sometimes find that, in consideration of certain misdeeds or vile states, or with a view to a special or personalised terminology, they refer to themselves as disbelievers. This gives rise to the question of how a person can call himself or herself a disbeliever and still remain a Muslim. But in the ḥadith above the basis for this practice is evident, because Ḣanẓalāh, in recognition of his changing spiritual states, called himself a hypocrite. Surely, he did not mean to use the term in its strict legal sense of inwardly denying the truth of Allāh’s message and the veracity of His Messenger. Rather, on

28 Muslim: 2750, Tirmidhi: 2514
the basis of the differences he found between states of presence and absence, he used the term figuratively. An example of the use of the word “disbeliever” as a special term is its use in place of the word “annihilated” or ʿanī, for the reason that one who is ʿanī has been buried in the love of the Almighty; and one of the meanings of the word for disbelief, kufr, is to cover over or obliterate something. Since Ḥanẓalah found one state obliterating the other from time to time, he termed himself a hypocrite.

Furthermore, the answer given by the Messenger was not in refutation of the use of figurative language, but rather of the false premise that the one state was necessarily any better than the other.²⁹

**States: Spiritual Witnessing**

The inner intensification and domination of something in the imagination is called spiritual witnessing or mushāhada. That this actually occurs is attested to in the hadith above in which Ḥanẓalah says of the Fire and the Garden, “it is as if we are seeing those things with our own eyes.” The meaning here is not that anyone actually saw the Fire and the Garden, but that in their imaginations the thought grew so intense that it possessed them. Many ignorant Sufis suppose spiritual witnessing to be direct vision, but they are clearly mistaken when they attempt to apply a dictionary meaning to a spiritual state.

**Miscellaneous: Barakah from Accompanying a Master**

In the same way that certain mystical states and conditions follow one’s ascetic exertions or spiritual disciplines, they will also be found sometimes to follow one’s being in the company of a master. However, unlike the effect of these exercises, the effect of a master’s presence or words is not usually long lasting. This was the reason behind Ḥanẓalah’s complaint that, upon leaving the company of the Messenger, he lost much of what he had gained there. Finally, no one should suppose that the reason for Ḥanẓalah’s lapse was his involvement in worldly affairs because, as we have clarified in the commentary above, the real reason for its occurrence was his parting company with the Messenger of Allāh.²⁹

**Questions: The Transient Nature of Spiritual States**

Most travellers on the Sufi way complain at one time or another that a particular state of theirs has lost its former intensity, or has disappeared altogether. Then,²⁹ In other words, there is no reason why one’s worldly activities cannot be imbued with the same spiritual significance as an act of prescribed worship, like prayer or fasting. Much of the message of Islam, in fact, is just that. This is what the Messenger was referring to when he said that there was to be no monasticism in Islam. YTD.
thinking that they have suffered some sort of spiritual reverse, the travellers become disheartened and confused. This is especially true among neophytes who are far more susceptible to changes in their condition than more experienced travellers. The Sufi masters, however, have established that the ascendancy of spiritual states is at best impermanent. This phenomenon of impermanence is referred to as *talwin* or variegation, and is something which occurs in varying degrees to even the most experienced Sufis. In this ḥadith, the Messenger’s saying, “There is a time for this and a time for that,” is in direct reference to *talwin*. This phenomenon is an inevitable part of the Sufi way and, as such, should never become a cause for concern.

**ḤADĪTH 9**

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عنَّ أَنسَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: دَخَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ الْمسْجِد، فَإِذَا حَبَلَ ﻓَيَدَّوْنَ يَبِينَ السَايِرِينَ قَالَ: مَا هَذَا؟ قَالُوا: حَبَلَ يُزْبَبُ إِذَا كَرَّت تَعْلَقَتْ فَقَالَ: لاَ، حَلْوُهُ، لِيُصَلِّ أحُدُكمُ بِشَنَاطِهِ إِذَا فَرَأَ فَلْيُقِعُ. (أخْرِجُ الْبَجَارِيَّ وَأَبُو دُؤُدَ وَالْوَسَيْلِيُّ).```

It is related on the authority of ‘Anas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that Allah’s Prophet ﷺ once went into the mosque and saw a rope there stretched between two supports. “What is this,” he asked. The Companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ replied, “This is Zaynab’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا rope. When she tires at worship, she props herself up with it.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Take it down. You should only worship for as long as you are fresh. When you tire, you should rest.” This hadith was related by Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, and Nasā’ī.¹⁰

**Teachings: Moderation in Spiritual Disciplines**

The Sufi masters are agreed that no one should go to such extremes in their spiritual disciplines as would adversely affect their health or well being. Clearly, this is the lesson of the ḥadith above. The excesses of certain of the Sufi masters in this matter need not present any difficulties when we realise that, as a result of their sincere desire and love for the Almighty, they were granted the extra strength necessary to perform whatever they did.

**ḤADĪTH 10**

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عنَّ أَنسَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: خَطَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ صَلِّي اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حَطًا، وقال: هذا.```

It is related on the authority of 'Anas that the Messenger of Allah drew a line on the ground and said, “This is man.” Then he drew a line parallel to the first and said, “This is his appointed time.” Then he drew a third line, further than the second, and said, “This is man’s wish. So, as man moves toward what he wishes for, he is greeted by the one that is closer to him [his appointed time]. This hadith was related by Bukhārī and Tirmidhī.

Interpretations: The Use of Metaphor to Indicate the Almighty

In the writings, and particularly in the poetry, of many Sufi masters words like sun, moon, ocean, and so forth are used to represent the essence and attributes of the Almighty. On the surface of it, at least, this kind of representation is becoming because it equates the Eternal with the ephemeral, and negates the concept of Allah’s unity or tawhīd. The purpose of this, however, is figurative and not literal representation. There is certainly nothing wrong with the figurative representation inherent in the comparison of two essentially unlike things. Witness, for example, the Qur’ānic simile of the lamp: “The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp.” The most one could say here is that the comparison in the hadith, unlike the one in the Qur’ān, is not made explicit by the use of a word for “like” or “as.” This, however, is something which occurs in all good literature. In the hadith above, Allah’s Messenger pointed to the lines he had drawn in the dust and said, “This is man, and this is his appointed time,” and “This is man’s wish.” He did not say, “This is like man,” or “This is like his appointed time,” even though that was what he really meant. Undoubtedly, then, the use of metaphorical language is perfectly acceptable.

There remain here two matters in need of clarification. The first is an explanation of what similarities exist between two essentially unlike things; and the second is an answer to the objection that since the names of the Almighty are self-designated, tawqifī, then where did the Sufi masters get permission to use other, undesignated names?

In brief, the explanation of the first matter is that similarities between the Divine Essence and natural phenomena only seem to be similarities. In actual...
fact, they are not. The oneness or unity of Allah, for example, is real, whereas the oneness of the ocean is only a relative sort of oneness. Likewise, the Almighty is a source in the sense that He is the effective and principal cause, whereas the ocean is only a material and secondary cause. And so forth. Certainly, these are significant differences, but they do not prevent comparison or metaphorical representation. For a detailed discussion of this subject, the qualified reader will find nothing better than what Qādī Mubārak wrote in his commentary on Muḥib Allāh Bihārī’s book, Sullam al-‘ulūm.\(^{34}\) The basis of the simile of the sun, as the source of beneficial light, is obvious.

To clarify the second point, it should be sufficient to point out that designation, tawqif, extends only to the names of the Almighty, and not to every one of His perfect attributes. With the above commentary and clarification in mind, it should be possible to gain a proper understanding of the following verses of mystic poetry, and others like them, without going to the extreme of labelling their authors “disbelievers.”

Though the ocean be one, from its fathomless depths
Come the waves with hue and form.

The sun rises, a sign of the sun.
The proof lies in a look at the sun.
Red wine, imbibe, and on the moonfaced, gaze.
Forsake religion and on these beauties gaze.

It should be noted that in these verses “moonfaced beauties” should be understood as representing the manifestations or tajalliyāt of the Almighty’s perfect attributes.

\[ \text{Hadīth 11} \]

\( \text{ عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنه قال: } \text{ أَخْذَ رَسُولُ الله صَلَّى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَنْكَحِيَ وَقَالَ: } \)

\( \text{كُنْ فِي الْدُنْيَا كَأَنْ تَكُنْ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ غَابِرٌ سَبِيلٌ (أَخْرِجَهُ البَخَارِيَ وَالْتَرْمِذِيْ) وَرَأَى } \)

\( \text{الْبِحَارِيَ }\) \text{بَعْدَ قَوْلِهِ أَوْ غَابِرٌ سَبِيلٌ وَعَدَ فَنْسَكَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْفَيْوُرِ.} \)

Ibn ‘Umar said, “The Messenger of Allāh took me by the shoulder and said, ‘Live in this world as if you were a stranger, or just a passerby.’” This was related by Bukhārī and Tirmidhi. However, in the version related

\(^{34}\text{This is a well-known Hanafi text on the subject of legal theory or } \text{‘aṣūl al-fiqh. YTD.}\)
by Tirmidhi, after the words, “or just a passerby,” the following sentence is added: “And consider yourself to be among the people of the graves.”

Sayings: Die Before you Die
This saying is one that Sufis often repeat, and this hadith is the equivalent of its meaning. Therefore, it is not inconceivable that this saying could be a hadith in meaning, even though it is not a hadith in the technical sense of the word. In fact, the great majority of Sufi sayings believed popularly to be the words of the Messenger have equivalents, at least in meaning, in the authentic hadiths of the Messenger. Therefore, to generalise about the Sufis narrating and popularising spurious material in the name of hadiths is decidedly unfair and unwarranted.

Character: Contemplation
The heartfelt contemplation of a subject, under all conditions or for a limited period of time, where the intention is to begin acting on the requisites of what is being contemplated, is called muraqabah. This is one of the primary objectives of inner conduct. In the hadith above it is muraqabah that Ibn ‘Umar is being urged to practise, because counting oneself among the dead has to do with inner, not outer, conduct. The results of regular muraqabah are a flagging in one’s desire for the things of this world, the dwindling away of lust, rancour, and other blameworthy character traits, and an increase in commitment and submission to the will of the Almighty.

糟 Hitch 12

وعن فیس بن أبي غررة رضی الله عنه قال: “کیما نستقيل قی عهد رسول الله صلی الله علیه وسلّم السبايرة قمر بنًا رسول الله صلی الله علیه وسلّم فسینا باسم هو أسحسن منه

قائل: ايا تعمیر التجار! إن يبيع بحراة اللعنة واحلف فسینو يباصلدیة. (رواه Ibn Majah: 4114)

Qays ibn Abi Gharazah said, “In the time of Allah’s Messenger we were called brokers. Then the Messenger stopped by the marketplace one day and gave us a better name, saying, ‘O you merchants!’ Surely your buying and selling is sometimes attended by gross exaggeration and

35 Bukhari: 6416, Tirmidhi: 2333, Ibn Majah: 4114
36 Note that he called them merchants instead of brokers.
the swearing of oaths. So, fortify your deals with charity.” This ḥadīth was related by Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, and Nasā’ī.37

**Customs: Taking a New Name**

In many spiritual families it has become common practice for a disciple to take a new name after taking bay'ah at the hands of a master. The basis for this custom could possibly be derived from the ḥadīth above in which the Messenger of Allāh used the word “merchant” instead of “broker” to address the Muslim traders he was visiting.38

**ḤADĪTH 13**

> ʿAbd Allāh bin Sallām reported from the Messenger of Allāh, may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him, that he said: “When one of you intends to perform the prayer [out in the open], let him first put something in front of himself. If he can find nothing else, then let him put his staff into the ground. If he has no staff, then let him draw a line in front of himself. In that way, nothing that passes in front of him [while he performs prayer] will bother him.”39

**Practices: Collecting One’s Thoughts**

The state-producing practices prescribed by the Sufi masters all have as their

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38 Prior to Islam traders were free to transact business in any way that they pleased. Thus, in pursuit of greater profits, they committed any number of what, after Islam, would be called unlawful practices. So, in view of the traders having taken to new practices after their conversion to Islam, Allāh’s Messenger gave them a new name as well. However, since the majority of business transactions, in spite of their technical legality, are rarely free of dubious elements, like the swearing off frivolous oaths, merchants are urged to regularly give a portion of their earnings in charity. This is only one of many examples from the ḥadīth in which Muslims are urged to exercise caution in their worldly affairs, especially where finances are concerned. YTD.

39 Abū Dāwūd: 689. Al-Mundhīrī reported from Sufyān ibn ʿUyayna, who said: ‘We have not found anything that would corroborate this report and it has not been narrated but through this chain: Whenever ʿIsāʾil ibn Umayyah reported this ḥadīth, he would ask: ‘Do you have anything that corroborates this?’ Imām ash-Shāfiʿī has also alluded to the weakness of this report. Imām Bayhaqī said: ‘This [weakness] does not matter in establishing this ruling.’
object the creation, after dispelling any inner confusion, of a certain presence of mind or oneness of concentration which, once it has become second nature, will greatly facilitate the matter of directing one's attention exclusively to Allâh. Obviously, however, as the One to be contemplated is himself Unseen, and as the beginner is rarely able to clear his/her mind of outside thoughts, it takes a great deal of practice before this presence of mind can become second nature. At any rate, the disciplines of the Sufis are basically methods for acquiring this second nature. The hadith above might be the source from which all of this (knowledge) was derived, because the scholars, such as Ibn Humâm in his commentary on the Hidayah, have written that among other things, the wisdom behind sutrah (putting something in front of oneself when performing prayer in the open) is that it allows one to collect one's thoughts and dispels confusion.

**Hadîth 14**

![Hadith Image]

It is related on the authority of Abû Huraira that the Messenger of Allâh said: “When Allâh loves someone, He calls Jibrîl and says, ‘I love so and so. Now, you love him too.’ Then Jibrîl, too, loves that person, and calls out to the inhabitants of the heavens, ‘Allâh loves so and so. Now, you love him too.’ So the inhabitants of the heavens come to love that person as well, and the person is accepted all over the earth. When Allâh despises someone, He calls Jibrîl and says, ‘I despise so and so. Now, you despise him too.’ Then Jibrîl, too, despises that person, and calls out to the inhabitants of the heavens, ‘Allâh despises so and so, now you despise him too.’ So the inhabitants of the heavens despise him too, and that person becomes despicable in the eyes of people all over the earth.” This hadith was related by Muslim.40

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40 Muslim: 2637
Signs: Acceptance and Rejection

In the ḥadith above the wali or true spiritual master is distinguished from the non-wali. One should be careful to heed this distinction in one’s search for a spiritual guide, and remember always to avoid a guide who is not a true wali. When, for no obvious reason, the hearts of many good and decent people are inclined toward a certain person, it is generally a sign that the person has been accepted by the Almighty. Similarly, when for no obvious reason decent people find themselves ill-disposed toward a certain person, it is generally a sign that the person has not been accepted by the Almighty. Of course, if people accept or reject a person on the basis of family ties, wealth, position, or hearsay, then this has nothing to do with that person’s standing with the Almighty. Finally, it should be remembered that the inclination or disinclination of people in whom there exist inner infirmities or corruption cannot be considered a valid indicator of anyone’s acceptance or rejection by the Almighty.

ḤADĪTH 15

عن معاذ بن جبل رضي الله عنه قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: قال الله تعالى: "وجيب من حبب في الحاضرين في والمحتاجين في والمفرغين في".

It is related on the authority of Mu‘adh ibn Jabal ﷺ that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: “Allah ﷺ said, “Those may be assured of My love who love one another for My sake, who sit with one another for My sake, who visit one another for My sake, and who spend on one another for My sake.” This ḥadīth was related by Mālik.41

Virtues: The Sufis

In the good tidings of this ḥadīth, reference is clearly made to the virtues of the true Sufis, because the attributes mentioned in the ḥadīth are among the chief attributes of the Sufis. For example, the love between a master and his disciple, the affection between fellow disciples, the respect shown by all Sufis for masters other than their own, their generosity in dealing with one another, and their undertaking lengthy journeys for the purpose of visiting one another; all of these things they do for the sake of Allāh, without the slightest trace of worldly motivation.

41 Muwatta’ Mālik: 3710
It is related that Abū Darda said, "For myself, I have no desire to own a shop on the steps of the Great Mosque in Damascus, even if I could earn fifty dinars a day there to spend in the way of Allah, and never miss performing a single salah in congregation. It is certainly not my place to prohibit what Allah has legitimised. It is just that I do not like the idea of not being among those described by the Almighty as '...people whom neither commerce nor sale divert from the remembrance of Allah.'" This hadith was related by Razin.42

Practices: Exaggeration in Severing Worldly Ties

The majority of Sufis have never preferred for themselves to have more worldly ties than are absolutely necessary, even though those ties might be perfectly legitimate and acceptable. Instead, it has always been their way to live unencumbered and simple lives, by placing their trust in Allah. My own master, Hājī Imdād Allah, may the mercy of Allah surround his soul, once wrote to a wealthy disciple of his in India who had intimated his intention to move permanently to Makka, that he should arrange for only enough money to be sent to him each month as would cover his basic expenses, and no more; not even for distribution to the needy in charity. Instead, our master told the disciple that if he wanted to help someone financially, he should arrange for the money to be distributed in India directly. In that way, he himself, while living in the holy city of Makka, need never concern himself with anything but worship. Now, many of those who look to nothing but externals will object that the severance of legitimate worldly ties is a form of monasticism (which was clearly prohibited by Allah's Prophet). Who knows what such people would have to say if they read what our master wrote to that wealthy disciple about not taking money for distribution as charity (which is, in itself, a form of worship)? Even so, it is clear from the hadith above that Abū Darda, who preferred not to own a shop even when he knew that

42 Imām Suyūṭī has quoted it in ad-Durr al-Manthur (5/94) from ʿAbd ibn Ḥumayd and Imām Ahmad's az-Zuhd.
it would enable him to give so much in charity every day from his earnings there, was of the same school of thought as our master. Is it possible that a companion of the Prophet was guilty of the practice of monasticism or of deliberately preferring not to perform an act of worship? The secret behind all of this is that through an excess of worldly ties an element of confusion is introduced into the state of communion with the Almighty. When Abū Darda said, “And it is certainly not my place to prohibit what Allah has legalised,” he made it clear that he would have no part in monasticism. When he said, “I just do not like the idea of not being among those described by the Almighty as, ‘...people whom neither commerce nor sale divert from the remembrance of Allah,’” he revealed the secret. His interpretation of the Qur'anic verse is one which took into account the simple fact that most people are unable to transact business while remaining, at the same time, constant in their remembrance of the Almighty.

The following verse of Persian poetry nicely illustrates the point that Abū Darda had in mind:

The words that interrupt you when communing with
Your friend, what matter if of faith, or disbelief!
Or that which screens you from your friend when you would meet,
What good if it appears a lovely sight or not?

Hadīth 17

Jābir, in a lengthy narration of how he sold his camel, said, “When I arrived at Madīna, the Messenger of Allah said to Bilāl, ‘Give him (Jābir) a measure of gold (in payment for the camel), and add a little extra.’ So he gave me a whole carat extra. Then I said to myself, ‘Never will I part with this extra carat of gold from the Messenger of Allah!’ Thereafter, it remained with me always, in a leather pouch, until it was taken from me.

Otherwise, the other well known interpretation of this verse, that of Ibn ‘Abbās, takes into account the fact that the first Muslims were both the best of traders and the best of people in their remembrance of Allah. YTD.
(forcibly) by the Syrians at the battle of Ḥarrah.” This ḥadith was related by Muslim.44

**Practices: Holding Keepsakes**

It is the practice of most Sufis to keep something that belongs (or belonged) to their masters as a memento. This is something that is done purely out of love for the master. The precedent for this practice is clearly related in the ḥadith above.

**ḤADĪTH 18**

It is related on the authority of ʿAwf ibn Mālik that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "I and a woman with parched cheeks [one who has had to toil and suffer] will be like these two [i.e. as close as the index finger is to the middle finger] on the Day of Judgment; a woman whose husband died and left her a widow, a woman who, despite social pressures and her own beauty, refused to remarry for the sake of her children [in order to devote herself to them more completely], until finally they grew up and set out on their own, or died.” This ḥadith was related by Abū Dāwūd.46

**Practices: Choosing to Remain Unmarried**

In order to keep their worldly ties to a minimum, or in order to avoid any kind of real or imagined interference in their relationship with the Almighty, some Sufis never marry. As a result, certain narrow-minded individuals have accused the Sufis of not adhering to the Sunna or way of the Prophet ﷺ. In the above ḥadith, not only do we find permission for remaining single, we also find that wherever there is a possibility of a child’s being neglected, it is better to abstain from marriage. This is, of course, on the condition that one’s practice of Islam will not be adversely affected. So, when the possibility that a child will be neglected is a legitimate excuse for not marrying, what then of the possibility that Allāh ﷺ will be neglected?

44 Muslim: 715, 1599

45 Abū Dāwūd: 5149. Al-Mundhirī said: ‘In its chain, there is Abū ‘l-Khaṭṭāb an-Nahhās ibn Qahm al-Baṣrī and his ḥadīth cannot be argued from.’
In a lengthy narration, Ahnaf ibn Qays said, "I said to Abū Dharr ulla, 'What do you say about these [monthly or yearly sums granted by rulers as] gifts?' He replied, 'Take them. For nowadays you will find succour in them. But if ever these should become the price of your faith, then drop them.'" This hadith was related by Bukhārī and Muslim.46

Practices: Accepting Gifts from the Wealthy

In general, it has been the practice of Sufi masters to accept gifts and stipends. The benefits of their doing so are peace of mind and freedom from having to concern themselves with things that might distract them from their real work. The hadith above is explicit in its giving permission for this practice. However, if the patron has some reason other than sincere love for the master, and actually wants to give money in payment for something he wants from the master, then, under those circumstances, his gifts may not be accepted. Similarly, if the gift is tainted with illegitimate earnings, such as would bring detriment to the name of Islam, then the gift may surely not be accepted. As a general rule, then, a gift may be accepted only when it comes unaccompanied by anything contrary to Islamic teachings.

46 This hadith could not be found in Bukhārī with these words. Muslim: 1657
is this? I replied, 'Just a wall that needs repairing.' Then he said to me, 'The matter of death is even simpler than that.' In another version of the same ḥadith, the Prophet ﷺ says, 'I see the matter of death as something even closer than that [wall].' This ḥadith was related by Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhi.⁴⁷

**Practices: Exaggeration in Severing Worldly Ties**

This practice has already been discussed in the commentary of ḥadith [16]. Obviously, the ḥadith above refers to the same practice.

**ḤADĪTH 21**

عن الحارث الأعور، عن علي رضي الله عنه قال رسولٌ الله صلى الله عليه وسلم (في فصيلة القرون من حديث طويل) ﴿لا ينبغي من أمانته، ولا يلقى علي كفره الرذ، ولا ينبغي عجائبه الحديث﴾

It is related on the authority of 'Ali رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said [among other things in a lengthy ḥadith], ‘...and the learned will never have their fill of it; and even though it be read and reread, over and over again, it will never seem old, and its wonders will never cease.’ This ḥadith was related by Tirmidhi.⁴⁸

**States: Spiritual Knowledge**

When, through constant remembrance, dhikr, and other spiritual practices and disciplines, the darkness of the self and other impurities are dispelled, the heart and soul of the Sufi will enter into a special relationship with the Almighty, so that certain spiritual subtleties and knowledge will be bestowed upon the Sufi from within, as it were, bypassing the usual mediums of learning and study. That this is something which actually occurs is attested to in the ḥadith above. This is because ordinary, recorded knowledge is limited in scope—once it is digested, that is the end of it, whereas spiritual knowledge is unlimited and, more often than not, impossible to digest.

⁴⁷ Abū Dāwūd: 5235, Tirmidhi: 2335, Ibn Majah: 4160
⁴⁸ Tirmidhi: 2906. He said: ‘This is a strange ḥadith; we do not know it but through the report of Ḥamzah az-Zayyāt. And his chain in unknown and there is a doubt in the ḥadith of Ḥarīth.’
**Hadīth 22**

It is related on the authority of Abū Huraira that Allah's Prophet said, "Never will a group of people gather in a house from among the houses of Allah for the recitation of Allah's Book, or to study it among themselves, except that a state of spiritual tranquility, sakīna, will descend upon them, and they are overcome by Divine Mercy, and they are surrounded by angels, and they are mentioned by Allah as being among those closest to Him." This hadīth was related by Abū Dāwūd.

**Practices: Group Remembrance**

The gathering together of a number of Sufis for the purpose of remembrance, dhikr, illuminating their inner beings, enhancing their animation, increasing their determination, and warding off inertia is called group remembrance. The precedent for this practice, along with an indication of its positive spiritual benefits, is to be found in the hadīth above.

**Customs: Spiritual Retreats**

Since the Companions of the Prophet and the Followers had their inner beings enlightened through proximity to the Messenger of Allah, so that they had acquired the ability to maintain states of constant remembrance, they were in no need of seclusion for the purpose of developing this ability. Later on, however, owing to changed conditions, the custom of building retreats became widespread among the Sufi masters, and with good reason. In the hadīth above, the words, "houses of Allah" are usually interpreted to mean mosques. However, since the phrase is figurative, it may be assumed that it refers to the general and not only to the particular. Secondly, when the mosque and retreat are established for more or less the same purposes, they may all be said to share in the description "houses of Allah." Therefore, in this wise, the hadīth may be cited as a precedent for the custom of building retreats.

**States: The Inner Condition of Tranquility**

Experience has shown that, as a result of one's involvement in constant remem-
brance, a certain strange yet pleasant state comes over the heart and, with con-
tinued involvement, will grow stronger and more permanent. In the terminology
of the Sufis, this is called nisba or affinity. In the ḥadith above, the word sakina is
used to denote the same phenomenon.

**ḤADĪTH 23**

عن أبي سعيد الخُدْرِيّ رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلّى الله علّيْهِ وسلّمُ: يقولُ الله تعالى: ‘من مُعَلَّمَ الْفِرَاحُ عَن مَسْتَفْلِيَ أَعْطَيْتُهُ أَفْضَلَ مَا أَعْطُي السَّابِلِينَ’. (أخيره الترمذي)

It is related on the authority of Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī that Allāh’s Prophet ﷺ said, “The Almighty says, ‘Whoever is diverted from supplicating Me owing to their preoccupation with recitation of the Qur’ān, will be granted the best of what I grant to those who supplicate.’”

*Practices: Non-essential Acts of Worship during Intense Sessions of Remembrance*

In most Sufi orders the disciple is given a particular dhikr-formula to repeat as a spiritual discipline. While engaged in this discipline, the disciple will forgo many other virtuous acts, like supererogatory prayers, lessons in the Islamic sciences, listening to talks about faith, and so forth. This practice is one which has drawn the criticism of many of those who concern themselves with no more than the externals of Islam. In brief, the reason behind this practice of the Sufis is that at the outset of discipleship, the disciple’s internal state is subordinate to the disciple’s external state. Over a period of time, however, the opposite will come about, so that the external state will be subordinate to the disciple’s internal state. Therefore, if at the outset the disciple is allowed to undertake a number of different activities, it will be next to impossible for the disciple to achieve the mental and spiritual concentration that is at the heart of all Sufi training. The ḥadīth above comes as confirmation of this practice. Therefore, preoccupation with the Qur’ān’s recitation, which is itself a kind of dhikr, and to the extent that one neglects as important an act of worship as supplication, *duʿāʾ* is accorded praise rather than criticism. This is the gist of the practice I have just described.

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50 Tirmidhi: 2926

51 The Qur’ān describes itself as “... but dhikr for all of the worlds” (12:104). YTD.
It is related on the authority of 'A'isha that the Messenger of Allah said, “One who has mastered the Qur'an shares the rank of the noble, pious scribes. While one who recites the Qur'an faltering, who finds it difficult to recite, for such a one there is a two-fold reward.” This hadith was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abu Dawūd, and Tirmidhī.

**Teachings: The Irrelevance of Pleasure in Matters of Worship**

It sometimes happens, when people find that they are not deriving any pleasure from the act of remembrance, *dhikr*, or the performance of other acts of worship, that they become discouraged and stop doing those things altogether. Sometimes they become so disheartened that they begin thinking that what they were doing was in vain and essentially futile. Such misgivings are anathema to inner, spiritual development because it is confidence that is the key to all such development. The masters have written that the object is *dhikr*, not pleasure. In fact, they say, to maintain one's level of involvement in *dhikr*, even when it is not enjoyable to do so, is of more benefit to the Sufi than if it actually gave him/her great pleasure. Therefore, a lack of pleasure is not necessarily indicative of a corresponding lack of benefit. Rather, the opposite is true. In the hadith above, this truth is clearly set forth in the promise of a double reward for the person who struggles in reciting the Qur'an; for the reason that there is a proportional relationship between the degree of difficulty and the amount of reward. This is what spiritual disciplines are all about.

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52 Al-Qur'an, 80:15.
It is related on the authority of Usayd ibn Ḥuṣayr that as he was reciting one night from the second chapter of the Qurʾān, near where he had tethered his horse for the night, the horse suddenly sprang up [apparently for no reason]. ‘Usayd then stopped his recitation, and the horse grew still. When ‘Usayd began reciting again, the horse sprang up another time. So he stopped, and the horse grew quiet. Usayd again began to recite, and again the horse sprang up. Then, since his son, Yahyā, was sleeping nearby the horse, ‘Usayd got up and moved him away. It was then that he happened to raise his head up to the sky when, lo and behold, he saw something like a cloud with lamps lit up inside of it. In the morning ‘Usayd related all this to the Messenger of Allāh, who said, “Do you know what that was?” “No,” Usayd replied. The Messenger said, “Those were angels approaching at the sound of your recitation. If you had continued reciting, the people would have risen this morning and seen them, and they would not have been invisible!” This ḥadith was related by Bukhārī.

Questions: The Possibility of Angels Revealing Themselves to other than a Prophet

According to the scholars of Islam, not only is it possible for the masters to see the angels, it is also possible for them to converse with the angels. Nor, they add, is this merely a matter of speculation, as such things have actually occurred. The ḥadith above is an unambiguous account of one such occurrence. In another ḥadith, related by Muslim, an incident is recorded in which the angels greeted ʿImrān ibn Ḥuṣayn.

Questions: The Possibility of Being Unable to Interpret One’s Own Visions

Another point to be derived from the ḥadith above is that it often happens that Sufis who have spiritual visions, kashf, are incapable of penetrating to the true meaning of those visions. In the ḥadith above, ‘Usayd actually saw the angels, but was nevertheless unaware that what he had seen were truly angels. Sufi scholars have written that the person who has taken this point to heart will never again rely on his/her own opinion or intellect in the matter of interpreting visions. Indeed, such a person will avoid making many mistakes.

54 Bukhārī: 5018
55 In other words, all such visions should be discussed with someone with greater experience. YTD.
Hadith 26

عَنْ أَبِي بْنِ كَعْبِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِيمُ: "يَا أَبا الْمُنْذِرِ، أَنْفِقْ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مَعْلُوكَ أَعْظَمْ?" قَالَ: "اللَّهُ لا إِلَيْهِ مَثَلُ مَا تَعْلَمُونَ" فَقَضَرَ بِصَدْرِهِ وَقَالَ: "لَيْهِيَتِكَ الْآيةِ أَبا الْمُنْذِرِ". (أَخْرِجَهُ مُسْلِمُ وَأَبُو دَوْدَةٍ)

It is related on the authority of Ubayy ibn Ka'b, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ once said to him, “O Abu Mundhir! Do you know which verse of Allah's Book is the greatest you have before you?” Ubayy ﷺ replied, “Allah, there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal.” Then the Prophet ﷺ struck Ubayy on the chest and said, “May this knowledge be a blessing to you, O Abu Mundhir!” This hadith was related by Muslim and Abu Dawud.

States: Spiritual Knowledge

While this subject was discussed in the commentary on Hadith 21, in the hadith above we find further confirmation of this phenomenon, as the naming of that particular verse as the greatest in the entire Qur'an came about through divine inspiration. Furthermore, in the Prophet's congratulations to 'Ubayy ﷺ, there is an obvious reference to the merit of that knowledge.

Note: In this hadith the Ayat al-Kursi39 is called the greatest verse in the Book of Allah on the basis of the blessings to be had from its recitation. Many different chapters and verses of the Qur'an have been mentioned in the hadith literature as possessing blessings of one sort or another. That the blessings of some verses are greater than those of others is true only in consideration of the different aspects of each verse or chapter; otherwise every verse of the Qur'an is equal when you consider that each is the word of the Almighty, inimitable and miraculous. Thus, there is no reason to suppose that the various hadiths which have come to us concerning the relative merits of one verse or another are in any way contradictory.

Hadith 27

عَنْ أَبِي بْنِ هُرِيْرَةِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: وَكَلَّمَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِيمُ يَحْفِظْ رَكُؤَةٍ

56 Qur'an, 2:255
57 Muslim: 810, Abu Dawud: 1460
58 Likewise, in the Prophet's striking Ubay on the chest there is an obvious reference to the source of that knowledge. YTD.
59 The verse quoted in the Hadith: 2:255, is called the Ayat al-Kursi or the Verse of the Seat (of Power). YTD.
It is related that Abū Hurairah said, "Allâh's Prophet entrusted me with the keeping of the zakâh money given during the month of Ramaḍān. One day, someone came to me and began taking handfuls of the grain [given as zakâh], so I grabbed him." [At this point the hadîth continues until Abū Hurairah said,] "So the Prophet asked me, 'Do you know whom you have been addressing for the last three days, O Abū Hurairah?' 'No,' I replied. Then he said, 'That was Satan.'" This hadîth was related by Bukhâri.\(^6\)

**Questions: Satan and Simulation**

It is clear from the hadîth above that Satan assumed a human form and revealed himself as such.

**States: Miracles**

It is an article of faith with Muslims that miracles may be performed by a wali, a true spiritual master. In the hadîth above, Abū Hurairah's capture of Satan was clearly one such miracle.

**Questions: The Possibility of Being Unable to Interpret One's Own Miracles**

A similar subject was discussed in the commentary on hadîth [25]. There, the subject was visions, kâshf, whereas here the subject is minor miracles, kârimât. In the hadîth above, Abū Hurairah admits his ignorance of the essence of his own kârama.

**Hadîth 28**

It is related on the authority of Abū Ayyûb al-Ansâri that he had a cellar filled with dates from which the jinn used to take their fill without his permission. When he complained about this to the Prophet, he replied,

\(^6\) Bukhâri: 2311, 3275, 5010
“Go! And when next you see them, say: ‘In the name of Allāh! Answer the call of Allāh’s Prophet!’” The narrator of the ḥadīth then said, “And so Abū Ayyūb ﷺ caught the jinn.” This ḥadīth was narrated by Tirmidhī. ⁶¹

**Customs: Charms and Incantations**

Most Sufi masters are called upon to make amulets and charms for people with particular needs, and to perform exorcisms and so forth. In such cases, most masters are too polite to refuse, and so, seeking the help of the Almighty, they do their best to furnish their petitioners with something that will be of use to them in solving their particular problems. In the ḥadīth above, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ taught Abū Ayyūb ﷺ a formula for exorcising the jinn. Thus, it cannot be said that the custom of the Sufis is in any way contrary to the Sunna. In fact, there are several ḥadīths concerning the use of different charms and incantations.

**ḤADĪTH 29**

> عن جابر رضي الله عنه قال: فِيْتِمَا نَزَّلَتْ إِذْ هَمَتُّ مَفْتَعِلاً مَنْ كَسَّاهُ اللَّهُ وَلَيْثَهُا
> قَالَ: تَحْمُّ الْمَفْتَعِلاً بِنَّوْ خَارِقَةٍ وَبَنَوْ سَلَيْمَةٍ وَمَا يُسَرُّ فِي أَنْ تَنْبَّأُ لْحَقَّ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا وَاللَّهُ وَلَيْثَهُا

It is related on the authority of Jābir ﷺ that, “Concerning us the verse was revealed, ‘When two parties amongst you were about to lose heart, even though Allāh is their Protector.’⁶² Yes, we are those two parties, the tribes of Ḥārithah and Salamā. And I am not sorry that this verse was revealed, for has the Almighty not said, ‘Allāh is their Protector?’⁶³” This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī and Muslim. ⁶⁴

**States: Taking Pleasure in Censure by the Beloved**

Many Sufis have related how, though it may seem incredible, they have derived pleasure from visions and inspirations in which they were scolded by Allāh or by His Messenger ﷺ. The ḥadīth above, however, should do much toward dispelling our viewing of this phenomenon in the light of incredulity. For, despite the censure of his tribe, it was the one phrase in indication of Allāh’s concern with his tribe

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⁶¹ Tirmidhī: 2880
⁶² Qur’ān, 3:122
⁶³ Even though the verse mentions a wrong they had committed, and was revealed to censure them its revelation was nonetheless a pleasure to Jābir. YTD.
⁶⁴ Bukhārī: 4051, Muslim: 2505
which caused Jābir  to glory in the revelation of the verse. Similarly, when a Sufi is made aware that he/she is being censured, a sign will be given, in one form or another, that the censure is made because the Sufi is cared for. Certainly, if it was Allāh's wrath that the Sufi was being made aware of, he/she would have no cause for rejoicing. Sa'di tells the story of the Sufi who heard a voice from the Unseen tell him that his years of worship had not found acceptance with the Almighty. The Sufi then continued as before with his worship, saying, 'Accepted or not accepted, there is no other way to go.' At last, from the Unseen came the cry, 'Accepted! Though you remain without perfection. For without Me, you remain without protection!' There is also a story about a disciple of Shāh Abū al-Ma'allī who returned from Madīna and related to him that in a dream he had been visited by the Prophet  who greeted him and then asked him to convey his greetings to his 'heretical' master. On hearing the dream, Shāh Abū al-Ma'allī began leaping for joy, saying: 'You say I'm no good, and I'm ecstatic! Allāh bless you, you have spoken well. How well sour words beautify sweet, red lips!' Another Sufi was startled when, during a time of intense spiritual contemplation, he heard a voice from the Unseen say, 'You will become a disbeliever and die!' Later the Sufi was told by his master not to worry, and to return to his devotions, for what he had heard was merely a taunt of love, after the fashion of the name-calling practised by lovers everywhere. The following verse of the Mathnawi might also be included under this general heading:

Your displeasure with me is pleasure to my soul,
May my heart be made ransom, my heart in grief!

ḤADĪTH 30

عن جابر رضي الله عنه قال: مرَضْتُ فَأَنامْي رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَعْتُدُونِي
وَأَبَوَيْكُ وَهَمْهَا مَاشِيَانِ فَوَجَدَنِي قَدْ أَعْمَىَ عَلَيْنَا فَوَتَضَأْتُ الْبَيْنِيَ صَلِّ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَمَّ صَبَّ وَضُوْءَهُ عَلَيْنَا فَأَفْقَدتُ. الحديث (أخرجه الخمسة إلا النسائي)

It is related on the authority of Jābir  that, "Once, when I had fallen ill, Allāh's Prophet  walked over with Abū Bakr  to inquire after my health. I was unconscious when they found me, so the Prophet  made ablutions and poured the used water over me. At that, I immediately regained consciousness... [the ḥadīth continues.] This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and Tirmidhi.65

Customs: Blessings from Relics
It is the way of most Sufis to secure blessings for themselves from the clothes and other personal effects of their masters and others whose acceptance with the Almighty is obvious. This hadith is explicit in its authentication of this custom; as it was from the blessings of the water used in ablutions by the Prophet ﷺ that Jābir ﷺ regained consciousness.

Hadith 31

عن عبادة بن الصامت رضي الله عنه قال: كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا تزوال عليه الوحي كتب ليذبح وتزوال وجهه. (أخره مسلم وابوداود والترمذي)

It is related on the authority of 'Ubādah ibn as-Ṣāmit ﷺ that, “When the revelation came to him, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was so overwhelmed by the experience that his face turned ashen.” This hadith was related by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and Tirmidhī.66

States: Ecstasy and Effacement
The suspension of senses or faculties which comes about as a result of the descent of spiritual meanings on the heart is called absence or ghaybah and effacement or mahw in Sufi terminology. It is this phenomenon, which is so clearly referred to in the hadith above.

Hadith 32

عن عائشة رضي الله تعالى عنها قالت: كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يَجَرُّ (أتيلاً) حتى تزوال: «وَاللَّهُ يَغْصَمْكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ» فأخرَّج رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم رأسه بين الْعَيْنَيْنِ، فقال: «يا أبا النَّاسِ! انصرفوا، فقد عصَّمْيُنِي اللَّهُ عز وجل»، (أخره الترمذي)

It is related on the authority of 'A'isha ﷺ that she said, “Allāh's Prophet ﷺ always kept vigil at night until the Almighty revealed the verse: ‘Allāh will protect you from mankind.’67 When that happened, the Prophet ﷺ stuck

66 Muslim: 2334, 1690. It was not found in Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī.
67 Al-Qur'ān, 6:68
his head outside the tent and cried, 'Go away, people! The Almighty has granted me his protection.' This ḥadith was related by Tirmidhi. 

Practices: Rejecting Causative Factors
This type of trust in Allāh is not only permissible, but preferable for the strong of heart and faith. Indeed, this has always been the hallmark of the Sufi masters. The hadith above is an extremely lucid account of the reality of such trust, tawakkul.

Note: The foregoing of fixed, indispensable causative factors is absolutely prohibited. This has nothing to do with tawakkul. The Qur'anic teaching on the subject is as follows: “And when you are resolved, put your trust in Allāh,” where, undoubtedly, the word “resolved” implies a definite course of action.

Hadith 33

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas that a certain man went to Allāh’s Messenger and said, “Whenever I eat meat, my appetite for women is stimulated and I am possessed by desire. Therefore, I have forbidden myself from consuming meat.” Then the Almighty revealed the verse: “0 believers! Forbid not such good things as Allāh has made lawful for you.” This ḥadith was related by Tirmidhi.

Corrections: Prohibition of Excesses in Forsaking Pleasure
Certain harsh and unsparing people have been known to abstain from things which are lawful in the same way that they abstain from things they know to be prohibited, believing that this is something which will bring them closer to Allāh. Practically and theoretically, this is religious fanaticism and falls under the category of blameworthy innovation, bid’ah. It was in refutation of

68 Tirmidhi: 3046
69 Al-Qur'ān, 3:159
70 Al-Qur'ān, 5:87
71 Tirmidhi: 3054
72 Like meat in general, and beef in particular.
precisely this type of extremism that the Qur’ānic prohibition of monasticism was revealed. The ḥadīth above explains that it was exactly this sort of monasticism that became the occasion for the revelation of the above mentioned verse of the Qur’ān. The abstinence of the Sufis, especially in the course of their spiritual disciplines, is comparable to nothing so much as the dietary caution exercised by the sick. This is because the sick do not hold it as an article of faith that what they abstain from (while in that state) is prohibited. Nor do they suppose their abstention to be in itself an act of worship. The Sufis’ practices in this regard, then, and contrary to the opinion of the shallow formalists, are in no way connected to monasticism.

**ḤADĪTH 34**

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar that, “When ‘Abdullāh ibn Salūl died, [such and such took place. The ḥadīth continues until finally Ibn ‘Umar continues...] Then ‘Umar stood up and grasped the cloak of the Prophet saying, ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Are you praying for him even when your Lord has forbidden you to pray for him?’ The Prophet replied, ‘On the contrary, Allāh has given me a choice.’” This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, and Nasa’ī.

States: Intoxication Resulting from Spiritual Meanings

Intoxication, sukīr, is the name given to that loss of discretion which sometimes takes place at the time of the descent of spiritual meanings on the heart. The return of discretion is called sobriety, sahw. In the ḥadīth above, a situation is described in which ‘Umar’s heart was so overwhelmed by antipathy for the

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73 Al-Qur’ān, 57:27
74 Ibn Salūl was a well known hypocrite in Madīna who, despite his profession of Islam, was despised by many of the believers. YTD.
75 The reference made by ‘Umar is to the Qur’ānic verse at 9:80: “... ask forgiveness for them, or ask not forgiveness...” YTD.
76 Bukhārī: 1269, 4670, 4672, Muslim: 2774, Tirmidhī: 3098, Nasa’ī: 1901, Ibn Majah: 1523
enemies of Allāh that he paid no attention to the way, both in word and deed, that he approached Allāh’s Prophet ﷺ. Indeed, to all outward appearances, ‘Umar’s ﷺ behaviour was extremely disrespectful. The Prophet ﷺ, however, knowing the reason for ‘Umar’s ﷺ behaviour, excused him. Later, when the state of sukr was replaced by sahīw, ‘Umar ﷺ marvelled at how reckless he had been, and was most repentant.

HADĪTH 35

On the authority of ‘Abdullāh ibn Ka‘b ﷺ it is related that his father, Ka‘b ﷺ [in the course of telling the story of how he had remained behind during the military campaign to Tabuk,] said, “So Allāh’s Prophet ﷺ forbade the Muslims to engage any of the three of us in conversation.” Later, in the same ḥadīth, Ka‘b ﷺ said, “When the one whose voice I had heard came to give me the good tidings [of forgiveness for having missed the campaign], I stripped off my robe and dressed him in it, out of joy for his having been the one to inform me.” In the same ḥadīth, Ka‘b ﷺ cites the following verse of the Qur’ān to describe how he and the other two felt: “... until, for all of its breadth, the earth became strait for them.”⁷⁷ This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abū Dāwūd, and Nasā‘ī.⁷⁸

Practices: Discipline by Disassociation

It is related concerning most Sufi masters that at one time or another they were forced to discipline someone from among their disciples by banishment, or by enforced silence, or by some other apposite disciplinary action. The object of this sort of discipline is no more than admonishment, and it is certainly never based on any kind of personal or animosity or malice. That this practice is a good one is attested to by the ḥadīth above, as Allāh’s Prophet ﷺ disciplined three of his Companions in much the same way.

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⁷⁷ Al-Qur’ān, 9:118
Customs: Presentation of Gifts to Bearers of Good Tidings

It is customary among many Sufis to offer garments or small sums of money to those, such as the reciters of inspired poetry, who bring them pleasure with their glad tidings. This is no different than Ka'î's giving his robe to the one who brought him the news of his forgiveness.

**States: Contraction**

The contraction of the heart at the coming of the signs of Divine majesty, *jalâl*, is called *qabd* by the Sufis. The straitened conditions of the three men described by Ka'î in his narrative correspond exactly to the *qabd* of the Sufis, as the reason for those conditions was the delay in the acceptance of the three men's repentance; for this delay was a sign, among many others, of Divine majesty. Indeed, the phrase used in the narrative to describe this state is a metaphor for restriction and depression. The opposite of *qabd* is *bast* or expansion, which denotes joy and pleasure in the heart at the coming of the signs of Divine bounty. This was the state experienced by Ka'î after he learned that his repentance had been accepted. All of this is clear from the hadith above in which it is related that, as a sign of how he felt, he gave away his robe.

**Hadîth 36**

> عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "لئنا أُغرِقَ إِنَّهُ فُرَعُونَ قال: أَمَنَّا أَنَا إِلَّا إِلَّهَ إِلَّاءَ إِلَّهَ إِمَّةَ بُنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ قَالَ جَبْرِيلُ: يَا مُحْمَدُ لَوْ رَأِيْتُبُّمَا كَانَ عَلَى كَأْنَى أَحَدٌ مِنْ حَالِ النَّبِيِّ وَأَصْدَقَ فِي هَذِهِ حَقَّةٌ أَنَّ نُذُرُكَ الرَّحْمَةَ (أَخْرَجَهِ التَّرَمَدِي).

It is related on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas that Allah's Messenger said, "When Pharaoh saw that he was going to drown, he cried out, 'I believe that there is no god but the One in whom the Israelites believe!' Then the angel Jibril said to me, 'O Muhammad! If only you could have seen me as I took mud from the ocean floor and stuffed it into his mouth for fear of his being overtaken at the last moment of his life by the mercy of Allah!'" This hadith was related by Tirmidhi.

**States: Intoxication**

In spite of the heart's position as the point on which revolves the acceptance of one's confession of faith, if it is not the time for the acceptance of repentance, it

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79 Tirmidhi: 3107
will avail nothing to confess one's faith aloud. If the time is right, however, for the acceptance of one's repentance, even a silent confession of faith will suffice.\(^{80}\) Jibril's attempt to silence Pharaoh, in spite of his knowledge that his doing so would have no bearing on Pharaoh's ultimate destiny, came as a result of his being in the state of *sukr*, concerning the reality of which I have spoken already in my commentary on a previous hadith [34]. In this case, too, it was Jibril's extreme antipathy for the enemies of Allah that led him to do what he did.

**HADITH 37**

 عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنَّهُ قال: قال أبو بكر: "أَنَّ مَسْلِلَ اللَّهِ! قَدْ شَيْبَتْ قَالَ: "شَيْبَتْيُ" ًوَ الْوَاقِعَةُ الحَدِيثَ (أَخْرَجَهُ السَّمِّيْـ) ُوَ الْوَاقِعَةُ الحَدِيثَ (أَخْرَجَهُ السَّمِّيْـ)

It is related on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas \(\text{سُجَّدُ} \) that Abū Bakr \(\text{سُجَّدُ} \) said, "O Messenger of Allah! You have aged!" Then he \(\text{سُجَّدُ} \) replied, "The chapters of Hûd and the Event have aged me!"\(^{81}\) This hadith was related by Tirmidhi.\(^{82}\)

*States: Awe*

On a higher spiritual plane than, but corresponding to, *qabd* and *bast* (contraction and expansion) are the feeling of awe brought on by the manifestation of Divine majesty or *hayba* and intimacy or *uns*. As the spiritual states of the Prophet \(\text{سُجَّدُ} \) were of the highest levels of spiritual development, it is better to refer to his awe for the Almighty, which is one of the early signs of *qabd*, as *hayba*.

*Character: Spiritual Vigilance*

Complete reflection on, and attention to, any particular subject, along with a continued effort to take its meaning to heart is called vigilance or *muraqabah*. Obviously, the ageing mentioned here as a result of awe depends chiefly on constant and concentrated attention to the subject. In this wise, the hadith points clearly to the practice of *muraqabah*.

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\(^{80}\) Therefore, as Pharaoh's confession of faith came too late, it mattered nothing that he confessed it aloud. See Qur'ān, 10:91–2. YYD.

\(^{81}\) The chapter entitled Hûd (11), the first of these two chapters, contains mention of how former nations were punished and made the objects of Divine wrath, while the chapter entitled The Event (56), details the Hereafter and conditions in the Fire and Garden. YYD.

\(^{82}\) Tirmidhi: 3297
HADITH 38

It is related on the authority of Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah said, “Beware the intuition of a believer, for the believer sees with the light of Allah.” This hadith was related by Tirmidhi.84

States: Intuition
Through the purity of heart, which is, in fact, the fruit of constant remembrance and heeding, it quite often happens that a Sufi is able to perceive obscure spiritual truths. A branch of kashf, or spiritual vision, this is known in Sufi parlance as intuition or firāṣa. The hadith above mentions this faculty explicitly. Furthermore, the “light of Allah” mentioned in the hadith refers directly to the purity of heart which is brought about through remembrance, dhikr, and heedfulness, taqwā.

HADITH 39

It is related on the authority of 'Ā’isha that, “I asked the Messenger of Allah if the people referred to in the verse: ‘Those who give of what they are given, with their hearts quaking: were those who drink wine and practise thievery. He answered me, saying, ‘No, O daughter of al-Siddiq! Rather, they are the ones who keep fasts and give alms, and then fear that perhaps their deeds will not be accepted of them. Those are the ones who truly vie in good deeds.’” This hadith was related by Tirmidhi.84

Character: Fear and Humility
This hadith is clear in its bespeaking these two characteristics of the Sufis, as it contains mention of those who, when they look on the lowliness and insignificance

83 Tirmidhi: 3127
84 Tirmidhi: 3175
of their own condition, and then on the majesty of the Almighty, are overcome by fear of the possibility that their works will not avail them in the Hereafter.

**Signs: Those Nearest to Allāh**

In the Qur'ānic verse quoted above, Allāh described certain characteristics as the attributes of His closest servants. These characteristics, then, are among the signs that indicate the true Sufi masters.

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**Hadīth 40**

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās that when Hilāl ibn Umayyah was unable to produce witnesses, after accusing his wife of adultery, the Messenger of Allāh told him that if he was unable to produce witnesses, he would have to face the penalty for false accusation. So, Hilāl said, “By the One Who sent you with the true faith! I am telling the truth. Surely, the Almighty will reveal something to exonerate me and spare me from that penalty!” Just then, Jibrīl descended. In the same hadith it is related that the Prophet said, “Had it not been for what was revealed in the Book of Allāh, this woman and I would have had business together.”

This hadith was related by Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, and Tirmidhī.

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85 The specific hadd penalty for false accusation, qadhf, in cases of adultery is eighty lashes. See Qur'ān, 24:6. YTD.

86 Jibrīl brought revelation exonerating Hilāl from the penalty in exchange for his oath and that of his wife. See Qur'ān, 24:6. YTD.

87 This is what the Prophet said when Hilāl’s wife gave birth to a child who displayed the exact signs that the Prophet had said would confirm its descent from one other than Hilāl. YTD.

88 In other words, she might have been punished. However, as she had taken the oath, as required by the law of ḫiṣn in the verse that was revealed when Hilāl first complained to him, the matter was closed until the Day of Judgment. It should be recognised here that the Prophet was speaking to Hilāl and telling him that he knew him to be truthful. Otherwise, from a purely legal perspective, there was no case. For unless there are witnesses to testify to adultery, the appearance of signs on a child are not sufficient to convict in a case involving ḫiṣn, especially when the general rule in such cases is that the least modicum of doubt will suffice to put aside the penalty. YTD.

States: Miracles
If Hilāl’s statement, “Surely the Almighty will reveal something to exonerate me and spare me from that penalty!” is taken as a declarative statement, and it is most likely that it was, then his foretelling the descent of the angel of revelation was a miracle, karāma. If the sentence is understood as exclamatory in nature, however, then the acceptance of his plea may be understood as a miracle.

Corrections: Legal Before Spiritual Considerations
By means of revelation it was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ that if a child with certain distinguishing traits were born to Hilāl’s wife, it would be illegitimate. Obviously, in a matter of such gravity, the Prophet ﷺ would never have relied on his own opinions or assumptions. When a child with exactly those traits was born to the woman, then, in spite of the certainty of his knowledge, the Prophet ﷺ deferred to the ruling of the Sharī’a. This is a very important point, that the Prophet ﷺ put the Sharī’a before the Haqiqa or, in this case, the certainty that the woman was guilty, and it is one on which many of our deeds and beliefs depend. Furthermore, this is actually a great mercy for us. Were it not so, there would be no order in the world. For example, the reality or Haqiqa of the matter is that everything in existence is the possession of Allāh ﷺ, and that when we ascribe things to ourselves or to others, we are only speaking figuratively. Then, if we were to do away with this counterfeit coin of figurative language and thought, and begin to transact all of our affairs in the currency of the Haqiqa, all distinction between what is rightfully our own and what belongs to others—rights, responsibilities, and even families—would all fall away. The resulting chaos, scandal and corruption is all too predictable. So Allāh, in His wisdom and mercy, has given us the Sharī’a to protect us from these evils. Those who are incapable of understanding this essential wisdom behind the Sharī’a often end up in heresy and worse.

Hadīth 41

عن عائشة رضي الله تعالى عنها في حديث الإفك حين نزل برائتها قالت: فقلت لَيَأَمِيُّ: قَوْمِي إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، فَقُلْتُ: وَاللَّهِ لَا أَقُومُ إِلَيْهِ، لَا أَحْمَدُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الَّذِي نُزِّلَ بِرَأْيَتِي. (أخرجه الخمسة إلا أبا داود)

It is related on the authority of ‘A’isha ﷺ concerning the events surrounding the incident in which she was slandered: “So, my mother said to me, ‘Go now to Allāh’s Prophet!’ I replied, ‘I will not go to him! Nor will I
praise any other than Allâh! He was the One who revealed my innocence.”
This hadith was related by Bukhârî, Nasâ‘î, and Tirmidhî.90

States: Ecstatic Pronouncements

The ecstatic pronouncements made by Sufi masters while under the influence of one spiritual state or another, whether made in prose or poetry, which when construed literally seem presumptuous or rash, are termed shatahât. Here, the statement made by ‘A’îsha was of this kind. The reason she said what she did was that she was extremely unhappy that the Prophet being only human and not possessing knowledge of all things, had himself been troubled and puzzled by the whole incident. In other words, ‘A’îsha’s distress was at what she believed to be the Prophet’s uncertainty about her. When the Qur’ânic verses concerning her innocence were revealed, she was so elated that she said what she said (as narrated in the hadith above). Finally, that the Messenger of Allâh did not refute or rebuke her for what she had said is ample proof that those who let such pronouncements, shatahât, escape from their lips may certainly be excused.

HADÎTH 42

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه في قوله تعالى: “إِنَّكَ لَا تَحْيَى مِنْ أَحْبَبْتِكَ” قَالَ: تَرَأَتْ
في رَسُولِ الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حَبَّتُ يُؤَوِّدُ عَمَّا أَبا طالِبٍ عَلَى الإِسْلَامِ (أَخْرِجَه مسلم والترمذي)

It is related on the authority of Abû Huraira concerning the verse: “No, you surely cannot guide whomsoever you wish.”91 that the Messenger of Allâh had been attempting to guide his uncle, Abû Tâlib, to accept Islam. This hadith was related by Muslim and Tirmidhî.92

Corrections: Spiritual Administration

Many ignorant people make the mistake of believing that Sufi masters have the ability to direct communication of Divine effusion, fayd, whenever, and to whomsoever they please. That this belief is false is made evident in the hadith above for, when the Prophet was not so empowered, how is it possible that others should be? Therefore, when the matter of ensuring spiritual welfare, which is the primary

90 Bukhârî: 4141, Muslim: 2770, Tirmidhî: 3180, Nasâ‘î: 8931
91 Qur’ân, 28:56
92 Muslim: 25, Tirmidhî: 3188
function of a Sufi master, is outside the sphere of his direct influence, then with all the more reason the matter of promoting temporal welfare must undoubtedly be understood to be beyond the power of the Sufi master. Nowadays, so many ignorant Sufis are caught up in the presumption, and I seek refuge in Allâh from the enormity of their beliefs, that the Sufi masters are in possession of all the powers of divinity. The ḥadîth above should suffice to repudiate all such notions.

**ḤADĪTH 43**

> ❲٧٠١ ❲
> عَنْ عِبَّاسَ يَسْتَمِعُواً فِي قُوْلهُ قَالَ: «مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّنْ قَلْبِهِنَّ فِي جُوْهُهُ»

> قَالَ: قَامَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمَ يُؤَاذِينَ، فَخَطَّرَ عَظْمَةَ الْحَدِيثِ (أُخْرِجَهُ)

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbâs ﷺ that he said, concerning the following verse: “Allâh has not assigned to any person two hearts within his breast.”⁹³ “One day, Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ was standing in prayer when certain thoughts crossed his mind...” This ḥadîth was related by Tirmidhî.⁹⁴

Questions: Stray Thoughts

Some people think that it is conditional to the proper performance of prayer that no stray thoughts enter the mind of the one performing it. That this is not so should be perfectly clear from the ḥadîth above. An intentional lapse in concentration, however, will certainly impair the value of the prayer. Still, the coming to mind of stray thoughts is something that is beyond our control. What is, however, within our control is our pursuing or ignoring these thoughts as they occur; for, if we pursue them, we may impair our prayer. That over which we exercise no control will neither enhance nor detract from our worship. There are sometimes periods in which no such stray thoughts occur, and this is the result of a certain absorption which is a praiseworthy spiritual state, but which is not something to be sought in itself. In fact, sometimes a thought-filled prayer is better than a thought-free one, for it is quite a taxing matter to ignore stray thoughts and remain concentrated on prayer. I have already explained that the rewards to be had from an act of worship are proportionate to the degree of difficulty or effort expended on performing it.

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⁹³ Qur’ān, 33:4
⁹⁴ Tirmidhî: 3199
Hadith 44

It is related on the authority of Abū Hurairah that Allāh’s Prophet said, “When the Almighty gives a command in heaven, the angels fold their wings in humble deference to the word of Allāh, which sounds like the noise of a chain dragged over rock.” This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī.

Questions: The Eternal Manifested in the Form of the Temporal

It is obvious that while the “word” of Allāh is eternal, the sound (form) of a chain being dragged over rock is temporal. Then, in this ḥadīth, through the comparison of the eternal “word” to the temporal “sound,” confirmation is found for the matter, so often referred to by the Sufi masters, of the manifestations of the Eternal Being in the temporal universe; a phenomenon referred to in Sufi terminology as representative manifestation or tajallī-e-mithali. Now, the reality of this manifestation has nothing to do with transformation, incarnation, or the assertion that Allāh is all, because every one of those notions is false, according to reason and revelation alike. Rather, what we have here is something which, with respect to certain of its attributes, bears a resemblance to the Eternal; a resemblance through which something created acts in such a way as to shed light on the attributes of the Eternal. In the light of this commentary, it should not be difficult to interpret the meaning of the following ḥadīth, or of others like it: Said the Prophet, “I saw my Lord in the best possible form.” Finally, that there is nothing improper in the use of similes to describe Allāh will be evident to anyone who has read the Qur’an.

Hadith 45

95 Bukhārī: 4701, Tirmidhī: 3223, Ibn Mājah: 194
It is related on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd that the Messenger of Allāh said, “When Allāh reveals His Word the heavenly hosts first hear a clanking like the sound of a chain being dragged over rock, and then they lose their senses. . . .” This ḥadīth was related by Abū Dāwūd.96

States: Ecstasy and Effacement
It sometimes happens, when there has been a particularly forceful descent of spiritual meanings on the heart, that the Sufi will lose consciousness. This is a part of the states known as ghaybah and mabw discussed in the commentary on ḥadīth [31] above. That this is not merely an excess invented by Sufis in the name of Islam is lucidly attested to (“. . . and then they lose their senses. . . .”) in this ḥadīth.

ḤADĪTH 46

عن أسن رضي الله عنه قال: تأمل علي النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن تفتح لنا الله

It is related on the authority of 'Anas that the verse: “Surely, We have given you a manifest victory,”97 was revealed to Allah’s Prophet and that surely the “manifest victory” referred to in the verse was the victory of Ḥudaybiya. This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim and Tirmidhi.98

Teachings: Uneasiness Over Contraction
The events which took place at Ḥudaybiya are well known.99 To all outward appearances, the Muslims were forced into signing a non-aggression pact with the unbelievers there. However, in view of Anas’ commentary, it is clear that the Almighty referred to the truce of Ḥudaybiya for the reason that it included several subtle considerations. In fact, events later proved that Ḥudaybiya was the first step in the liberation of Makka, a manifest victory if there ever was one. In all this we have a glimpse at the foundation of the teaching by Sufi masters that

96 Abū Dāwūd: 4378. Al-Mundhirī said: ‘Bukhārī, Tirmidhī and Ibn Majah have also reported a similar ḥadīth from 'Ikrimah, the freedman of Ibn ‘Abbās, from Abū Hurairah.’
97 Qur’ān, 48:1
98 Bukhārī: 4172, 4834, Muslim: 1786, Tirmidhī: 3262
99 In brief, Ḥudaybiya was the site of a treaty between the Muslims and the idolators of Makka. For details, see the commentaries on verse 48:1. YTD.
although the state of contraction, or *qabḍ*, seems outwardly to be an indication of decline, it is in reality a praiseworthy state, like expansion, *baṣṭ*, and one from which the experienced Sufi may derive great benefit. Indeed, the first step on the way to *baṣṭ* is *qabḍ*.

Mawlānā Rūmī wrote:

> When *qabḍ* comes it’ll be, O wayfarer,  
> For your benefit, so be not dismayed.  
> When *qabḍ* comes, see in it the best,  
> Stay diligent, and keep your composure.

**HADĪTH 47**

> عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه في قوله تعالى: (إِعْلَمُواَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلُ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا قَالَ: لَيْنَ الْقُلُوبِ بَعْدَ قُسُوْمَهَا فَجِئَلَهَا مُحْبَبةً مُّبَيِّنَةً، يَجْعَلُ الْقُلُوبِ مُحْبَبةً بِالْعَلِيمَ وَالْجَعْلِ، وَإِلَّا فَقُدْ عَلِمَ إِحْيَاءُ الأَرْضِ بِالْمَطرِ مُسَاَهِمَةً (أَخْرِجْهُ رَزِئٌ)

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās ‏ that he said, concerning the verse: “Know that Allāh revives the earth after it was dead,”100 that: “Allāh softens the hearts after they have grown hard, and makes them humble and repentant. He it is Who brings inert hearts to life with knowledge and with wisdom. Nonetheless, that the earth is revived by the rain is a phenomenon easily perceived through observation.” This ḥadīth was related by Razīn.101

**Summary**

In the verse preceding the verse mentioned in this hadīth, the believers are urged to create within their hearts a sense of submission to the will of the Almighty. This is followed by the verse concerning the revival of the earth. There are two possible explanations for this sequence. The first is that the revival of the earth, as a universally recognised phenomenon, is mentioned here as an example of how the heart may also come back to life. The second is that the heart is represented there figuratively by the earth, as Ibn ‘Abbās ‏ opined in the ḥadīth, so that the verse is essentially a metaphor.

100 Qur’ān, 57:17
101 Ad-Durr al-Manthur, 6:254
Sayings: The Heart is Allah's Wide Earth
Certain Sufi masters have referred to the heart as "Allah's wide earth." This ḥadīth may simply have been the source of this saying.

Miscellaneous: Esoteric Commentary on the Qurʾān
In the works and discourses of the Sufi masters one may find any number of Qurʾānic verses and ḥadīths interpreted in rather unconventional ways. This has always been a cause of much consternation among rigid formalists. This ḥadīth, however, clearly indicates that there is nothing wrong with this kind of Sufi commentary. In the first volume of my commentary, The Key to the Mathnawi, I have discussed this subject at length.

102 E.g., Qurʾān, 29:56 and 39:10. —Trans. "O My servants who believe, surely My earth is vast. So, Me alone you must worship." and "Say (on My behalf) "O My servants who believe, fear your Lord. Those who do good deeds in this world will have a good return, and the earth of Allah is wide. Certainly those who observe patience will be given their reward in full without measure."

103 In the story of the Khalifa's Seeing Layla, Mawlana Rūmī wrote the following verses: "The Qurʾānic text: 'Cleanse My House,' you two, is/ the explanation of such purity: it (the purified heart) is a treasure of (divine) light, though its form is of this earth." Now, the Qurʾānic text quoted in the couplet is from the second chapter of the Qurʾān, (2:125), and is in the form of a command directed to the Prophet Ibrāhīm and his son, Ismāʿīl, concerning the purification of the Kaʿbah. Mawlana Thānawi, in his Urdu commentary on the Mathnawi wrote that the verse also contains reference to the purification of the heart, but that that reference is indirect, and indicated rather than designated. Mawlana Thānawi then writes: "You should know that this kind of esoteric commentary is something which is found throughout the works of the Sufi masters. Regarding this, however, there are two major misconceptions. The first is the belief that the only true interpretation of the Qurʾān is the Sufi interpretation, and that whatever the other scholars have written is wrong. Undoubtedly, this belief is entirely erroneous, and a sure sign of deviation. The second misconception results in people reviling the Sufis and accusing them of having tampered with the Qurʾān. It is essential, therefore, to study the matter more closely. To begin with, the proper commentary of the Qurʾān is the commentary written for it by conventional, orthodox Qurʾānic scholars or muḥassarīn. However, it sometimes happens that the intended meaning of the Qurʾān will bring to mind another, similar meaning. If, for example, Zayd and 'Amr each bear a likeness to one another, then one might automatically think of 'Amr when speaking of Zayd. So, as a result of this sort of mental association, the intended meaning of the Qurʾān will bring to mind another, similar meaning. If, for example, from the above quoted Qurʾānic text, "... cleanse My House," the mind easily passes on to that part of the human body, the heart, which resembles the Kaʿbah through its being the place of descent for spiritual meanings and light. Then, the inference may be drawn that just as the command has been given to cleanse the Kaʿbah, so that it becomes a finer receptacle for heavenly manifestations, so also the command is given to cleanse the heart. Now, this sort of lore is known as contemplative knowledge or iʿlām al-iʿtibār; and it is this which is mentioned in the Qurʾān itself: "Therefore, contemplate, O you who are possessed of vision!" (59:2). Indeed, the very same process is used by the formalist scholars of law in their interpretations of the Shāriʿa. See, Ashraf ʿAli Thānawi, Kalāt-i-Mathnawi (Deoband, India: Matbāʿ- e- Ashrafi, n.d.) vol. 1, pp.90–91.
Hadīth 48

It is related on the authority of Abū Huraira concerning the verse: “...and who prefer others over themselves, even though poverty be their lot,” that “A man from the Ansār had a guest for the night but no food to offer him, except for a few morsels he had put aside for his children. The man said to his wife, ‘Put the children to sleep, put out the light, then serve our guest whatever we have.’ Then the verse was revealed.” This hadīth was related by Tirmidhī.

Practices: Non-disclosure of Good Deeds

It has always been the practice of Sufi masters to do their utmost to conceal the good that they do. This hadīth is clear in its confirmation of such a practice.

Character: Altruism

This hadīth also substantiates the selflessness, or preference for the welfare of others which is characteristic of the Sufis in general.

Hadīth 49

It is related on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās concerning the verse: “...and do not leave Wadd, nor Suwa‘, Yaghūṭ, Ya‘ūq, nor Nasr,” that: “All of these are the names of pious men from the nation of the Prophet Nūḥ.

104 Qur’ān, 59:9
105 Tirmidhī: 3304
When they died, Satan prompted their followers to erect statues of them in the places where they used to rest, and to name them with their names. So, the people did as Satan bid them, but they never worshipped the statues. Still, when those people passed away and knowledge of true religion had been forgotten, people began worshipping the statues.” This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī.106

Corrections: The Prohibition Concerning Pictures
It is the practice of some Sufis nowadays to keep pictures of their masters. This ḥadīth shows clearly how this practice can be, and has actually been, corrupted into great evil. According to the Shariʿa, pictures are not to be shown respect.107 However, as those Sufis who keep pictures of their masters also treat those pictures with great respect, they are clearly acting in defiance of the Shariʿa.

Hadīth 50

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "إِنَّ الْعَيْبَ إِذَا أَخَطَّا خَطِّيَّةً لَكَنَّهُ فِي قَلْبِهِ نَكْتَةُ، وَإِذَا هُوَ نَزَّعَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ وَتَابَ صَفَّيْ قَلْبِهِ، وَإِنَّ عَادَ رَيْدًا فِي بَيْتِهِ حَتَّى تَ غَلِبَ قَلْبُهُ وَهُوَ الَّذِي ذَكَرَ اللهُ تَعَالَى". (أخيره الترمذي وصحبه)

It is related on the authority of Abū Hurairā that the Messenger of Allāh said, “Whenever a servant commits an act of wrongdoing, a black spot appears on his/her heart; and when he/she desists, and asks forgiveness, and repents, his/her heart will become clear. But, if instead [of remaining committed to repentance] he/she again commits the same wrongs, more and more black marks will accumulate until they overshadow his/her heart. This is the rust which the Almighty speaks of in the Qurʿān.”108 This ḥadīth was related by Tirmidhī.109

Miscellaneous: The Heart in Light and Darkness
In the writings of many Sufi masters, the heart is spoken of as being either “illus-
mined" through worship and devotion, or "darkened" through wrongdoing and neglect. In this Ḥadith, the same things are mentioned. This light or darkness, then, does register on the heart—as a result of one's own deeds. But not in any perceptible way.

**ḤADĪTH 51**

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه في قوله تعالى: (ونَرَكِينَ طُبُقاً عَنْ طُبُقٍ) قال: حَالُ بَعْدٍ

حال قال: هذا نَبِيُّكُمُ صلى الله عليه وسلم. (أخيره البخاري)

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas concerning the verse: “Surely, you shall traverse, stage after stage,” that, “This means, state after state. And the person to whom this was addressed was your Prophet.” This Ḥadith was related by Bukhārī.

**Questions: A Sufi Can Always Make More Progress**

In the writings and discourses of the Sufi masters it is often noted that there is no end to the progress that might be made by a Sufi. The words of this Ḥadith, when applied generally, are certainly consistent with this observation. The phrase, "stage after stage" refers neither to only two stages, nor to any other definite number of stages, but is rather intended to denote an unending succession of stages. This is what is referred to in the works of the Sufi masters.

**ḤADĪTH 52**

عن أبي ذر رضي الله عنه قلتُ بارسُول الله! وما كانت صُحَفُ إِبْرَاهِيمٍ وَمُوسَى؟ قال:

كَانَتْ عِبَارَةٌ كُلُّها، عَجِّبَتْ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِالْمُوْتِ ثُمَّ يَفْرَحُ، عَجِّبَتْ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِالْيَوْمِ الْآَخُرِ كَيْفَ يُضِحُّكَ؟ عَجِّبَتْ لِمَنْ رَأَى الْذَّنْبَةَ وَقَتَلَهَا بَلَاءَهَا ثُمَّ يَطْمَئِنُّ إِلَيْهَا، عَجِّبَتْ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِالْغَدِرِ ثُمَّ يُنْصَبُبُ عَجِّبَتْ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِالجُفَاحِ ثُمَّ لَا يَعْمَلُ. (أخيره رزي)

It is related on the authority of Abū Dharr that he said to Allāh’s Prophet, “O Messenger of Allāh! What were the scrolls of Ibrahim and Mūsā?” The Prophet replied, “They were admonition entirely. I am amazed at people who, although certain of death, persist nonetheless

110 Qur‘ān, 84:19  
111 Bukhārī: 4940
in making merry. And I am amazed at those who, although convinced of the existence of the Fire, persist nonetheless in laughter. I am amazed at those who, although acquainted with the way fortunes may change at a moment's notice in this world, persist nonetheless in their complacency. I am amazed at those who, although convinced that their daily bread is predestined, persist nonetheless in striving to earn more and more. And I am amazed at those who, although they believe in a final reckoning, persist nonetheless in making no effort to do good deeds.” This ḥadith was related by Razīn.\(^{112}\)

*Teachings: Contemplation*

The sort of contemplation known as *muraqabah* that is taught and practised by Sufis is essentially thoughtful consideration. Experience has shown that before one can become adept at *muraqabah* one must practise it diligently for a certain period of time each day. The principles on which this practice is based are to be found in this ḥadith, for the matter of associating peoples’ ways with their beliefs is one that requires a certain amount of reflection which is, in fact, at the heart of the practice of *muraqabah*.

**ḤADĪTH 53**

> عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنه أن رجلاً من أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أزى لياله القدر في المنام في السبع الأوائل فقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: ازروا ذات الطين في السبع الأوائل، فمن كان يتحرّها في السبع الأوائل. (أخرجه الثلاثة والترمذي)

It is related on the authority of Ibn ʿUmar ﷺ that a number of the Companions ﷺ were shown in their dreams that the “Night of Power”\(^{113}\) was one of the last seven nights in the month of Ramadān. When they told the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ of what they had dreamt, he replied, “I see that your dreams are in agreement on the last seven nights. Then, whoever seeks it, let them seek it on the last seven nights.” This ḥadith was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Mālik, and Tirmidhī.\(^{114}\)

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112 Ad-Durr al-Manthur, 6:571
113 al-Qur’an, 97:3
114 Bukhārī: 2015, Muslim: 1165, Muwatta’: 616. Tirmidhī has not recorded this ḥadith of Ibn ʿUmar ﷺ, but a similar report from Aʾisha ﷺ, but has alluded to this report in his comment: ‘On this issue, there is also a ḥadith by Ibn ʿUmar ﷺ.”
Questions: The Reliability of Concurrent Visions

While it is the firm belief of the Sufi masters that spiritual vision, kashf, is unacceptable as legal evidence, they are agreed on the reliability of concurrent visions in regard to extralegal matters. This ḥadith is clearly indicative of this point of view.

 Hague 54

ʿען ابنعبאס رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "الشيطان جاثم على قلب ابن أدم فإذا دكر الله تعالى حسناً، وإذا عقل وسموّس". (أخرهبه

It is related on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās that Allāh’s Messenger said, “Satan will perch himself on a person’s heart. Then, if the person mentions the name of Allāh, Satan will slink away. But if the person is negligent [in remembering Allāh], Satan will begin whispering to that person.” This ḥadith was related by Bukhārī.115

Teachings: Silencing the Whisperings of Satan through Remembrance

It should be abundantly clear from this ḥadith that dhikr is an effective remedy for the whisperings or waswasa that often cause concern and worry and that could, therefore, lead to frustration and even to one’s abandoning one’s spiritual disciplines. Therefore, it is clearly important that one fortify oneself with dhikr rather than suffer as a result of waswasa regardless of its variety, including evil but resistible whisperings, neutral but resistible whisperings, and irresistible whisperings. Now, while there is no danger of wrongdoing resulting from the “neutral” variety of whisperings, it is still to be feared for its debilitating effect on the heart, which might eventually lead to wrongdoing. While it is true that the irresistible varieties of waswasa are not immediately harmful, they are, nonetheless, quite often the cause of much concern and worry and could, therefore, lead to frustration and even to one’s abandoning one’s spiritual disciplines. Therefore, it is clearly important that one fortify oneself with dhikr rather than suffer as a result of waswasa.

 Hague 55

عن أبي سعيد رضي الله عنه قال: اعثكف رسل الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في المسجد،

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115 Bukhārī: As a chapter-heading on Sūra an-Nās in the Book of Qur’ānic Interpretation.
It is related on the authority of Abū Sa‘īd that while the Prophet was sequestered in the mosque, he heard others noisily reciting the Qur‘ān. Opening the curtain from his makeshift compartment, he said, “Listen! Each one of you is conversing with his Lord. So, do not disturb each other, and do not raise your voices one above the other while reciting the Qur‘ān or in prayer.” This was related by Abū Dāwūd.

Teachings: Contingencies in Permission for Audible Dhikr

In this ḥadīth, the reason given for the prohibition on reciting aloud was the matter of causing inconvenience to others. From this we may derive the following two conclusions. First, that the Shari‘a permits the practice of making remembrance aloud, dhikr-e-jali. Secondly, permission for such dhikr may be given only when others will not be disturbed by it. This is the middle way between the two positions on either extreme. One group insists that audible dhikr is contrary to the Sunna, and that those who practise it become so enchanted by it that they begin to give it more importance than prayer. The point to remember here is that what is of importance is dhikr itself, and not any particular kind of dhikr. Audible dhikr is not in itself an act of worship, though it does have its advantages. Its effect on the heart, for example, is greater; it is effective in nullifying unwanted thoughts, and so forth. However, should it become a nuisance to other people, then the spiritual drawback of causing discomfort to another will far outweigh the advantages of making dhikr aloud. Therefore, at such times, the dhikr should be inaudible. Finally, as to the question of whether audible or inaudible dhikr is better, the answer that comes to us from other ḥadīths is that inaudible dhikr is superior.

ḤADĪTH 56

 وعن عائشة رضي الله تعالى عنها قالت: قَامَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْلَّيْلِ فَقُلَّ أَقْلَهْ أَقْلَهْ وَرَفَعَ صُوْتَهُ فَلَمَّا أَصْبَحَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهُ صلى الله عليه وسلم: فَيَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ فَلَانَا كَأَيْنَ مَنْ أَذَكَّرُوهَا الْلَّيْلَةَ كَتَبَ أُسْقُطُهَا. (رواة: الشيخان وأبو داود وهذا لفظه)

116 Abū Dāwūd: 1332
Questions: A Novice as the Means for a Master’s Development

We may learn from this hadith that a spiritual master will sometimes become the recipient of divine effusion, fayd, through a less developed intermediary. There should be no difficulty in our understanding this matter when it takes place without the intermediary’s having intended it, as was the case in the hadith quoted here. Obviously, the source of all fayd is the Almighty Himself, and the novice is only an intermediary. In this case, the one receiving fayd is actually (under normal conditions) the means by which fayd passes on to the novice; and it is clear that whenever a follower is benefited by a guide, the reward for the benefit will go to the guide by means of the follower. Similarly, even when this takes place as a result of the novice’s own intentions, there should still be no reason to suspect that the novice is more accomplished than the master. There are many hadiths in which there is record of the Prophet benefiting from the advice of his Companions. In spite of that, the question of who among them was the most excellent, the closest to Allah, etc. has never arisen. Someone’s becoming an intermediary in some particular matter is certainly in no way prejudicial to established virtue and excellence. Of course, when we are speaking of other than the Prophet there is nothing to prevent us from allowing that a disciple might, in certain areas, actually be more accomplished than his/her master. Finally, since it is possible to receive fayd through an intermediary, it is clear that even a master may benefit from the company of the righteous. Indeed, it often happens that a master will benefit from a disciple.

Hadith 57

عن ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "اقتُرِ عَلَيْ نِقْرَأْ أَوْلَيْكُمْ وَعَلَيْكَ أَنْزُلَ؟ فَقَالَ: إِنِّي أَجْعَلْ أَنَّ أَسْمَعَهُ مِنْ عَيْنِيٍّ فَقَرَأْتُ عَلَيْهِ وَقَرَأْهُ: فَإِذَا عَيْنَا مَذْرُوْقٌ فَقَانُ. (آخره الحسنة إلا النسائي)

It is related on the authority of Abdullāh ibn Maṣʿūd that the Prophet

117 Bukhari: 5037, Muslim: 788, Abū Dāwūd: 131
said to him, “Recite the Qur'an for me.” When 'Abdullāh  replied, “What? You want me to read what was revealed to you?” the Messenger of Allāh  said, “It's just that I love to hear it from someone else...” Further on, in the same narration, Ibn Mas‘ūd  reports that as he was reciting for the Prophet , “…his eyes suddenly filled with tears.” This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and Tirmidhī.18

Questions: The Special Properties of Audition
It is human nature that people often derive more pleasure from listening to something recited to them than from reading or reciting the same thing themselves. For this reason, audition or sama‘ is sometimes prescribed for a disciple who needs to have a particular state intensified, or to have his/her desire or shawq renewed, or to attain a certain spiritual composure. The fact that certain types of sama‘ are prohibited is another matter.

States: Ardour
One's being overcome by a peculiar but praiseworthy spiritual state is called ardour or wajd. The last sentence in this ḥadīth is clearly indicative of wajd, and may be cited as a precedent from the Sunna for this state.19

**ḤADĪTH 58**

عن أسماء رضي الله عنها قالت: ما كان أحد من السلف يغشي عليه، ولا يسعف

غبطة القرآن، وإنما كانوا ينوكون ويفضلون ويلوحون.18

الله. (أخرجه رضي رزلي)

It is related on the authority of Asmā‘  that, “Among the first Muslims no one ever fainted or cried out in ecstasy when the Qur’an was being recited. The most that would happen was that people would cry or shiver until their skin and their hearts would soften to the remembrance of Allāh.” This ḥadīth was related by Razīn.20

Questions: The Ardour of the Masters
The meaning of wajd was given in the commentary on the previous ḥadīth. Here,

119 See ḥadīth [93]. ytd.
120 Ibn Sa‘d, at-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā: 8:188
in this ḥadīth, the kind of wajd being described is the wajd of the spiritually adept. It is this kind of wajd which is described in the Qur'ān. The fainting and shouting that most people associate with wajd is wajd of a middling degree, and is known to have occurred very infrequently among the first Muslims. In a ḥadīth related by Imam Tirmidhi, for example, there is mention of an incident in which Abī Huraira fainted as a result of wajd.

**ḤADĪTH 59**

It is related on the authority of Abī Huraira that Allāh’s Messenger said, “If any one of you rises at night to pray, and then finds himself slurring the words of the Qur'ān, and incapable of comprehending what he is reading, then let him lie down and go back to sleep.” This ḥadīth was related by Abū Dāwūd and Muslim.

*Teachings: The Prohibition of Excess in Spiritual Disciplines*

Some people go to such extremes in their disciplines, like denying themselves food and drink, and sleep, and so on, that they never give a thought to the possibility that what they are doing may be harmful in some way. Surely, there is a lesson for these people in this ḥadīth. Two points should be kept in mind here. The first is that more often than not the result of such excesses will be to impair one’s health and no more, so that one becomes incapable of performing even the prescribed acts of worship. The second is that when one is so tired as to be incapable of reciting the words properly, there is no way that the full benefits of recitation will be forthcoming; and when that is the case, one’s staying awake will have been in vain.

**ḤADĪTH 60**

121 al-Qur'ān, 39:23
122 Muslim: 787, Abū Dāwūd: 1311, Ibn Mājah: 1372
It is related on the authority of 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn 'Abd al-Qārī that he heard 'Umar say: “I heard the Messenger of Allāh say, ‘Whenever one of you sleeps through his/her nightly devotions, or through a part of them, then, if you perform them anytime between dawn and afternoon prayer, you will receive the same reward as you would for performing them at night.’” This hadith was related by Mālik, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, and Nasā‘ī.123

Teachings: Making Up Missed Devotions

The real message in this hadith is that one should never miss one’s daily (or nightly) devotions, even though they are categorised as supererogatory. If, however, they cannot be performed at the regular time, then they may be performed later. But to miss them entirely is to miss great blessings. As it is said: “Those who have no devotions, will have no experiences.”

ḤADĪTH 61

It is related on the authority of Ḥārith ibn Suwāyḍ that he heard ‘Abdullāh ibn Mās‘ūd say that he heard Allāh’s Prophet say, “Allāh’s elation at the repentance of His believing servant is greater even than the happiness of that person who spends the night in the desert and awakes in the morning to discover that his camel has wandered off with all of his provisions, and who finally, after much trepidation and anxiety, gives up hope and lies down to die... only to awaken to the sight of the camel and

provisions, exclaiming: ‘O Allâh! You are my slave, and I am your Master!’ thus erring in his excitement.” This hadith was related by Tirmidhî.\textsuperscript{124}

\textit{States: Ecstatic Pronouncements}

It sometimes happens, when a Sufi is overcome by the intensity of one spiritual state or another, that he or she will utter, in ecstasy, words whose meaning will be difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with the Shari‘a and its teachings. From this hadith, both the validity and the irreproachability of this type of ecstasy may be ascertained for, after quoting what the man said, the Prophet 

\textbf{HADÎTH 62}

عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنّهّ قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: «رأيتَ إمرأةً سوداءً نائرةٌ الرأس تخرجت من المدينةّ حتى نزلت بمهماً وهي الجحشة، فأولت أن وَيَاةً المدينةّ نقلّ إليها» (أخرجه البخاري والترمذي)

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar 

\textbf{HADÎTH 63}

عن أم العلاء الأنصاريةّ رضي الله تعالى عنها قالت: لما قدِّم المهاجرون طار لَنا طهان بن مطلبُ في السكنى، فاشتكى فمرّضناه حتى نوزع قالت: قرأت لِيَعْتُنَّى في المنام عيني تحري فأخبرت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال: «اذاك عمله يجري الله»

(أخرجه البخاري)

It is related on the authority of Umm al-‘Alâ that she said, “When the Muslims migrated to Madîna it fell to our lot to share our home with

\textsuperscript{124} Bukhârî: 6308, Muslim: 2744, Tirmidhî: 2497. The last portion of this hadith, ‘O Allâh! You are my slave...’ is not reported in Ibn Ma’sūd’s hadith, but by Anas 

\textsuperscript{125} Bukhârî: 7038, 7039, 7040, Tirmidhî: 229, Ibn Mâjah: 3924
When he became ill, we cared for him until, after a time, he died. Then we prepared him for burial.” Her narration continues, “Then I went to sleep and saw in a dream that ‘Uthmān was in possession of a gushing fountain. The next day I went to Allāh’s Messenger and told him what I had dreamed. So he told me that ‘Those were ‘Uthmān’s good deeds, gushing for him in Paradise.’”

This Ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī.126

Questions: The World of Manifest Meaning
In the Ḥadīth above, and in the one which preceded it, the truth of the world of manifest meaning, ‘ālam al-mithāl, where spiritual and other meanings are made manifest in a variety of forms, is further confirmed.

ḤADĪTH 64

عن أنسِ رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صل الله عليه وسلم: لا تقتيمين أحدكم الموته من صغر أصابه (أخرجه الحمسي)

It is related on the authority of Anas that Allāh’s Prophet said, “No one should ever wish to die just because hardship has befallen him.” This Ḥadīth was related by Muslim, Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhi and Nasā’i.127

Questions: Wishing to Die
In the writings and discourses of many Sufi masters the wish to die is often expressed. This, apparently, is done in contradiction to the explicit directive of the Shari‘a. The qualifying condition, “… just because hardship has befallen him,” in this Ḥadīth should suffice to clarify any doubts on the matter. In other words, the prohibition against wishing to die is qualified by the aforementioned condition. Then, whenever the condition is satisfied, the prohibition will be applicable. If the condition is not satisfied, however, the prohibition will be void, unless there is another legitimate reason for it not to be so. The wish expressed by the Sufi masters is nothing more than the result of their true desire to meet Allāh, and is therefore in no way contrary to the Shari‘a. Rather this (wish of the masters) is more precisely a spiritual state that is itself the result of bast or spiritual expansion.

126 Bukhārī: 7018
Hadith 65

It is related on the authority of Usāmah ibn Zayd that Allāh’s Messenger said, “Whoever is done a favour, and then says to the one who did the favour, ‘May Allāh gift you with a good reward,’ will certainly have done his/her utmost to praise that person.” This hadith was related by Tirmidhī.128

Teachings and Practices: Supplications for the Bearer of Gifts

It is the custom of the Sufi masters to show their appreciation to those who serve them, or present them with gifts, by evincing their pleasure and, at the same time, by making duʿā for the person who favoured them. In this, aside from the obvious blessings, moral virtue, and adherence to the Sunna, there is also the matter of gratitude to the one performing the favour, itself an act of worship. The lack of appreciation and the haughtiness evinced by some so-called masters is therefore most uncharacteristic, unworthy and, in some respects, a sure sign of ingratitude to the Almighty.

Hadith 66

It is related on the authority of Abū Saʿīd that when Allāh’s Prophet was asked who was the best of people, he replied, “A believer, a doer of jihad with his/her life and wealth in the way of Allāh.” Abū Saʿīd also related that when the Messenger was asked who was the next best, he replied, “A person who dwells in a canyon among canyons, who fears Allāh, and who spares other people his/her own evil.” This hadith was related by Muslim, Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nasā’i.129

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128 Tirmidhī: 2035
Practices: Retreat

It has been the practice of most Sufis to avoid as much as possible the company of others, and to live their lives in relative seclusion. That this is permitted by the Shari'a and, within certain limits, even considered praiseworthy may be ascertained from the ḥadith related here. By analogy it may be assumed that permission to live in seclusion may also be given to one who is not spared from the evil of people in general. Furthermore, the ḥadith suggests that a life of intercourse and association is better for the person from whom people can be expected to benefit. Indeed, it was for this reason that the doer of jihad was said to be better than the person in retreat. In summary, then, it may be said that the person who can be of benefit to Muslims in general should remain in their society, while one who will not be of any special benefit to them, but who is likely to suffer because of them, or cause them to suffer, may live in isolation.

**ḤADĪTH 67**

عَنْ شَدَّادِ بْنِ الْهَادِ: أَنَّ رَجُلًا مِّنَ الْأَعْرَابِ جَاءَ فَامَنَ بِالْبُيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَى قَوْلِهِ وَلَكِنْهُ يَبْعَثُ عَلَى أَنْ أَرْسُلَ إِلَى هُمْ- وَأَشَارَ بِبَيْنِهِ إِلَى خَلْقِهِ- بِسَهْمٍ قُمْتُ- فَأَدْخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ، فَقَالَ: "إِنَّ تَسْدِيقَ الَّذِي يَصْدِقُكَ" فَلْحُمْ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ تُهْضَرُوا إِلَيْهِ فِي ذَلِكَ الْعَدُوُّ فَأَتَيْهِ الْبَيْتُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَحْمُوْلًا فَأَدْعَاهُ سَهْمَ حَيْثُ أَشَارَ، فَقَالَ الْبَيْتُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "أَهْوَ»؟" فَأَلْوَ: "أَلْوَ: ْتَعَمُّ، قَالَ: "صَدِيقُ الَّذِي قَصَدْتُهُ" ثُمَّ كَفَّنَ فِيّ جُبَيْةِ الْبَيْطِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. الحديث (أخرجه النسائي)

It is related on the authority of Shaddād ibn al-Ḥad that one of the bedouins went to Allāh’s Prophet ﷺ and proclaimed his faith in him. The narrator of this ḥadīth then went on to detail how when the bedouin was apportioned a share of the spoils of war, he went to the Prophet ﷺ and said, “It was not for this that I have followed you! Rather, I have followed you to be pierced here [pointing to his neck] by an arrow so that I die and then go straight to the Eternal Garden!” In reply, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “If you have spoken the truth, Allāh will verify it.” After a short passage of time, the Muslims again took up arms against their enemies. Then the man was brought before the Prophet ﷺ, borne by his comrades at arms, and pierced through by an arrow in exactly the place he had pointed to earlier. When he saw him, the Prophet ﷺ asked, “Is this the same man?” The people gathered there said, “Yes.” Then Allāh’s Prophet
declared, “He spoke the truth, and Allah has verified it.” Then he directed that the man be buried in his own (the Prophet’s) cloak. This hadith was related by Nasā’ī.\[130\]

**States: Miracles**
As the circumstances of this Companion’s martyrdom were to a great extent miraculous, the hadith may be cited as a genuine instance of a miracle.

**Customs: Keepsakes**
The burial of the Companion in the Prophet’s cloak may be considered as the precedent for all such customs retained by the Sufis; their possessing keepsakes and mementos of their masters for the sake of blessings, both during his lifetime and after.

**HADITH 68**

> عَنْ أَبِي عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَامَ بَعْضُ يُومٍ بُدْرٍ فَقَالَ: إنَّ عَبْدَالْلَّهِ النَّافِعِ فِي حَاجَةِ اللَّهِ وَحَاجَةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَإِيَّيْنَى أُبَابَعُ لَهُ.

(أخيره أبو داود)

It is related on the authority of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar that Allah’s Prophet stood up on the day of the battle of Badr and said, “Today ‘Uthman is away on Allah’s business, and on His Prophet’s business. So, I will pledge for him myself!” This hadith was related by Abū Dāwūd.\[131\]

**Customs: Spiritual Pledges for those not Present**
The custom of accepting requests for bay’ah from those who, for one reason or another, are unable to present themselves before a master is one that is quite widespread among Sufis. Concerning the legality of bay’ah in absentia, the hadith above is unambiguous for ‘Uthmān was clearly not present. Since, however, he wished to be present, the Prophet took his pledge anyway. Obviously, the bay’ah described in the hadith was the bay’ah of jihad. There is, nonetheless, no reason to suppose that there are any procedural differences between the different kinds of bay’ah. Finally, the reason for ‘Uthmān’s absence was the illness of his wife, the daughter of the Prophet.

\[130\] Nasā’ī: 1955
\[131\] Abū Dāwūd: 2726
**Hadith 69**

It is related on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr  that, “There was a man in charge of the Prophet’s baggage whose name was Kirkirah. When he died, the Prophet said, ‘He has gone to the Fire.’ Then the Companions went and looked in the man’s possessions, where they found a cloak he had misappropriated from the spoils of war.” This hadith was related by Bukhārī.  

**Corrections: The Futility of Bay’ah without Proper Practice**

Many ignorant Sufis proudly proclaim that they are the disciples of such and such a master, and then, as if their association with such a master were in itself such a great virtue, suppose that there is no need for them to do anything else. The magnitude of the mistake these people make should be apparent from this hadith. What more blessed association could one hope for than to serve Allāh’s Prophet? Yet, even to the servant of the Prophet the retribution meted out was in proportion to the crime. What then of one’s association with master so and so, when the deeds of the disciple amount to nothing?

**Hadith 70**

It is related on the authority of Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī that Allāh’s Messenger  said, “A person who chooses not to argue when they know that they are wrong will have a house built for them on the outskirts of the Eternal Garden. And a person who chooses not to argue even when they know they are right will have a house built for them in the middle of the Garden. And a person who works consciously to improve their character

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132 Bukhārī: 3074
will have a house built for them in the highest (and best) part of the Eternal Garden.” This ḥadīth was related by Tirmidhī.\(^{133}\)

**Practices: Avoiding Debate**

It has always been the way of the Sufi masters, even when right, to remain silent in the face of those who wish only to debate or quarrel with them. That this practice is one that is encouraged by the Shari‘a should be more than obvious from the ḥadīth cited here.

**ḤADĪTH 71**

> عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «مَا يَنْفِقُ الْأَرْضُ مُسْلِمٌ إِلَّا أَنْ يُحْتَى مَا عَنْهُ نَبِيِّهُ وَشَهَيْهِ مِنْ خَجْرٍ أَوْ شَجْرٍ أَوْ مَدَرٍّ حَتَّى نَقْطَعَ الأَرْضُ مِنْ هُنَا وَهُنَا.» (أَخْرِجَهُ التَّرْمِيِّدِيِّ)

It is related on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa‘d that Allāh’s Prophet ﷺ said, “Whenever a Muslim says ‘labbayk’ whatever is on their right says ‘labbayk’, and then whatever is on their left, whether rock, or tree, or sand... until the word travels out over all the world.” This ḥadīth was related by Tirmidhī.\(^{134}\)

**Questions: The Speech of the Inanimate**

This hadīth should be more than sufficient to confirm the veracity of the visions had by many Sufi masters in which rocks and other inanimate objects appear to speak.

**ḤADĪTH 72**

> عَنْ نَافِعِ أَبِي سَيْمَعِ أَسْمَعْ أَسْلَمَ مُؤْلِ عُمَرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ بِقُولِ أَبِي عُمَرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: رَأَى عُمَرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَلَى طَلَّحَةٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ نَبِيَّاً مَضْنُوحًا وَهُوَ مَخْرُومٌ فَقَالَ: مَهَدَا؟ فَقَالَ: هُوَ مَخْرُومٌ أَوْ مَخْرُومَةٌ فَقَالَ: إِنْ كَمِّ أَنْتَ الرَّحْطُ أَنْتَ يَقْتَدَيْ يَكُمْ النَّاسَ، فَلَوْلَا أَنْ رَجُلًا، جَاهِلًا فَرَأَ هَذَا لَقَالَ إِنْ طَلَّحَةُ بِنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ كَانَ يَلْبِسُ النِّيَابَ المُضْنُوحَةَ فِي الْإِخْرَاجِ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا أَنْيَا الرَّحْطُ مِنْ هَذِهِ النِّيَابِ.» (أَخْرِجَهُ مَالِكٌ)

\(^{133}\) Abū Dāwūd: 4800, Tirmidhī: 1993, Ibn Mājah: 51

\(^{134}\) Tirmidhī: 828, Ibn Mājah: 2921
It is related on the authority of Nāfī' that he heard Aslam say to Ibn 'Umar that 'Umar once saw Ṭalḥah wearing a dyed garment as ihram, so 'Umar asked him about it. Ṭalḥah replied, “It’s brick-dust dye.” 'Umar then replied, “You are looked upon as a leader, and people follow your example. Now, if an ignorant person were to see you in these clothes, he might go around telling people that Ṭalḥah ibn Ubaydullāh wears a dyed garment for ihram. Therefore, Ṭalḥah, do not wear any sort of dyed garments [as ihram].” This hadith was related by Mālik.

Corrections: The Need for Circumspection
From this ḥadīth it is evident that the people who are looked up to as leaders in Islam have more need for prudence and piety than do the majority of Muslims. Since the Sufis are looked up to by most Muslims, it is clear that they need to be extra careful in their practice of Islam. Unfortunately, however, in our own times the reverse has become the norm. Indeed, it is negligence and unconcern which characterise most of our present day Sufis. Some have even gone so far as to deny the necessity of the Shari'a and its emphasis on externals. May Allāh deliver us from their ignorance!

HADĪTH 73

عَنِ الصَّعْبِ بْنِ جَنَّاتَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ أَهْدَى إِلَى رَسُوْلِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ جَمَارًا وَحُنْثِيًا وَهُوَ بَالْأَبْيَاءَ أَوَّلَاءَ فُرْدَةٌ عَلَيْهِ فُلَامًا رَأَيَ ما فِي وَجْهِهِ قَالَ: «إِنَّا لَمْ نَرَدَّهُ عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا أَنَا حُرُومٌ» (أَخْرِجَهُ الْسِّنَةُ إِلَّا أَبَادَاوْدَ)

It is related on the authority of Sa'b ibn Jaththamah who gifted a wild ass to Allāh's Prophet while he was at Abwā' or Waddān, that when the Prophet returned the gift, and saw what was on the man's face, he explained, “We return this to you only because we are in ihram.” This hadith was related by Mālik, Muslim, Bukhārī, Nasā'ī and Tirmidhī.

135 The use of incense during Ḥajj is prohibited, and in the early days of Islam most dyed garments were dyed with incense of one form or another. Thus, though Ṭalḥah wore a garment dyed with brick dust, it was not inconceivable that some people would have supposed it to have been dyed in incense and then deduce for themselves that, if someone of the stature of Ṭalḥah could wear it, then there must not be anything wrong with their wearing such garments. YTD.
136 Muwatta': 626
Teachings: Returning Gifts
From this hadith we learn that the reason for returning a gift, if it is valid, should be made known to the giver, so that he/she does not become insulted or discouraged. The excuse presented by the Messenger ﷺ lends itself to two explanations. The first is that if the ass was alive, its acceptance was prohibited and contrary to the conditions of ihram. The second is that if the ass was dead when presented, the possibility that it had been hunted down especially for presentation to the Prophet ﷺ could not have been discounted. Under those conditions, the jurists of the Shafi'i school have opined that its acceptance is prohibited, while the jurists of the Hanafi school hold that to accept it is permitted, while noting that the more prudent course would be to refuse or return it.

**HADITH 74**

فَعَنْ أَبِي عُمَرَ رضي الله عنه قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يُقُولُ إلى قولي ولا تبرئ على هذه الكِلِيات. وَأَذَى في رواية عن عبد الله بن عمر رضي الله عنه يُقُولُ بعده هذه الكليات: لَبَكَ، آَلِهَتُكَ، لَبَكَ، وَسَعَدَكَ، وأَحْيَيْتُكَ يَدُكَ، وَرَغْبَةُ إِلَيْكَ وَالْعَمَل. وَفِي رواية أبي داود قال: والناسُ يَزِيدُونَ ذَالِ المُعَارِج وَتَحَوَّلُهُ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ وَالْبَيِّنِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يُسْمَعُ ولا يُقُولُ شَيْئًا. (أخره البخاري) It is related on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar ﷺ that he heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ make the ritual chant of the Ḥajj in a certain manner. The hadith continues until Ibn 'Umar ﷺ says, "... and he added nothing to these words." In another hadith on the subject, Ibn 'Umar ﷺ related that he had it on the authority of his father, 'Umar ﷺ, that he added some other words to the ritual chant. Another narration, related by Abū Dāwūd on the authority of Jābir ﷺ, contains the following statement, "...and the people [all of whom were Companions] added words of their own which the Prophet heard and did not object to." The hadiths related by Ibn 'Umar ﷺ were related by Bukhārī and Muslim.138

Miscellaneous: Original Composition
Certain critics of the Sufis have charged them with bid'ah or blameworthy innovation because they compose their own supplications, dhikr, and daily recita-

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tions. From the ḥadiths quoted here, however, it should be clear that there is in fact permission for this kind of innovation. The blameworthy sort of innovation comes about when people attempt to make innovations in the body of the religion itself. Clearly, even when the innovations are in themselves unobjectionable, this is prohibited; and even more so when the innovations are dubious or clearly objectionable.

**ḤADĪTH 75**

عن جابر رضي الله عنده في حديث طويل فقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: "أرأيت ما استقلت من أمرٍ ما استدلت ما استدلت؟" (أخره ج الخمسة إلا الترمذي وهذا لفض الشيخين)

It is related on the authority of Jābir Ṣ, as a part of a lengthy narration concerning the Farewell Hajj, that Allāh’s Prophet Ḥ said, “If I had known then what I know now, I would not have brought these animals with me for sacrifice.”¹³⁹ This hadith was related by Muslim, Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, and Nasā‘ī.¹⁴⁰

**Corrections: The Impermanence of Spiritual Visions**

It is the belief of many over-zealous Sufis that the kashf or spiritual visions of the Sufi masters is something which the masters can turn on or off at will. Some even believe that their masters know everything that happens, as it happens. The absurdity of these beliefs should be apparent to anyone who has read the ḥadith related here by Jābir Ṣ, as the Messenger of Allāh Ḥ clearly admitted to his not having known what was in store for him. Those who hold to such erroneous beliefs should see to their rectification.

**ḤADĪTH 76**

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه قال: "لم أقم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أبي أن يدخل البيت وفيه الألهمة، فأمر بها فأخرجت وأخرجوا صورة إبراهيم وسامعه عليه السلام في أبدامها الأزلام، فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "قد أتئمه الله،"

¹³⁹ When a Ḥajj pilgrim takes animals along for sacrifice at the Ḥajj, he/she may not remove his/her ihram until after the animals have been sacrificed. Evidently, on the Farewell Pilgrimage, this presented problems to the Prophet. YTD.
It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās that when Allāh’s Messenger entered Makka [following its liberation] he refused to go inside the Ka’bah as long as idols remained inside of it. When he gave the order that the idols be removed, he noticed that one of the things his Companions took out was a painting that depicted the prophets, Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl, divining with arrows. As soon as he saw the picture, Allah’s Prophet exclaimed, “May Allāh damn them [the idolaters]! By Allāh! They knew that those two never once practised divination by arrows!” Then he entered the Ka’bah and recited the words “Allāh is Great” in every direction.  

**Corrections: The Veneration of Images**

Nowadays, many ignorant Sufis have taken to keeping pictures of their masters and to accord to those pictures so much respect that it borders on sanctification. The hadith here makes it quite clear that the Messenger of Allāh would have no part of such veneration. The fact that he refused to enter the Ka’bah as long as that picture was inside is sufficient to indicate his position on the matter.

**ḤADĪTH 77**

> عَنِ النَّاسِلِيَّةِ رضي الله عنها قالَتْ: قُلْتُ لِعنَانَ بْنِ طَلَّحَةَ رضي الله عنْهُ: مَا قَالَ لَكَ رَسُولُ الله صَلَّى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حِينَ دُعَاكَ؟ قَالَ: إِنِّي نَسيْتُ أَنْ أَمْرَكَ أَنْ حُمَّرَ الْقُرُونَ فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ يُبْنِي اِنْفُقَانَ فِي الْبَيْتِ مَنْ يُكَوْنُ فِي الْبَيْتِ مَنْ يُشْغَلُ الْمُصَلِّيِّ. (أخرهه أبو داود)

It is related on the authority of Al-Aslamiyah that she once asked ‘Uthmān ibn Ṭalḥah what the Prophet had said to him when he called him. ‘Uthmān replied, “He told me he had forgotten to ask me to cover over those two horns.42 ‘For indeed,’ he said, ‘there should be nothing inside here which might distract people from performing their prayers.’” This hadith was related by Abū Dāwūd.43

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141 Bukhārī: 1601
142 These were two horns found inside the Ka’bah and said to be from the goat sacrificed by the Prophet Ibrāhīm instead of his son, Ismā‘īl.
143 Abū Dāwūd: 2030
Teachings: Empty Rooms for Worship

It is the teaching of the Sufi masters that the rooms or cubicles set aside for worship and spiritual disciplines should be bare except for a single mat on which to sit, so that the disciple's mind will be less likely to wander while he/she is engaged with disciplines. The basis for this practice is clearly presented in the Ḥadīth.

ḤADĪTH 78

عن عائشة رضي الله تعالى عنها قالت: كانت قُرُّبَتُمْ وَمِنّ ذٛان وَبِيّنتَها وَهُمُ الْحُمْسُ يَقُولُونَ بَلْ مَرْدُ يَقُولُونَ: تَحْمِنَ قَطَّبُنَّهُمْ فَلاَ نُخْرِجُونَ مِنْ حَرَّمٍ (أخذه رزٛین).

It is related on the authority of 'A'isha that, “The Quraysh and those who followed them, collectively called the Ḥums, used to halt at Muzdalifah and say, 'We are the ones who dwell in Allāh's sacred precincts, therefore we shall not step outside of them.' This Ḥadīth was related by Razin. 145

Corrections: Baseless Practices by Those Living Near the Graves of Sufi Masters

The people mentioned in this Ḥadīth based their claim that they, unlike the rest of the Ḥajj pilgrims, need not go to 'Arafah on the fact that they were the servants and inhabitants of the sacred precincts. Their claim, however, was refuted by the Qur'ān. 146

From all of this we may deduce that the practices, many of which are contrary to the Shari'a, invented and perpetuated by those who live nearby the graves of people revered as saints, awliya', are completely unfounded.

ḤADĪTH 79

عن أنس رضي الله عنه أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أتى الجمره فرماها إلى قوله قال: لأبي طلحة: أقسم بأسماء النعاس، (أخذه الخمسة إلا النسياني).

It is related on the authority of Anas that Allāh's Messenger said [after having his hair cut off at the completion of the Ḥajj] to Abū Ṭalḥah

144 The Ḥajj pilgrims proceed from Muzdalifah to 'Arafah during the Ḥajj. But Muzdalifah lies within the haram, or the sacred precincts, while 'Arafah does not. In refusing to continue on to 'Arafah during the Ḥajj, the pagan Quraysh attempted to assert their tribal superiority over the rest of the pilgrims. YTD.
145 Tirmidhi: 884
146 al-Qur'ān, 2:198
“Distribute the hairs among the people.” This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī.47

**Practices: The Presentation of Blessed Gifts**

It is the practice of most Sufi masters to present gifts for the sake of blessings to those of their disciples in whom they find sincere desire. This hadith may be cited as the basis for this practice. This does not necessarily mean that the masters think of themselves as “blessed”. Rather, their purpose in presenting such gifts is to keep their disciples in good spirits. Of course, where the Prophet is concerned, there is no doubt that he was indeed blessed and a source of true barakah. This is an article of faith with all Muslims, and it is corroborated by impeccable textual evidence.

**Hadīth 80**

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ that a mad woman who had committed adultery was brought before ʿUmar ﷺ, and that ʿAlī ﷺ said to him, “You know that Allah’s Prophet ﷺ said that, ‘The pen is lifted48 for three; for a child until he/she reaches maturity, for a sleeper until he/she wakes, and for an insane person until he/she comes to their senses.’ This woman is known by her tribe as a madwoman. So it is certainly possible that when she committed this act, she was out of her senses.” This ḥadīth was related by Abū Dāwūd.49

**Questions: Toleration for the Spiritually Intoxicated**

Just as the mind is subject to becoming clouded by different physical and psy-

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48 The intended meaning is that there are three kinds of people who are not to be held responsible for their deeds. The lifting of the pen refers to the record of their deeds, and how certain deeds will not be recorded. YTD.

49 Abū Dāwūd: 4402
chological stimuli, it can also become clouded at the arrival of certain spiritual states. Among these states is the state of spiritual intoxication, *sukr*. Then, in the same way that the Shari'a excuses the insane, it also excuses the rash utterances, *shatahāt*, made by those in states of ecstasy, and the errors of omission and commission made by Sufis who have come under the influence of extremely overwhelming states of ecstasy like *sukr*. Furthermore, such a state, like insanity, will oftentimes be impossible to detect. It was for this reason that 'Umar was in doubt in regard to the state of the woman brought before him, until 'Ali spoke up and clarified the matter. The teaching of the hadith is simply that if there are indications of the possibility that someone may be excused by the Shari'a, it is far better to give that person the benefit of the doubt. That was what 'Ali did in the case of the mad woman, as it was well known that she was often subject to fits of insanity. Therefore, the deeds and sayings of the spiritually intoxicated may be excused or interpreted favourably when there is evidence of true *sukr* (something the person’s spiritual master would know immediately), and of the person’s virtues, good character and adherence to the Sunna. When, on the other hand, a person is known to be a wrongdoer and is scornful of the Sunna, no excuse or favourable interpretation should be allowed, as there is nothing to indicate the person’s deserving it. Were it not this way, the door of legal censure and punishment would be closed; and that is clearly absurd.

**ḤADĪTH 81**

It is related on the authority of Anas that a man was accused of committing adultery with one of the maid servants from the household of the Prophet. So the Prophet said to 'Ali, “Go and cut off his head.” When 'Ali went after the man, he found him bathing in a well. Offering the man his hand, 'Ali said, “Come out.” Then, while helping the man out of the water, 'Ali noticed that the man’s penis had been cut off. So he let the man go. Later, when the Prophet was informed of what had
transpired, he congratulated ‘Ali for the job he had done, and then said, “An eyewitness will see what others cannot.” This was related by Muslim.\textsuperscript{150}

**Corrections: Attention to the Spirit Rather than the Letter of a Command**

In this hadith, the command of the Prophet was absolute and unqualified by legal conditions or other restraints. Ali was to find the man and punish him. At face value, the orders provided for no more and no less than that. To the superficial observer, anything more or less would appear to be disobedience. Thus, many of the Sufis whose greatest concern is with the externals of obedience to their masters will ignore entirely the factors underlying those orders, even to the point of failing to discriminate between what is allowed and what is not allowed by the Shari‘a. Such careless disciples are considered by true Sufi masters to be less than obedient. On the other side of the coin, there are some obedient disciples who will be considered by people to be disobedient because they followed the spirit and not the letter of their masters’ commands. It is clear, however, from the congratulations received by ‘Ali that such absolute commands are actually qualified, at least to the extent that they are consistent with the principles and precepts of the Shari‘a. Then, when the orders of the Prophet were so qualified, is it conceivable that the orders of an ordinary master would not also be qualified in the same way? Especially when it is the teaching of all true masters that adherence to the Shari‘a is essential in all matters. Then, in such matters, though something other than absolute obedience may appear to be disobedience, it is in reality the very essence of obedience.

**Hadith 82**

\[\text{عنَّ عليٌّ رضيٌّ الله عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ الله صَلَّى الله عَلَيهِ وَسَلَّمُ: "رَفَعَ الْقُلُومَ عَنْ}\
\[\text{نَائِئَةٍ، وَعَنْ الصَّبِيبَ حَتَّى يَحْيَى، وَعَنْ المَجُوْنِ حَتَّى يَعْفَلِّي."}\
\[\text{أَخْرَجَهُ أَبُو دَوْدَ وَالْتَرْمِذِي وَزَادَ أَبُو دَوْدٍ فِي الْأَخَرَى: عَنِ النَّفِّيفِ.}\

It is related on the authority of ‘Ali that Allah’s Prophet said, “For three, the pen is lifted: for a sleeper until he/she wakes, for a child until he/she matures, and for an insane person until he/she returns to their senses. This hadith was related by Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī, with the difference that in Abū Dāwūd’s version the words, “and a person who has become senile,” are also related.\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{150} Muslim: 2771

\textsuperscript{151} Abū Dāwūd: 4403, Tirmidhī: 1423
Questions: Pardon for the Spiritually Overcome

This question was discussed in detail in the commentary on the eightieth ḥadīth. From the addition in the narration related by Abū Dāwūd, however, it becomes even more evident that the loss of reason excused by the Shari'ā is not limited to insanity only, but to senility as well. Then, when it is clear that there is no such limitation, the spiritual state which overcomes the mind should also be considered as belonging to the same category, and deserving of the same treatment.

**ḤADĪTH 83**

عن النوَّاس بن سمعان رضي الله عنه قال: سأَلَتِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَن

البر والانفلام، فَقَالَ: «البر حَسْنُ الخُلُقَّ وَالانفلام مَاحَاكُ فِي صَدْرِكَ، وَكَرِهْتَ أَنْ يُبْلِغَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ». (أُخْرِجَهُ مَسْلِمُ وَالتَّرِمِذِي)

It is related on the authority of Nawwās ibn Sam‘ān that he asked Allah’s Messenger about piety and impiety. In reply, the Prophet said, “Piety is good character. Impiety is whatever pricks your conscience, and what you would not like others to know about.” This ḥadīth was related by Muslim and Tirmidhi.¹⁵²

Questions: Accrediting the Judgment of the Spiritually Pure

The type of impiety referred to in this ḥadīth has to do with those acts of wrongdoing for which no specific textual prohibition exists but which one suspects to be contrary to the fundamental principles of Islam. The answer given to the question was designed to enable all Muslims to recognise this kind of wrongdoing for themselves. But the key to proper recognition, as alluded to by the fact that it was the Companions for whom the answer was given, is inner purity. From this ḥadīth it should be apparent that the judgment of a spiritually developed Muslim may be accredited and acted upon in those matters for which there are no explicit Shari’ā directives. It is on the basis of this principle that most masters, when petitioned for discipleship, look into their own hearts for an answer and, accordingly, either accept or reject petitions for initiation into the Sufi order.

**ḤADĪTH 84**

عن أبي ذر رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلی الله علیه وسلَّم: «يَا أَبَا ذَرُّ! إِنَّ
It is related on the authority of Abū Dharr that Allâh’s Prophet said, “O Abū Dharr! I can see that you are weak.” And truly, I want for you only that which I want for myself. So, never judge between two parties, and never become responsible for the welfare of an orphan.” This hadith was related by Abū Dāwūd.

 Practices: Abstinence from Worldly Affairs

It is the practice of most Sufis to disassociate themselves from all non-essential affairs of the world. This is something which their formalist critics never fail to mention in their attacks on the Sufi way, charging that as a result of this retirement from worldly affairs the Sufis are of no benefit whatsoever to the Muslim community in general. This hadith, however, clearly shows the approval of the Prophet for the practice of non-involvement. At the heart of the matter lies the fact that while, undoubtedly, it is a good thing to be of benefit to others, it quite often happens that this same ‘being of benefit’ becomes the cause of evil (love of fame, power, influence, position, etc.). It is also quite obvious that the repulsion of evil must be put before the acquisition of good. This ruling, however, is not binding in the case of persons whose spiritual state is such that they are no longer susceptible to this kind of evil. Indeed, the first Caliphs of Islam were excellent examples of such insusceptibility. In this hadith, the words, “I can see that you are weak,” clearly indicate a measure of susceptibility. Finally, as it is a mistake to rely on one’s own opinion before one has attained a high degree of spiritual competence, one should leave all important decisions to one’s spiritual master.

Hadith 85

It is related on the authority of Jubayr ibn Mu’tim that a woman went to Allâh’s Prophet and spoke with him about something. When they

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153 i.e., that you are unable to bear too many worldly relationships.
154 Muslim: 1826, Abū Dāwūd: 2868, Nasâ’i: 3697
had finished talking, the Prophet ﷺ asked the woman to come and talk to him again. The woman then asked, “And if I do not find you?” as if to refer to his death. So the Prophet ﷺ replied, “If you do not find me, then go to Abū Bakr.” This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim and Tirmidhī.155

 Practices: Spiritual Successors
It is the practice of most Sufi masters to name a successor or several successors from among their disciples who will be responsible for carrying on their work in the Sufi order. The basis for this practice may be seen in the ḥadīth related here by Jubayr -urlencoded. It is, of course, essential that those so designated be qualified in every way for the responsibility. Nowadays, it happens all too often that after a master passes away, his disciples and relatives gather together to choose his successor from those among them who were closest to the master, regardless of whether or not that person is truly qualified. This is clearly injurious to all concerned, and a blot on the name of Sufis everywhere.

ḤADĪTH 86

عن عائشة رضي الله تعالى عنها في حديث طويل قالت: وكان لي علي رضي الله عنه من الناس وجة حبيبة فاطمَة خاتمَة الناس أصْرَفْتُ وجوهُ الناس عنتُه (أخره الشيخان واللفظ لمسلم)

It is related on the authority of ʿA’isha ٓ, as part of a lengthy narration, that, “While Fatimah was alive, ʿAlī ٓ enjoyed a great deal of prestige among the Muslims. But after she died, that prestige diminished somewhat.” This was related by Bukhārī and Muslim.156

 Practices: Respect for the Relatives of a Master
To the Sufis, the giving of respect to all those related to their masters is a matter of second nature. It is evident from the ḥadīth here that this is something that was found among the Companions as well.

ḤADĪTH 87

عن عائشة رضي الله تعالى عنها من خطبة عمر رضي الله عنها قال فهيا: أنا عمر ولي

155 Bukhārī: 2659, Muslim: 2386, Tirmidhī: 3676
156 Bukhārī: 4240, 4241, Muslim: 1759
It is related on the authority of 'Ā'ishah that ‘Umar said in one of his last addresses, “I am ‘Umar. I never coveted being appointed your leader. But then the dying man [Abū Bakr] willed it to me; and it was Allāh who inspired him [to do so]. Therefore, I will not bestow this trust on anyone who is not truly worthy of it. Rather, I will bestow it on someone whose sole interest is the honour and welfare of the Muslims.” This ḥadith was related by Mālik.\(^{157}\)

**Questions: Inspiration**

Certain of the Sufi masters are known to have received inspiration, ilḥām. This ḥadith clearly mentions one such instance of a spiritually advanced Muslim receiving ilḥām.

**Corrections: Appointing Successors**

Many so-called Sufis appoint successors solely for the purpose of perpetuating their orders, regardless of whether or not the one so appointed is actually worthy of the position. This ḥadith clearly indicates the error of this practice. Those who are guilty of such excesses should see to their rectification.

**ḤADĪTH 88**

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar, in a lengthy narration, that his father, ‘Umar said, “Undoubtedly, Allāh, Most High, is going to see to the preservation of His religion. So, if I fail to name a successor, well, the Prophet did not name a successor either. And if I do name a suc-

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cessor, Abū Bakr also named a successor." This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī.\[158\]

**Practices: Not Naming a Successor**

It is the practice of many Sufi masters not to name a specific successor, trusting that Allah will put those of their disciples who are worthy of it in positions to carry on the work of their orders. This ḥadīth may be cited as the precedent for this practice. Furthermore, it is the teaching of the Sufis that to become a spiritual successor, khalifah, it is not essential to have been appointed by the master himself (though this, of course, is the exception rather than the rule), on the condition that one has given the master one’s spiritual allegiance, bay’ah, and then proved oneself worthy of becoming a khalifah.

**ḤADĪTH 89**

\[\text{ survives, line breaking necessary for readability}\]

It is related on the authority of ʿUmar ibn Maymun that ʿUmar said to his son, “Go to the Mother of the Muslims, and say to her that ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb asks permission to be buried at the side of his two companions.” In the same narration it is related that ʿA’isha replied, “I had wanted that place for myself, but today I prefer that he should have it.” This was related by Bukhārī.\[159\]

**Customs: Burial in a Blessed Place**

A great many of the Sufi masters have directed in their wills that arrangements be made for their burial in certain blessed places, or at the side of certain pious predecessors. The ḥadīth above indicates that this custom is not without precedence in the Sunna.

**Customs: Self Sacrifice**

Another widespread Sufi custom is their courtesy in allowing themselves to be

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158 Bukhārī: 7218, Muslim: 1823, Abū Dāwūd: 2939, Tirmidhī: 2526
159 Bukhārī: 3700
preceded by those who are their betters in the performance of good deeds. For example, when a master comes and stands in the second row for congregational prayers, quite often a Sufi in the front row will offer his place to the master, and then perform the prayer in the second row. That there is nothing wrong with this should be evident from the ḥadith above. Some scholars, however, have written that it is better not to practise this kind of self-sacrifice in matters of worship, as it indicates a lack of desire. In matters of blessings, barakah, however, there is nothing wrong with it. It is clear, moreover, that what ‘Ā’isha did pertained to a matter of barakah. The opinion of our greatest scholars, however, is that respect for a superior is itself an act of worship. Then, if a greater act of worship is preferred to a lesser act of worship, this surely cannot be called a lack of desire. Of course, a lesser act of worship should never be preferred over a greater act.

**ḤADĪTH 90**

 женін ابن عبَّاس رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: «لا تنكروا الحجرة» (رواه أبو بكر).

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās that, “Allāh’s Prophet said, “Do not cover your walls with cloth.” This ḥadith was related by Abū Dāwūd.\(^1\)

**Corrections: Covering Memorials and Tombs**

It is evident from this ḥadith that the practice of covering tombs and memorials with decorative trappings is not a good one.

**ḤADĪTH 91**

 женіن أبي موسى رضي الله عنه قال: كتب في سفر فجعل الناس تجهزون بالتكبير، فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: «ازبعوا على الفسقيم إنكم لا تدعون أسم ولا غاية إنكم تدعون سبئا بصرا وهو مفخخ و الذي تدعون أقرب إلى أحدهم من عقی راجل».

(A’īr al-khamsa ‘ilā ‘ansā’i)

It is related on the authority of Abū Mūsā that while the Companions were on a journey, some people began shouting “Allāh is Great” aloud,

\(^1\) Abū Dāwūd: 1485
so Allāh's Prophet ﷺ said, "Be kind to yourselves! You are not calling a deaf or absent one, you are calling the All-hearing, the All-seeing, and He is with you! In fact, the One you are calling is closer to you than the necks of the camels you are riding." This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī.161

Corrections: Audible Dhikr

The practice of doing dhikr aloud is one which is well supported by evidence from the Qur’ān and the Sunna, so there is really no need to discuss its status in the Shari‘a. However, what needs to be discussed is the matter of exaggerated or overly loud dhikr. Certain overly enthusiastic Sufis believe that volume in dhikr is itself an act of worship. Accordingly, it is their belief that the louder the dhikr the greater the benefit. In this, they are completely indifferent to the right of others to peace and quiet. On the other hand, there are any number of dry formalists who are of the opinion that audible dhikr is a form of blameworthy innovation or bid‘ah. The truth of the matter is that this kind of exaggerated audible dhikr is neither worship nor bid‘ah, as long as one does not hold the belief that it is actually an act of worship.162 Rather, the practice of doing overly loud dhikr is a spiritual remedy that is known to produce special effects on the heart, like sensitivity and increased concentration.

Then, on this basis, the practice may be said to be permitted. However, wherever there is permission for something, it will always be conditional on the absence of nullifying factors. Thus, in this matter as well, permission is given only on the condition that no one is inconvenienced by it. The implied prohibition in the ḥadīth here should be interpreted as applying to the belief that volume in dhikr is an integral part of the act of worship. Nor does the prohibition in the ḥadīth negate in any way the benefit of this practice as a remedy for spiritual ailments, as this aspect of loud dhikr is not specifically mentioned.

There remains here the question of why, when this remedial aspect of loud dhikr is so desirable and useful, no mention of it is made in other ḥadīths? In fine, the answer is that the Companions were not in need this particular remedy, as they had advanced beyond the particular spiritual sphere in which this remedy is effective.163 Only later on did the need for this sort of remedy arise.

161 Bukhārī: 2992, Muslim: 2704, Abū Dāwūd: 1526, Tirmidhī: 3461
162 The dhikr itself it worship, but the exaggerated audible part is not. So, what the author is warning about is the mistaken belief that the audible part is actually an act of worship. YTD.
163 Another explanation is that there might well have been cases where the Prophet, Allah bless him and give him peace, prescribed this sort of dhikr, but that no one recorded it as a ḥadīth; or, if they did, the ḥadīth may have been rejected early on by the muḥaddithīn for technical or other reasons. YTD.
Questions: Proximity

Essentially, the proximity and closeness of the Almighty is beyond human comprehension. It can certainly not be called subjective or spatial proximity, though some theologians have labelled it 'attributive' proximity. The way of the early Sufi masters, however, was to refrain from attempting to classify the attributes of the Almighty, and to leave unexplained whatever the Almighty left unexplained. In the few instances where the masters spoke of this proximity in terms suggesting limitation, their intention was not to ascribe human characteristics to the Almighty but to allow their readers to come to a more complete understanding of the matter. Toward that end they used figurative language. The ḥadīth here clearly indicates\textsuperscript{164} that there is nothing wrong with the use of this sort of figurative expression with regard to the Almighty.

\textbf{ḤADĪTH 92}

\textit{عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه في دعاء رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "اللهُ أَغِيسَلِيْنِيَ مُنَّ حُطَابَاتِي بَالْأَمْوَامُ وَالْتَّلْبِينَ وَالْتَّرْمِيِّدِ"} (أخرجه الحميم إلا الترمذي وهذا لفظ الشيخين)

It is related on the authority of Abū Huraira Ῥ that Allah's Messenger Ῥ recited the following supplication, "O Allah! Cleanse me of my mistakes with water, snow and sleet." This ḥadīth was related by Muslim, Bukhārī, Nasā'i and Abū Dāwūd.\textsuperscript{165}

Interpretations: Figurative Representation of the Divine Attributes

In the poetry of many Sufi masters the Divine essence and attributes are represented figuratively by water and the ocean, as in the following verses:

Though the ocean be one, from its great depths
waves rise in a multitude of hues and forms.

The purpose of this figurative representation is not to suggest a complete unanimity of similarities; indeed, the Almighty is far beyond compare. Rather, it is to illustrate His attributes, by means of similarities, in ways that are clear and instructive. For example, the ocean is a single, non-composite entity which is the source of many varied phenomena, and the same is true of the Almighty; though it is obvious that, in nature, the sources are as different from one another as they could possibly be. Permission for the use of this kind of figurative rep-

\textsuperscript{164} "...closer to you than the necks of the camels you are riding."

\textsuperscript{165} Bukhārī: 6375, Muslim: 598, Abū Dāwūd: 781, Tirmidhi: 3494, Nasā'i: 60, Ibn Mājah: 805
representation may clearly be ascertained from the Ḥadīth cited here. Water, snow and sleet are figurative representations of the Divine attribute of mercy, and the quality common to all is purification. Then, when it has been established that figurative representation of the Divine attributes is permitted, it follows that figurative representation of the Divine essence is also permissible, as there is no difference between the attributes and essence of the Divine.

ハウス 93

It is related on the authority of Zayd ibn Thabit concerning the Prophet's teaching that one should say 'Glory be to Allah,' after every prayer, a man from among the Muslims of Madina saw in a dream that someone told him to say 'Glory be to Allah' twenty five times after every prayer, and to add the words, 'There is no god but Allah,' as well. The next morning, when the man related his dream to Allah's Messenger, he said, "Then do it that way." This Ḥadīth was related by Nasā‘i.166

Miscellaneous: Informing One's Master of One's Dreams

The Sufi masters have written in their works on the etiquette of the Sufi way that when a disciple receives instructions in a dream, the disciple should consult with the master before acting upon those instructions. This Ḥadīth clearly corroborates this practice. It is essential in such instances that the disciple not be deluded into thinking that (as the instructions were vouchsafed to him/her alone) more was revealed to them than was revealed to the master. For even though that is possible, it does not mean that the disciple is in any way more accomplished than the master. For the disciple such thinking is indeed injurious, and they should refrain from it, thinking instead that the vision or dream was the result of spiritual blessings or progress brought about in them by the master. Furthermore, it should be evident to the disciple that the master is far more qualified to grasp the true significance of their dreams and visions. For that reason, the

166 Nasā‘i: 1351
A disciple should always inform the master of dreams and visions, and abide by whatever the master says concerning them.

**Hadith 94**

عرض عائشة رضي الله عنها فقالت: كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا أخذ مصدقاً، نفث في يديه وقرأ الحديث (آخرجه السنة إلا النسائي)

It is related on the authority of ‘A’isha that when Allāh’s Prophet went to bed, he would blow into his hands and recite a supplication. This was related by Mālik, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī.

**Customs: Incantation and Sufflation**

While the ritual recitation of Qur’ānic verses to produce a favourable effect is not in itself among the objectives of the Sufi way, it is a form of service to humanity and, as such, is something which the Sufis almost never refuse to do. From the evidence of this hadith, it is certain that this practice is condoned by the Sharī‘a, and that there is nothing wrong in its being performed for one’s own benefit. The secret behind all such charms and recitations is that, essentially, they represent a form of dependence upon, humility before, and subservience to the Almighty.

**Hadith 94**

 وعن مالك في دعاءه صلى الله عليه وسلم «أنتم الأرض» الحديث.

It is related on the authority of one of the Companions that the Messenger of Allāh used the following words in a prayer of supplication, “O Allāh! Fold up the earth for us.” This hadith was related by Imam Mālik.

**Sayings: Traversing the Earth**

Many stories are told about masters who miraculously travel great distances in short amounts of time. As a matter of course, the starched formalists deny all such narrations. The Sufis, however, and many other scholars claim not only that such journeys are possible but that they have actually occurred as well. The hadith quoted here would seem to bear out the claim of the Sufis, as the ‘folding of the earth’ is something which has no fixed quantitative value. Thus, as a variable, it is not confined to any one specific distance; and in the absence of any

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168 Muwatta’: 3583, Tirmidhī: 3438
evidence to suggest limitation, it will remain a variable. It is a principle of Islamic legal theory that the general, unless proven to be specific, will remain general. Thus, in general, such traversing of the earth is possible.

**Hadith 95**

"When a guest visits a house, eat its food, drink its drink, and then pray for them.

It is related on the authority of Jabir that Abu Laytham once prepared a meal and invited the Messenger of Allah and his Companions to partake of it. When they had finished eating, the Messenger said, "Repay your brother." The Companions asked, "And how do we repay him?" Allah's Prophet replied, "When you enter someone's house, eat their food, drink their drink, and then pray for them. That is how you repay them." This hadith was related by Abu Dawud.169

**Hadith 96**

"May the fasting break their fasts with you, may the pious partake of your food, and may the angels pray for you.

It is related on the authority of Anas that the Messenger ate a meal of bread and olive oil with Sa’d ibn Ubada, and then recited the following supplication, "May the fasting break their fasts with you, may the pious partake of your food, and may the angels pray for you." This hadith was related by Abu Dawud.170

**Practices: Supplicating for One’s Host**

It is the practice of the Sufis to offer supplication, *du’ā’,* after eating, for the one who has fed them. The hadith above corroborates this practice. Another hadith concerning the same practice follows.

169 Abu Dawud: 3853

170 Abu Dawud: 3853
Teachings: Ignoring Illuminations

The Sufi masters teach that one should never pay attention to mystic illuminations which may come while one is in a state of contemplation. Concerning these illuminations they teach that the veil of light is worse than the veil of darkness. This teaching is substantiated by the hadith related by Qatadah. The reason that the Messenger saw the moon was that many Arabs in those times used to gaze on the heavens so intently, and with such veneration, that they were diverted from ever directing their attention toward the Creator. Here, with regard to mystic illuminations, a similar situation exists wherein attention is diverted from the true objective.

Hadith 98

It is related on the authority of 'Imrân ibn Hudhayfah that Maymûnah was borrowing a lot of money, until finally her family reproved her. Then she said, “No, I will not refrain from borrowing. For I have heard my dear friend and sincere companion (i.e. her husband, the Messenger) say, “Whenever someone borrows money, and Allâh knows that they truly intend to repay the debt, Allâh will see to it that it is paid in this world.” This hadith was related by Nasâ’î.
Practices: Borrowing Money for Guests and the Needy

Many Sufi masters borrow freely in order to entertain guests and provide for the needy. This hadith alone should suffice to vouch for this practice. It is well known that Maymūnah ﷺ was not given to frivolous spending.173

Hadith 99

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه في حديث فضيلة الذكر قال رسول الله صل الله عليه وسلم: فيقول ملك منهم فلان عبد خطايا ليس منهم إنما مرحاحجته فجلس فيقول والله قد غفرت هم القوم لا يشفى جليسهم (أخره الشيخان)

It is related on the authority of Abū Hurairah ﷺ in a lengthy hadith from the Prophet ﷺ concerning the virtues of dhikr that an angel said, after being told by the Almighty that He had forgiven the sins of all of those present in a certain group of people engaged in His remembrance, dhikr, “But there is a certain one among them, a wrongdoer, who is not really one of them, but who was passing by on his own business and simply decided to sit there and rest.” The reply of the Almighty to the angel was, “And I forgive him too! Even those who come only to sit with these people will not be deprived.” This hadith was related by Bukhārī, Muslim and Tirmidhi.174

Customs: Initiation into Sufi Orders

It has been the way of the Sufi masters to also initiate into their spiritual orders people from whom little can be expected in the way of spiritual advancement. While this may appear to be little more than an exercise in futility, there is at least the advantage of the blessings which come to them through their association with a Sufi order. This kind of bay'ah, then, is given only for the sake of barakah. This practice is clearly supported by the hadith quoted here, as even those who sit in the company of Allah’s special servants will not be deprived. Certainly, when a person takes bay'ah from a Sufi master it is more than likely that the person will attach themselves to the master at least to the extent of sitting and conversing with the master from time to time.

173 Among the wives of the Messenger ﷺ, Maymūnah bint al-Ḥārith ﷺ was perhaps best known for kindness and generosity. Of her, ‘A'isha ﷺ said, “She was the most God-fearing among us, and the most attached to her relatives.” YTD.

174 Bukhārī: 6408, Muslim: 2689, Tirmidhi: 3600
It is related on the authority of Shufayy al-Asbuhi that he related a ḥadith to Mu‘āwiyah that concerns the first people to be questioned on the Day of Judgment in exactly the way he had heard it from Abū Huraira, and that Mu‘āwiyah had said, “If that is what is going to happen to them, then what about the rest of us?” Then Mu‘āwiyah broke down and cried so much that people thought he was going to die. But he eventually regained his composure, wiped his face, and said, “Allāh and His Messenger are right.”

Then he quoted from the Qur’an: “Whoso desires the life of this world and its temptations, We will pay them in full for their works therein, and they shall not be defrauded there: they are those for whom in the world to come there is only the Fire. Their deeds will have failed them, and void will be their works.”175 This ḥadith was related by Muslim, Nasā’i and Tirmidhi.176

States: Spiritual Ardour

Spiritual ardour, or wajd has been defined as one’s being overwhelmed by a peculiar but praiseworthy spiritual state. While there are many different forms and degrees of wajd, only that which is free of dissemblance may be considered praiseworthy. Mu‘āwiyah’s state, as described in this ḥadith, is an example of true wajd.

175 al-Qur’an, 11:15

176 Muslim: 1905, Tirmidhi: 2382, Nasā’i: 3139
It is related on the authority of Abū Hurairah ﷺ, concerning the difference of opinion between Abū Bakr ﷺ and ʿUmar ﷺ on the question of whether or not to make war on those who withheld payment of Zakāh, that ʿUmar ﷺ said, “By Allāh! When I saw that Allāh had opened the heart of Abū Bakr ﷺ to the waging of war, I knew that he was right.” This ḥadīth was related in its entirety by Mālik, Muslim, Bukhārī, Nasāʾi, Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī.\(^{177}\)

**States: Divine Guidance**

The biographies of the Sufi masters contain innumerable references to incidents of divine guidance, or ilhām. What is termed in the ḥadīth above as Allāh’s opening the heart of Abū Bakr ﷺ clearly attests to the validity of the ilhām of the masters. Essentially, ilhām is divine guidance exerted directly upon the heart. In the argument referred to in the ḥadīth, it would appear that both Abū Bakr ﷺ and ʿUmar ﷺ were made recipients of divine guidance. First, Abū Bakr ﷺ received it and then, through the spiritual effusion of Abū Bakr’s ﷺ words, the ilhām was passed to ʿUmar ﷺ. Moreover, since the outcome of their ilhām was in no way contrary to the Shariʿa, they acted upon it.

**ḤADĪTH 102**

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`Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said, “Asceticism is not simply a matter of your denying yourself what is lawful, or of spurning wealth. Asceticism is your having more faith in what is in the hand of Allāh than in what you hold in your own hand. And asceticism is your desiring more a reward for your enduring affliction than an end to it.” This ḥadīth was related by Tirmidhī.\(^{178}\)
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\(^{177}\) Bukhārī: 4986

\(^{178}\) Tirmidhī: 2340, Ibn Mājah: 4100
Character: Signs of Mastery: Trust in Allah

The realities of asceticism, *zuhd*, and trust in Allah, *tawakkul*, two qualities of the Sufi masters which are so inseparable from true mastery as to be unmistakable as distinguishing traits of the true master, are concisely explained in this hadith. In fact, this hadith should go a long way toward eliminating the misconceptions people have concerning ascetics as people who shun all lawful pleasures as completely as they do unlawful ones, who immediately give away whatever they receive, and who never lift a finger to extract themselves from difficulty. From the hadith quoted here, it is clear that these matters are in no way essential to true *zuhd*, which is one's having more faith in what is in the hands of Allah than in what is in one's own hands, and one's being happier with misfortune than without it for the sake of the reward to be had for being patient under the strain of it.

**HADITH 103**

"أَهْلَوَّ بَيْنَ الْمُّسْتَقْبِلِ وُضُرِّيٍّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ‘لَا يَبْلُغُ الْمَعْلُوْنَ عَنْ عُظْمَةِ السَّعْيِ الْمُقْنِيِّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهُ صَلَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ: ‘لَا يَبْلُغُ العُلُوْنَ حَقِيقَةَ النَّفْقَى حَتَّى يَبْدَعَ مَا لَا يَبْسُ عِنْهُ حَذَرَ اِلَّا يَبْسُ عِنْهُ’’. (أَخْرَجَهُ النَّمْذِيَّ)

It is related on the authority of ‘Atiyah al-Sa’di that the Messenger of Allah said, “A believer will never truly be heedful unless he/she forsakes what is objectionable as a precaution against what is objectionable.” This hadith was related by Tirmidhi. 179

Miscellaneous: Rebutting the Objection to the Denouncement of Lawful Pleasures

Most strait-laced formalists take exception to the Sufi practice of renouncing worldly pleasures, saying that this is contrary to the Sunna. However, the truth of the matter as disclosed by the hadith above is that this practice is indeed a part of the Sunna, and the way to true *taqwa*, or heedfulness.

**HADITH 104**

"أَهْلَوَّ بَيْنَ الْمُّسْتَقْبِلِ وُضُرِّيٍّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ‘لَا يَبْلُغُ الْمَعْلُوْنَ عَنْ عُظْمَةِ السَّعْيِ الْمُقْنِيِّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهُ صَلَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ: ‘لَا يَبْلُغُ الْمَعْلُوْنَ حَقِيقَةَ النَّفْقَى حَتَّى يَبْدَعَ مَا لَا يَبْسُ عِنْهُ حَذَرَ اِلَّا يَبْسُ عِنْهُ’’. (أَخْرَجَهُ النَّمْذِيَّ)

179 Tirmidhi: 2451, Ibn Majah: 4215
It is related on the authority of `Abbad ibn Tamim that Abū Bashir  was once on a journey with Allāh’s Prophet , when it was announced that there was not to remain on the neck of any camel any kind of collar except that it be cut off. This was related by Mālik, Bukhārī and Abū Dāwūd. 

Reform: Unlawful Charms
Most commentators on this ḥadīth have explained that the announcement was made because the Arabs from before the advent of Islam were accustomed to tying protective charms around the necks of their animals; charms which, for the most part, could not be tolerated by the Shari’a of Islam. This ḥadīth, then, proclaims the prohibition of all amulets, charms and talismans that are in any way antithetical to the Shari’a. Many of today’s so-called Sufis would do well to take note of this.

ḤADĪTH 105

It is related on the authority of Kabashah  that Allāh’s Messenger once entered her house and, while standing, drank from the mouth of a water bag that was hanging from a peg on the wall. Later, she cut the leather away from the mouth of the water bag. This much of the ḥadīth was related by Tirmidhī. In the version of the ḥadīth related by Razīn, Kabashah added, “Then I made from the leather a small flask from which I used to drink.”

Customs: Blessings from what is Used by a Master
The belief of many disciples that there are blessings to be had from whatever their master touches, or drinks from, or wears, is verified by this ḥadīth.

Reform: Permission to Use What Was Used by a Master
Many of those who use such articles do so only occasionally. There is nothing

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180 Bukhārī: 3005, Muslim: 2115, Abū Dāwūd: 2552, Muwatta’: 3456
181 The author is speaking here of unlawful charms, i.e. charms in the name of other than Allāh or in the shape of humans, etc. Otherwise, in his commentary on ḥadiths [28] and [94], he has discussed how, in fact, the practice of making charms is a part of the Sunna. YTD.
182 Tirmidhī: 1892, Ibn Mājah: 3423
wrong with this if it is done as a measure to conserve the effects of the blessings. However, if it is done out of a belief that frequent use is in some way disrespectful, then the words, “from which I used to drink” from the ḥadīth should suffice to dispel that groundless belief.

**ḤADĪTH 106**

It is related on the authority of Jābir that Allāh’s Messenger once entered a vegetable garden owned by a man from the Ānṣār of Madīna who was, at that moment, drawing water from his well. The Emissary said, “If you have some water which has stood overnight in a water bag, I’d prefer to drink that. But, if you don’t, I’ll just ask you for a drink from that well.” This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī and Abū Dāwūd.184

**Miscellaneous: Latitude in Partaking of Worldly Pleasures**

A number of Sufi masters are known to have been quite liberal in matters of food and drink, giving nearly ceremonious attention to the ways in which food was prepared and served. Certain purists have objected that this sort of behaviour has nothing to do with self denial or any of the other concerns of a true master. The Prophet’s showing of a preference for one kind of water over another is certainly indicative of a certain degree of latitude in such matters, especially with regard to the spiritually developed. The wisdom behind all of this is that through one’s partaking of these delights, one’s love for the True Provider is increased, while at the same time one’s dependence on Him is demonstrated in a practical manner. Both of these qualities may be numbered among the objectives of the Sufi way. Actually, in the same way that there is a great deal which is beneficial in forsaking worldly pleasures, there is also a great deal which is beneficial in partaking of them. Finally, only a master should decide how much of each will be suitable for him/herself or for his/her disciples.

183 Well water left overnight will be clearer, as the dust particles have a chance to settle to the bottom, whereas freshly drawn water from a desert well will often be murky. YTD.

184 Bukhārī: 5613, Abū Dāwūd: 3724, Ibn Majah: 3432
Hadith 107

It is related on the authority of Abu Huraira ş that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “On the night I was taken up into the heavens, I was given two cups; one of wine and one of milk. When I drank the cup of milk, an angel said, “Praise be to Allah Who guided you to Islam. Had you taken the wine, the community of your followers would have gone astray.” This hadith was related by Nasâ’î. 185

Questions: The World of Manifest Meaning

The particular meaning-form of Islam is milk, while the meaning-form of worldly pleasures is wine. Thus, the world of manifest meaning, so often referred to by Sufi masters, finds confirmation in the hadith related here.

Hadith 108

It is related on the authority of Jabir  that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said, “Between a person and disbelief there is one’s abandonment of regular prayer.” This hadith was related by Muslim and Tirmidhi. 186

Sayings: Calling a Misdeed Disbelief

In the works of many Sufi masters misdeeds are referred to as disbelief. For example,

On the Way, it’s disbelief to bear enmity,
   With us the heart’s a mirror, that’s our policy.

As the same thing has been done in this hadith (one does not become a disbeliever by missing one’s prayers), it may be said to corroborate this figurative usage

185 Bukhari: 3394, Muslim: 168, Tirmidhi: 3130, Nasâ’î: 5660
186 Muslim: 82, Abû Dawûd: 4678, Tirmidhi: 2691
of words. In the same way that the ḥadīth can be explained,\textsuperscript{187} so also the sayings and writings of the Sufis can be explained or interpreted in one way or another.

**ḤADĪTH 109**

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عن أبي داً رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قام حتى أضحى بالليل، فعندهم: فإنهم عبادك و إن تعفرهم فإنك أنثى العزيز الحكيم (أخرجه النسائي)
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It is related on the authority of Abū Dharr \textsuperscript{188} that Allah's Prophet \textsuperscript{188} stood all night in prayer, reciting one verse over and over again until morning. The verse was: “If you punish them, they are your servants; and if you forgive them, you are the Almighty, All Wise.” This ḥadīth was related by Nasā’ī.\textsuperscript{189}

**Miscellaneous: Spiritual Disciplines**

It is a frequent charge of the formalists that the rigorous variety of spiritual disciplines, or mujāhahah practised by the Sufis is a blameworthy form of innovation, bid“ah. From the ḥadīth above it should be more than evident that such discipline was practised by the Prophet \textsuperscript{188} himself, which makes it a part of the Sunna. The few ḥadīth which mention the prohibition of such practices also clarify that the prohibition is only for those who are physically unable to perform those practices or are otherwise not in a position to perform them regularly.

**ḤADĪTH 110**

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عن علي بن عبد الرحمن قال ابن عمر رضي الله عنه يتحكي صورة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أشار بإصبعه إلى الإيام في القبلة ورمى بيصره إليها (أخرجه النسائي)
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It is related on the authority of 'Ali ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān that 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar \textsuperscript{189} said in his description of how the Prophet \textsuperscript{189} used to perform the prayer, \textit{salāh}, that he \textsuperscript{189} used to point toward the \textit{qiblah} with the forefinger, and then keep his gaze fixed on that finger. This ḥadīth was related by Nasā’ī.\textsuperscript{189}

\textsuperscript{187} The explanation given by most commentators is that non-performance of \textit{salāh} may be taken to mean complete abandonment of \textit{salāh} as a practice and a part of faith, in which case, the non-performer becomes a disbeliever. YTD.

\textsuperscript{188} Nasā’ī: 1011

\textsuperscript{189} Nasā’ī: 1161
**HADITH 111**

It is related on the authority of Ibn Zubayr concerning the prayer of Allâh's Prophet that his gaze never went beyond the tip of the finger he was pointing with. This hadith was related by Abû Dâwûd and Nasâ'î.

**Practices: Increasing Concentration**

Among the many spiritual disciplines practised by the Sufis is their looking fixedly at a single object. The purpose of this particular exercise, and many others like it, is to increase the powers of concentration and absorption. The two hadith quoted here would seem to confirm this practice.

**HADITH 112**

It is related on the authority of al-Faḍl ibn 'Abbâs that Allâh's Messenger said, "Salâh is performed in twos, with one's witnessing after every two cycles, and with humility and devotion. The prayer of those who do not do these things will be stillborn. This hadith was related by Tirmidhi.

**Questions: The Need for Humility**

While most Sufis hold that complete concentration is essential to the proper performance of prayer and other acts of worship, the formalists insist that it is not. The hadith above makes it perfectly clear that this is indeed essential, as without it prayer is stillborn and imperfect.

**HADITH 113**

190 Abû Dâwûd: 990
191 Tirmidhi: 385
It is related on the authority of 'A'isha ﷺ that Allâh's Messenger ﷺ performed prayer while dressed in an embroidered robe. When he caught himself gazing at the embroidery, he said, "Take this robe of mine away to Abû Jahm ibn Hudhayfah and exchange it for a simple woollen robe. This thing has just distracted me from my prayer!" This ḥadîth was related by Mâlik, Muslim, Bukhârî, Nasâ'i and Abû Dâwûd. In the version related by Mâlik and Abû Dâwûd, the last sentence reads, "I was looking at it as I performed prayer and became afraid that it might distract me."\footnote{Bukhârî: 373, Muslim: 556, Abû Dâwûd: 914, Nasâ'i: 772, Muwatâ'a: 324, 325. The addition in Mâlik and Abû Dâwûd alluded to above are actually in Mâlik and Bukhârî.}

Practices: Foregoing Whatever Interferes with Concentration

This ḥadîth clearly endorses the reduction in factors that distract from the remembrance of Allâh ﷺ which is practised by so many of the Sufi masters.

Questions: Whispering and Vague Suspicions

Another matter that becomes evident from this ḥadîth is that occasionally mild forms of waswasa, whisperings and vague suspicions, are visited upon the spiritually developed. This is certainly not in any way to be construed as detracting from their virtues and perfection.

Character: Publicising One's Condition

It is a part of sincerity and humility to make one's own seemingly imperfect condition known to one's followers and disciples. There is a provision to this, however, and that is that there be no danger of someone's misunderstanding and then having doubts about the Sufi way or Islam. If the imperfect condition is one of wrongdoing, then it is essential that it not be made known to others, as there are many ḥadîth which expressly prohibit the broadcasting of one's own or another's wrongdoing.
It is related on the authority of Abū Hurairah that the Messenger of Allāh said, “May the curse of Allāh be on those Christians and Jews who worship the graves of their prophets!” This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Nasā’ī.\(^{193}\)

Reform: Grave Worship
This ḥadīth should suffice as admonishment to the ignorant Sufis of our times who prostrate themselves at the graves of past Sufi masters, regardless of whether they do so with the intention of worship, which is clearly disbelief, or with the intention of greeting, which is a major act of wrongdoing and no more than a step removed from disbelief.

**ḤADĪTH 115**

\[
\text{‘עַבֵּד אֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ רְפָעָא הָעָלָה שָׁלוֹם בַּעֲדוֹ הַמֶּשֶּה הַיָּדָו מֵלָכּוֹת שֶׁלְּאוֹתָא שִׁלְחוּ בָּאָמָרָא:}
\]

\[\begin{align*}
\text{إنَّ عَدُوُّ اللَّهِ إِبْلِيسُ جَاهِلٌ بِشَهَابٍ مِّن نَّارٍ لَا يَجَلِّلُهُ فِي وَجَهِيَّةٍ} & \text{ الحديث (رواه مسلم)}
\end{align*}\]

It is related on the authority of Abū Darda that Allāh’s Messenger once stood and began to perform his prayer. When he had finished, he reported to his Companions, “Iblis, the enemy of Allāh, brought a flame from the Fire of hell and tried to put it in my face.” This ḥadīth was related by Muslim and Nasā’ī.\(^{194}\)

Miscellaneous: No One is Safe from the Promptings of Satan
From this ḥadīth it should be clear that regardless of how perfectly developed a person may be spiritually, one should never underestimate the disruptive power of Satan, Iblis. On the contrary, one should constantly be on guard against Satan’s causing one to do wrong. Look at the insolence of the wretch who dared even to come into the presence of Allāh’s Messenger, threatening him with burning fire while he was at prayer! As the prophets are protected from wrongdoing, Satan had to resort to the threat of physical violence in order to cause distress to the Prophet.

**ḤADĪTH 116**

\[

text
\]

\[\begin{align*}
\text{عنَّ أَبِي عُبَيْس رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قالَ:} & \text{ عليه وَسَلَّم.} \\
\end{align*}\]

\(^{193}\) Bukhārī: 1390, Muslim: 530, Abū Dāwūd: 3227, Nasā’ī: 704, 2049

\(^{194}\) Muslim: 542
Reform: Performing the Prayer in a Mosque

Many of our modern-day Sufis rarely if ever go to a mosque to perform their prayer. It is quite clear from this hadith that these dervishes need correcting; for when their prayer is imperfect to the point of being unacceptable, of what avail will their dhikr and other disciplines be to them?

**Hadith 117**

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas that Allah’s Messenger said, “The prayer performed by someone who hears the call to prayer and, without an excuse, fails to answer that call will not be accepted.” One of the Companions asked what a valid excuse was, so the Prophet replied, “Fear, or sickness.” This hadith was related by Abū Dāwūd.¹⁹⁵

**Reform: Prayer in the Mosque**

The same subject that was mentioned in the hadith above is again mentioned here, but with even greater emphasis.

**Hadith 118**

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas that when he was asked about someone who spent his days fasting and his nights in prayer, but who never went to a mosque for congregational prayers, he answered, “He is one of the people of the Fire.” This hadith was related by Tirmidhī.¹⁹⁶

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¹⁹⁵ Abū Dāwūd: 547

¹⁹⁶ Even though this narration quotes Ibn ‘Abbas, it is considered a hadith for the reason that Ibn ‘Abbas would never have said what he did unless he had heard it from Allah’s Prophet. YTD.
It is related on the authority of 'Utbân ibn Malik that when he told Allah’s Messenger that the rains prevented him from making his way to the mosque for prayers and that he would like the Emissary to come to his home and perform prayer with him in the place where he usually performed it, Allah’s Messenger replied, “Yes, we will do it.” This hadith was related by Málik, Muslim, Bukhârî and Nasâ‘î.

Practices: Designating a Place Especially for Devotions
In spite of the fact that ‘Utbân might have chosen to perform prayer with the Prophet in any place in his home, he preferred that it be performed in the place in which he was accustomed to performing it when alone. The reason for this is that a designated place is a sure aid to increased concentration. Thus, when making dhikr or performing other spiritual disciplines it is better that one sit in a specially designated place. First, it should never be supposed that this designation is in itself an act of worship. Secondly, such a place should be chosen as will not interfere with the rights or comforts of others.

Customs: Taking a Place of Blessings
Another reason for ‘Utbân’s asking the Prophet to perform the prayer with him in that particular place was so that it would become a place of blessings (having once been occupied by the blessed person of Mu‘ammad al-Muṣṭafâ). The reason for this is that it is better that one be in a place of blessings when performing spiritual exercises such as dhikr and so on. Here also, however, the condition is that one does not exceed proper bounds in either what one believes about the subject or in one’s practices related to it. If this condition is not met, one may very easily fall into the mistake of bid‘ah.

Hadîth 119

"عَنَّ أَنَسِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "إِنَّى لَأَذْخَلُ فِي الصُّلُوِّ وَأَنَا أَرِيدُ أَن أُطَلِّبَهَا فَأَسْمَعُ بُكَاءَ الصَّمِيمِ فَأُحْيَا في صَلَوَتِي لِمَا أَعْلَمُ مِنْ وَجَدَ أَمَّي عَنْ بُكَاءِهِ (أَخْرَجَهُ الخَمِسَةُ إِلَّا أَبَا دَاوُدُ)."

It is related on the authority of Anas that Allah’s Prophet once said, “When I begin performing prayer I feel like prolonging it. But sometimes I hear the crying of a child, and so I shorten the prayer because I real-
ise how upset the child's mother [who may possibly be performing the
prayer in the congregation] must be.” This hadith was related by Muslim,
Bukhārī, Nasā’ī and Tirmidhi.\footnote{197}

**Questions: The Prayers of the Masters**

Many people suppose complete mental involvement to be the true objective of
prayer, and thus believe it to be one of the qualities essential to spiritual mastery.
From this hadith, however, it is plain to see that this is neither an objective nor
an essential quality. Had this sort of absorption been essential for mastery, then
how was it that the greatest of all, Allāh bless him and give him peace, was not
completely absorbed in his prayer? Why did he pay attention to the crying of
a child? Why did he imagine in his mind’s eye the anxiety of a child’s mother?
Nonetheless, absorption is certainly worthy of praise. But because something is
praiseworthy does not mean that it is an end in itself.

**HADĪTH 120**

\textit{‘Abd al-‘Uzza b. ‘Umar} \textit{said, “Straighten the rows, line up the shoulders, fill in the empty spaces, don’t push against your neighbour, and don’t leave any space in between for Satan.”} This hadith was related by Abū Dāwūd.\footnote{198}

**Miscellaneous: Audible Group Dhikr**

It is the teaching of the Sufi masters that when doing audible group dhikr the
participants should sit as closely together as possible. That teaching is borne out
by the words of the Prophet in the hadith quoted here, “Fill in the empty spaces.”
Certain masters have taught that empty spaces in the group are invitations to
waswasa or vague misgivings. This is also supported by the hadith: “Don’t leave
any space in between for Satan.”

\footnote{197} Bukhārī: 709, 710, Muslim: 470, Tirmidhi: 237, Ibn Mājah: 989, Nasā’ī: 826
\footnote{198} Abū Dāwūd: 666
**HADITH 121**

> عنَّ عَبْدُ عَزِيزِ اللَّهِ عِنَّ مَعْفُولًا، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ: "صُلُّوا قَبْلَ الْمَغْرَبِ رَكَابَتَيْنِ" ثمَّ قَالَ: "صُلُّوا قَبْلَ الْمَغْرَبِ رَكَابَتَيْنِ لِمَنْ شَاءَ" حَسَبًا أَنَّ يَتَّجَدَّهَا النَّاسُ سَنَةً. (أُخرَجَهُ أَبُو دَوْدُ بِهذَا الْلِّفْظِ) وَفِي أُخْرِى لِلْمَسْجِدِينَ. قَالَ: "صُلُّوا قَبْلَ صِلْوَةِ الْمَغْرَبِ" ثُمَّ قَالَ فِي الْثَّالِثَةِ: "لِمَنْ شَاءَ كَرَاهَةُ أَنَّ يَتَّجَدَّهَا النَّاسُ سَنَةً".

It is related on the authority of ‘Abdullāh ibn Mughaffal  that Allāh’s Prophet ﷺ said, “Perform two cycles of prayer before sunset.” The narrator added, “Then he said, ‘Perform two cycles of prayer before sunset, if you wish,’ so that no one would think that they had been ordered to do so.” This hadith was related by Abū Dāwūd. In another version related by Muslim and Būkārī, the Prophet ﷺ said, “Perform prayer before sunset,” three times, and then said, “If you wish,” so that people would not think that to do so was Sunna.  

**Reform: Discounting Supposedly Requisite Practices**

Although the practice of performing two cycles of prayer before sunset was mentioned expressly, the Companions ﷺ were made to understand that they were not to assume it was a duty. Then, concerning those practices for which there is no mention, express or otherwise, in the Qur‘ān or the Sunna, how is it possible that the Prophet could have intended that people obligate themselves to perform them? Furthermore, experience has shown that until people completely abandon these practices, they are not fully able to free themselves from the belief that they are somehow obligated to perform them. For this reason it is essential that they discontinue these practices, whatever they may be.

**HADITH 122**

> عنَّ المَغْرِبَةِ بْنِ شَعْبَةِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ حَتَّى نُؤُورُمَنَّ قَدَمَاهُ قَبْلَ لَهِ: "قَدْ غَفُرَلَكَ مَاتَقَدَمَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ" قَالَ: "أَفَلاَ أَكُونُ عَبِيدًا شَكُورًا؟" (أُخرَجَهُ السَّكِّيَةُ إِلَى أَبَادَؤِ)  

It is related on the authority of Mughirah ibn Shubah  that Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ stood so long in night prayer that his feet swelled up. So one of

199 Abū Dāwūd: 128, Bukhārī: 1183, Muslim: 838
the Companions asked him why, if his former and his latter wrongs had been forgiven, did he have need of such rigorous devotions? Allah's Messenger replied, "Am I not to be an appreciative servant?" This ḥadith was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasāʾi and Tirmidhī.{200}

Miscellaneous: Rigorous Spiritual Disciplines
The commentary on mujāhahādah at Ḥadith 109 applies equally to this Ḥadith.

ifiant (wassalam), then, it would be said that he used sometimes (when fatigued) to take the liberty of performing the night prayer in a sitting position. This ḥadith was related by Abū Dāwūd.{201}

Teachings: Taking Rest
When it becomes apparent to a master that a disciple’s ardour is flagging, then, in accordance with the teachings of the Sufi masters, he should decrease the disciple’s disciplines and allow him/her to take more rest. The ḥadith quoted here may be cited as containing the foundation of this teaching, as the Prophet himself used sometimes (when fatigued) to take the liberty of performing the night prayer in a sitting position.

It is related on the authority of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAbū al-ʿĀṣ that he said

{200} Bukhārī: 4836, Muslim: 2819, Tirmidhī: 412, Nasāʾi: 1645, Ibn Mājah: 1419

{201} Abū Dāwūd: 1307
to Allāh’s Messenger, Allāh bless him and give him peace, “Satan comes between me and my prayer, interfering with my recitation of the Qur’ān, so that I become confused.” So Allāh’s Messenger replied to him, “That is the satan called Khanzab. When you sense his presence, seek refuge in Allāh from him and spit three times to your left.” ‘Uthmān said, “So, I did that. And when I did, Allāh made him (the satan) go away.” This Ḥadīth was related by Muslim.202

Miscellaneous: A Cure for Whisperings
There are a number of methods for curing waswasa, including the method recommended in this Ḥadīth here. The basic element in all of these cures, however, is one’s directing one’s attention to Allāh and ignoring the waswasa. Whatever specific methods are mentioned in the numerous Ḥadīths which have come to us on the subject are all essentially related to this one simple principle. In the particular method mentioned in the Ḥadīth related by ‘Uthmān, the directive to seek refuge in Allāh is a way of turning one’s attention toward Allāh, while the directive to spit on the left is a way of ignoring the whisperings. It would also seem apparent that this method is best applied prior to one’s beginning the prayer.

ḤADĪTH 125

It is related on the authority of Abū Hurairah that a man went to Allāh’s Prophet and asked if there was permission for one fasting to embrace one’s wife. So the Prophet gave the man permission to do so. But when another man came and asked the same thing, the Prophet refused to give him permission. The man he gave permission to was an old man, while the man he refused was a young one. This Ḥadīth was related by Abū Dāwūd.203

202 Muslim: 2203
203 Abū Dāwūd: 2387
Practices: Each According to His Own

It has been the practice of the Sufi masters to instruct their disciples each according to his/her own particular spiritual development, state, and abilities. The event described in this hadith is quite obviously based on the same underlying principle. Furthermore, the hadith lends support to the practice of most Sufi masters of giving instruction to their disciples in private. It is not difficult to imagine the confusion which would result if novices of limited abilities and spiritual stature were to begin with practices and disciplines meant for advanced Sufis. Furthermore, private instruction is often more effective for the reason that the rapport between teacher and student can be more firmly established in private.

Hadith 126

It is related on the authority of Abū Hurairah (R) that the Messenger of Allah (S) said, “Do not single out the night of Jumu’ah from among all other nights for standing in prayer. And do not single out the day of Jumu’ah from among all other days for fasting. Fast on Jumu’ah only when a fast that you regularly keep falls on that day.” This hadith was related by Muslim.

Reform: Turning Practice into Belief

When, concerning a matter of practice, there is nothing in the Sharī‘a to limit its performance to a certain time or place, then to make it a belief that the practice should be performed at only a certain time or place, or to intend to perform it only at a certain time or place even if one is not regular in doing so, or to be regular in performing it at a certain time even if one does not intend to be doing so, or to give those who do not know the impression that the practice is in some way limited to a certain time or place, is clearly prohibited by the Sharī‘a. In our own times not only the Muslims in general, but many Sufis as well have become entangled in this affliction.

204 For example, if one regularly fasts in the middle of the month, or after every three days, as recommended in the Sunna. YTD.

205 Muslim: 1144
HADITH 127

It is related on the authority of Abū Hurairah that Allah's Prophet said, "Assuredly it is not your bodies or forms which concern Allah, but your hearts and your deeds. Piety (taqwa) is here! Piety is here! Piety is here!" And he pointed to his chest. This hadith was related by Bukhāri, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhi.

Questions: Inner Meaning

In this hadith as well there is clear support for the Sufi way. Indeed, what the hadith alludes to is the very same purification of the heart and cultivation of good character and deeds which are promoted by tasawwuf. Another point to be gleaned from this hadith is that the writings of many Sufi masters may be viewed in much the same way, i.e. for their content rather than their form. Indeed, there are many examples of the use of this sort of language by the Prophet himself.

HADITH 128

It is related on the authority of Anas that Allah's Prophet sent him on a mission for something he needed done. When Anas was late in returning, his mother asked him what had delayed him, so Anas explained that he had been sent by the Prophet to do something for him, and that it was a secret. Then Anas' mother said, "Don't ever reveal a secret of the Prophet to anyone." This was related by Bukhāri and Muslim.

207 This account was not found in these words in Bukhāri. Muslim: 2482
Teachings: Keeping Secrets

The keeping of secrets is something which is greatly emphasised by Sufi masters, regardless of whether the secrets have to do with the instructions one receives from one's master, or with one's visions, or dreams, or with experiences one has while under the instruction of a master.

Hadith 129

It is related on the authority of ‘Umar ﷺ that Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said, "Verily, there are people among the servants of Allāh ﷺ who are neither prophets nor martyrs, but whose good fortune will be coveted on the Day of Judgment by the prophets and martyrs because of the positions they will hold nearby the Almighty." The Companions said, "Tell us, O Allāh’s Messenger, who these people are?" So the Emissary ﷺ replied, "They are a people who love one another for no other reason than for the sake of Allāh, who have no blood or financial ties between them. By Allāh! Their faces and everything else about them will be light! When most people fear, they will have no fear; and when most people sorrow, they will have no sorrow!" Then the Emissary ﷺ recited the following verse: "Surely, the friends of Allāh; no fear shall beset them, neither shall they sorrow."²⁰⁸

This was related by Abū Dāwūd.²⁰⁹

Virtues: The Friends of Allāh

It is hardly necessary to point out here that the people referred to in this ḥadīth are the great Sufi masters. No one should suspect that the words, "...whose good fortune will be coveted of the Day of Judgment by the prophets," point somehow to the inferiority of the prophets, as that is clearly nonsense.

²⁰⁸ al-Qur’ān, 10:62
²⁰⁹ Abū Dāwūd: 3527
\textbf{HADITH 130}

It is related on the authority of Abū Dharr \(\text{س} \) that he once said, “O Allah’s Prophet! What about someone who really loves a certain group of people, but is unable to do what they do?” The Prophet \(\text{س} \) replied, “You, O Abū Dharr, will always be with those you love.” This was related by Abū Dāwūd. The words of Tirmidhī’s report from Ṣafwān ibn ‘Assāl \(\text{س} \) are: “Man will be with whom he loves.”\(^{210}\)

\textit{Virtues: Those Who Love the Masters}

This hadith points clearly to the virtue of those who love and follow the great Sufi masters. We have seen by experience how most disciples begin to love their masters from the time of their initiation into the order, bay’ah. Quite often, a master will initiate a person from whom little can be expected in the way of spiritual disciplines and development, solely for the reason that they possess the requisite desire. Finally, our deeds are judged by our intentions.

\textbf{HADITH 131}

It is related on the authority of Abū Hurairā \(\text{س} \) that the Messenger of Allah \(\text{س} \) said, “The souls of humankind were [in the spirit world] as an army gathered. Then those who were acquainted with one another [in that world] will harmonise [in this world], and those who were unknown to one another there will fall into discord here.” This hadith was related by Muslim and Abū Dāwūd. Bukhārī related a similar hadith from ‘Ā’ishah \(\text{س} \).\(^{211}\)

\(^{210}\) Abū Dāwūd: 5126, Tirmidhī: 2387

\(^{211}\) Bukhārī: 3336, Muslim: 2638, Abū Dāwūd: 4834
Questions: Spiritual Harmony

Experience has shown that the success of any master-disciple relationship depends on there being some sort of natural harmony between the two. This harmony will be seen to have been attributed in this hadith to prior acquaintance in the spirit world. Furthermore, in cases where this natural harmony is found to be lacking, it often happens that a master will decline to grant initiation, bay'ah, preferring instead to recommend that the prospective disciple seek out another master.

ḤADĪTH 132

עַنְ בֵּי הָעִירָה רַעְשָׁיָהוּ עֹנָהוּ כָּלָל: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهُ سَلَّمُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «لَا حَلَّلَ اللَّهُ الْأَمَّ.» (أُخْرِجَهُ البَخَارِي)

It is related on the authority of Abū Hurairah that the Messenger of Allāh said, “When Allāh created Adam as a manifestation of His attributes...” (the ḥadīth continues). This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī.

Sayings: Man is the Manifestation of the Divine

The meaning most widely agreed upon by the commentators on this ḥadīth is one which clearly lends support to the saying of the Sufis that the reality of humans is that they are manifestations of the Divine. Briefly speaking, the human being is a singular and even astonishing creation of the Almighty. The presence of this creation, in turn, indicates the presence and perfect attributes of a Creator. Then, in view of these facts, the created may be said to be a manifestation of the Creator, i.e., the means of His manifestation. In this same wise, all of creation may be said to be the manifestation of the Almighty. There are a number of other interpretations that may be given to the words of this ḥadīth, according to one of which only the most accomplished of Sufi masters may be said to be a manifestation of the Divine. I have discussed this subject at length in my Urdu commentary on Mawlānā Rūmī’s, Mathnawi, entitled Kalid-i-Mathnawi, or The Key to the Mathnawi. In any case, the ḥadīth should be viewed as the basis for all commentary on this saying, as the word ṣūrah (often mistakenly interpreted to mean “image”) actually means manifestation.

212 al-Qur'ān, 7:172
213 Bukhārī: 6227
It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar that Allah’s Messenger once remarked, while gazing at the Ka’bah in the Sacred Mosque, “How magnificent you are! And, to think that the sanctity of a believer is even more sublime!” This hadith was related by Tirmidhi.

Sayings: One Heart is Better than a Thousand Ka’bahs

This well-known Sufi saying is clearly exonerated by the hadith quoted here, as the reason for the believer’s being more sacred than the Ka’bah is the believer’s faith. Then, as the heart is said to be the place where faith resides, there should be no difficulty in understanding why the believer’s heart is more sacred than the Ka’bah. Furthermore, since the hadith said that the believer’s heart is more sublime, without specifying exactly how much more, then it is certainly within the realm of possibility that it be a thousand times more sacred. It should, however, be understood that this is a partial excellence only, and not one which necessarily implies that humans may also be prostrated to, in the same way that humans bow down before the Ka’bah.

Reform: Caution in the Choice of a Master

Obviously, when mere friendship can be such a powerful influence on one’s lifestyle, then the infinitely closer relationship of the disciple and master will surely be a very influential one. Experience has shown that the beliefs, deeds, and char-
acter of a master all have a certain effect on the disciple which, if nothing else, will at least amount to the disciple’s viewing those beliefs, deeds and characteristics in a favourable light. Obviously, then, if the beliefs, for example, of a master are erroneous, the beliefs of his disciples are certainly not likely to be entirely correct. This is why one must be very careful in choosing a master.

**Hadith 135**

> عن عمّر رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: «لا يلتنون رجلاً بإمرأة إلا كان كالفه السبطن» (أخرجه الشيخان وأبو داود)

It is related on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar that ‘Umar once addressed the Muslims at a place called Jabiyah and said, “Listen, O believers! As I am standing here among you now, Allâh’s Messenger once stood among us and said, “Beware! Whenever a man contrives to be alone with a woman, they will inevitably be joined by a third; Satan.””

**Reform: Female Disciples to Veil Themselves Before Male Masters**

Under certain circumstances it is not entirely unlikely that a master could be left alone with a female disciple, or at least be figuratively left alone if the only others present are also women. For this reason it is essential that women disciples always wear veils before their masters. Obviously, very little in the way of spiritual progress can be expected in the presence of Satan! The lax attitudes of many of our present day Sufis are certainly in need of correction.

**Hadith 136**

> عن أبي موسى رضي الله عنه قال قال فيتنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يحمس كلياً وفيها: «حجابة النور لو كشفته لأخرجت صفات وجيه ما أنهى إلى بصره» (أخرجه مسلم)

It is related on the authority of Abû Mûsâ that Allâh’s Prophet stood among the Companions and spoke of five things, [the last of which was that] Allâh’s veil is of light. If ever He lifted it, the splendour of His

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216 Tirmidhi: 2165, Ibn Mâjah: 2363, Nasâ’î: 10418
countenance would incinerate whatever of His creation He gazed upon.
This ḥadith was related by Muslim.\footnote{Muslim: 179, Ibn Majah: 196}

Questions: Visions of the Almighty
A great many ignorant Sufis hold to the belief that a Sufi traveller is capable of seeing Allāh in this world in the same way that all believers will see Him in the next. This ḥadith clearly disproves their claim.

\[\text{ḤADĪTH 137}\]

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\text{عن عَمَّر بن كَتَبٍ الأنصاري} \text{ أنَّهُ أَخَرَجَ بِعْضِ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم أن رَسُوَّلَ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قال يَوْمُ حُذُورِ النَّاسِ الدَّجَالِ: إِنَّهُ مُكْتَوَبُ بِبَنِ عِتِيْبَةَ كَافِرًا يَقْرَأُ مِنْ كَرِيهِ عَمَلَهُ،} \\
\text{أو يَقْرَأُهُ كُلَّ مَوْعِمٍ .} \\
\text{وَقَالَ: تَعَلَّمَؤُوا أَنَّهُ لِنَّبِيٍّ أَحْدَمُ مِنْكُمْ رَبٌّ حَتَّى يَمْوَتُ}. \text{(رواه مسلم)}
\]

It is related on the authority of `Umar ibn Thābit that he was told by one of the Companions that Allāh's Messenger said, while warning the Muslims of the Dajjāl, “Written between his two eyes is the word “Disbeliever” readable to anyone who dislikes his [Dajjāl’s] works, or to anyone who believes. Know, then, that none of you will be able to see your Lord until you die, whereas anyone will be able to see the Dajjāl. Therefore, do not be tricked into believing that the Dajjāl is your Lord.” This ḥadith was related by Muslim.\footnote{Muslim: 7365}

Questions: Visions of the Almighty
The impossibility of one's seeing the Almighty in this world is further substantiated in this ḥadith.

\[\text{ḤADĪTH 138}\]

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\text{عن أبي هُرَيْرَةَ رضي الله عنه أنَّهُ أَخَرَجَ بِعْضِ أَصْحَابِ الرَّسُولِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: دَخَلَ الْمَسْجِدُ وَرَسُولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم،} \\
\text{فَقَالَ الْمَلَكُ الْمَلِكِيُّ مَتَمَّ قال: اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْنِي وَاحْتَدَأْ وَلاَ كَرَحْمَ مَعَنَا أَحَدًا،} \\
\text{فَقَالَ الْمَلَكُ الْمَلِكِيُّ مَتَمَّ.} \\
\text{ثُمَّمَ لم يَبْلِدَ أنَّ بَالِ الْمَسْجِدِ}
\]

\footnote{217 Muslim: 179, Ibn Majah: 196}
\footnote{218 Muslim: 7365}
It is related on the authority of Abū Huraira that a bedouin entered the mosque while Allāh’s Prophet was sitting there. The bedouin performed two cycles of prayer, and then prayed aloud, “O Allāh! Have mercy on me and Muhammad! And show mercy to no one else.” Afterwards, the Prophet remarked to the bedouin, “Do you think you can confine what is boundless?” Just then, the bedouin urinated on the floor of the mosque, and all those present hastened toward him. But the Prophet stopped them from doing harm to the man, saying, “Remember! You are charged with being facilitators, not with being aggravators! Just pour a bucket of water over it.” This ḥadīth was related by Mālik, Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, Nasā’ī and Tirmidhī.

**Character: Tolerance for the Deeds and Words of the Ignorant**

It is not the way of the Sufi masters to be harsh with the ignorant people with whom they occasionally come into contact. On the contrary, their reactions to such people are always tempered with forbearance. Indeed, certain critics have even accused some masters of indulging the ignorant. The ḥadīth quoted here should dispel all such misgivings.

**ḤADĪTH 139**

It is related on the authority of Abū Huraira that the Messenger of Allāh said [after mentioning the virtues of certain practices], “This is your post! This is your post! This is your post!” This ḥadīth was related by Mālik, Muslim, Tirmidhī and Nasā’ī.

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220 Muslim: 251, Tirmidhī: 51, Nasā’ī: 14, Muwatta’: 557
Sayings: Jihād Against Satan

My own master, Hājī ‘Imdād Allāh, wrote a treatise on The Greater Jihād, in which he established that the jihād of the Sufi traveller is with the armies of Satan. The ḥadīth quoted here, since it speaks of a post, indicates clearly that a Muslim is always at war with Satan.

**Hadīth 140**

عنّ جابر رضي الله عنه في حديث طويل، فلمّا خرج الرجلان إلى فم السّعب اصطحاب الْمُهَاجِريِّينّ، وقام الذاناريِّيُّ صلاً، فتأى الرجل، فلمّا رأى شخصه عرف أنّه ربيبة قرُمّة بسّهم، فوضع فيه، فذرعه حتى رماه بثقلة أسفه ثمّ ركع وسجد، ثمّ نبّه صاحبه، فلمّا عرف أنّهم قدّ نذرو به حرب، فلمّا رأى المهاجرين ما بالانصارى من الدّما، قال: سبحان الله! ألا أنّهٰتى أول مارّمي مك! قال: كنت فسورة أقرؤها فلمّ أحب أن أقطعها (أخرجة أبي داود).

It is related on the authority of Jābir who said, in his narration of the Dhât al-Ruqā’ campaign, “When the two men reached the mouth of the canyon, the Muhājir lay down while the Anṣārī stood up to pray. Just then, one of the enemy approached and, seeing that the man standing was a sentinel, fired an arrow at him which lodged itself in his side. When the sentinel pulled it out, the archer fired three more arrows into him. Then the sentinel moved into the bowing (rukū’ī) and then the prostration (saj-dah) position until finally, after completing the prayer, the sentinel woke his sleeping partner. By this time, the enemy had gone away, knowing that the alarm would be given. When the Muhājir saw the blood on his partner, he said, “Allāh be praised! Why did you not tell me the first time you were shot?” The Anṣārī replied, “I was reciting a chapter from the Qur’ān that I especially like, and did not want to interrupt the recitation.” This hadith was related by Abū Dāwūd.

States: Savouring Recitation

To take pleasure in reciting the Qur’ān in prayer, or in any other act of worship is often indicative of a very advanced spiritual state, as should be obvious from the hadith quoted here.

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221 Abū Dāwūd: 198
It is related on the authority of ‘Ali that Allah’s Prophet said, “Whoever fails to wash even an area the size of a hair when performing the ritual bath will suffer such and such a penalty in the Fire.” ‘Ali commented, “After hearing that, I became my hair’s worst enemy.” Another narrator in the chain said, “It became the practice of ‘Ali, after that, to keep his head shaved.” This hadith was related by Abū Dāwūd.

**Practices: Shaving the Head**

It is the practice of most Sufi masters to keep their heads shaved. The precedent for this practice comes from the example of ‘Ali who, as is evident from the hadith, did so with the tacit approval of the Prophet. Furthermore, aside from the benefit mentioned in the hadith (of facilitating the perfect performance of the ritual bath), the other benefits of shaving the head are freedom from having to care for it, from becoming attached to it, and not having to worry about its causing perspiration during the performance of certain rigorous disciplines.

It is related on the authority of Uthaym ibn Kathīr ibn Kulayb, on the authority of his father, Kathīr, that his [Uthaym’s] grandfather, Kulayb went to Allah’s Messenger and said, “I commit myself to the way of Islam.” At that, Allah’s Messenger said, “Then get rid of that disbelieving hair,” by which he meant to say, “Shave it off.” This hadith was related by Abū Dāwūd.

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222 Abū Dāwūd: 249, Ibn Mājah: 599
223 Abū Dāwūd: 356
**Customs: Shaving for Initiation**

Certain masters require that their disciples shave their heads as a part of the initiation and pledging *bay'ah* formalities. That this is not without a sound basis in the Sunna is attested to by this hadith. It may be that the logic behind this custom is that it emphasises the individual’s desire to rid himself of all traces of what went before, be it disbelief, or wrongdoing, or imperfect devotion.

**Hadith 143**

> "‘Umar had nine large trays which he used to fill with fruit and other delicacies and then send to the wives of Allâh's Prophet. This hadith was related by Mâlik."

It is related on the authority of Aslam, as part of a lengthy narration, that ‘Umar had nine large trays which he used to fill with fruit and other delicacies and then send to the wives of Allâh’s Prophet. This hadith was related by Mâlik.

**Practices: Serving the Family of One’s Deceased Master**

It has always been the practice of the Sufis to offer their services to the family of their deceased or absent masters. The hadith quoted here clearly indicates the praiseworthiness of this practice.

**Hadith 144**

> "It is related on the authority of ‘Umar that he said, ‘Be wary of eating meat! For the habit of eating meat is as hard to break as the habit of drinking wine. Allâh likes not those who are in the habit of eating meat.’ This hadith was related by Mâlik."

It is related on the authority of ‘Umar that he said, “Be wary of eating meat! For the habit of eating meat is as hard to break as the habit of drinking wine. Allâh likes not those who are in the habit of eating meat.” This hadith was related by Mâlik.

**Practices: Avoiding Meat**

There are many Sufis who do not eat meat. Concerning this matter it will be nec-

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224 Mâlik: 970  
225 Mâlik: 3450
essential to understand the following points. If the reason for a Sufi's abstention is the same as given in the hadith, i.e., to avoid falling into a base habit which might itself become a factor in leading to other base habits, then the Sufi's abstention is perfectly all right. Nonetheless, such a Sufi should partake of meat from time to time so as not to seem as if he/she were prohibiting that which Allah has permitted. If, however, the Sufi should abstain out of a belief that abstinence from meat is in itself an act of devotion, then this is blameworthy innovation, bid'ah. And if the Sufi does so as a part of the working of a spell or charm, then that is mere nonsense added to nonsense. And if the Sufi does so out of a belief that the slaughter of animals is cruel and unnatural, then that is clearly heresy.

**ḤADĪTH 145**

 uninsured رضي الله عنه: قال: أذركني عمر رضي الله عنه: وفِيه قَالَ: أَوْ كُلُّ مَا أَشْتَهَيتِ مَا ِاشْتِرِيْتِه؟ حَسْبَ أَحَدُكُمْ مِنَ السَّرِّفِ أَن يَأْكُلَ كُلُّ مَا أَشْتَهَيْتِ. (أخيره مالك)

It is related on the authority of Jābir  that one day, as he was returning from the marketplace with a package of meat, ʿUmar  met him and asked what he was carrying. Jābir replied, “We had a craving for meat, so, for a dirham, I bought some.” Then ʿUmar replied, “And is it that whenever you have a craving for something, you go out and buy it? For the likes of us, it is extravagance enough that we eat everything we desire.” This hadith was related by Mālik.226

**Practices: Foregoing Pleasures**

It is the practice of nearly all Sufis to devote a good deal of time and energy to the matter of combatting their desires. This is what this particular hadith is all about.

**ḤADĪTH 146**

 uninsured ُرِضْيِ اللَّهِ عَنْهُ قَالَ: كُنْتُ فِي سَقْرِ وَقَبforEach كتابی قِصَصُ اللَّدْيِغِ وَفِيه قَالَ: مَارِحُتِ ِلَا يَأْمُ الكِتابِ، فَلَنَّا: لَنُتِمْكُنَا شَيْئًا حَتَّى تَأْبَى رَسُول اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلمُ فَنَسْلِه، فَلَنَّا قَيْمَتْنَا ذَكَرْنَا نَّهَ فَقَالَ: وَمَا أَدْرَى كُلُّهَا؟ أَقِسِمْنَا وَأَخْرَجُوا لَهُ يَسْهُمُ. (أخيره الحنمة إلا النسائي)

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226 ِّMuṣannaf Ibn Abi Shaiykh: 25012
It is related on the authority of Abū Sa‘īd who, in his narration of the events of a journey he had taken, told the story of a man who was bitten by a poisonous snake and then cured by a member of Abū Sa‘īd’s party. Abū Sa‘īd relates that when the man was asked what charm he had used to cure the victim, he replied, “The only charm I used was the Opening Chapter of the Qur‘ān.” Later, when the victim had recovered, he gifted the Muslim party a hundred goats. ‘Abū Sa‘īd said, “So we said to one another, ‘Let us not do anything about these goats until we have asked Allāh’s Messenger about the matter.’” When we returned from our mission, and told Allāh’s Messenger what happened with the snakebite victim, he said to us, “How did you know it was a charm? Distribute the goats among your party, and give me a share too!” This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd.227

CUSTOMS: TAKING MONEY FOR CHARMS

Some Sufis take money from people who come to them asking for charms. That this is permitted, and in no way degrading, is obvious from the ḥadīth quoted here. There are, however, two conditions that must be met: 1) that the charm and what it is employed to help bring about are in no way contrary to the Shari‘a and; 2) that there be no deception involved. It should be remembered here that for anyone but an accomplished master, the business of making charms and attending to the problems of the public are quite often very distressing at a spiritual level.

ḤADĪTH 147

It is related on the authority of Anas that Allah’s Prophet said, “There is nothing to [the spread of disease by] contagion, and nothing to omens. Signs, however, are of interest to me.” The Companions asked, “What do you mean by ‘signs’?” The Prophet replied, “Any sort of encouraging word.”228 This ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī.229

228 For example, if someone looking for something they had lost, hears someone cry out “finders keepers,” that would be an “encouraging word”; and it may be taken as a good sign and nothing more. YTD.
Customs: Seeking Signs in the Qur'an or the Works of the Sufi Masters

Many Sufis have been known to seek signs about their worldly or spiritual needs in the pages of the Qur'an, the Divân of Ḥāfiz, or the Mathnawi of Mawlānā Rūmī. The validity of this practice should be evident from the hadith. If there is nothing more to one's seeking than that, there is nothing wrong with the custom. The important thing is never to lose sight of the fact that only Allāh can bring these things to pass, both the sign and what it portends. However, if one should overstep this point and suppose that, for example, Mawlānā Rūmī is ever-present and all-seeing, or that the signs one receives from a book are really omens of something sure to take place, then this is the worst sort of bid'ah, and very near to disbelief.

Hadith 148

It is related on the authority of ‘Ali that Allāh's Messenger said, “What an excellent person is one learned in the ways of Islam! When needed, they are useful; and when others have no need of them, they can be of use to themselves.” This hadith was related by Razin.

Practices: Correcting Without Rancour

In the matter of giving advice or friendly admonition, it has never been the way of the Sufis to harass or antagonise anyone. For the Sufis, it is enough to say what they feel they must, once or twice, and to leave the matter at that. If their advice is heeded, fine; and if it is not, then they have better things to do. The words in the hadith, “...when others have no need of them, they can be of use to themselves,” clearly indicate the correctness of this practice. The following Qur'anic verse may also be cited in this connection: “As for he who thinks himself to be self-sufficient, you give your attention to him, even though you are not accountable for his failure to attain purity.”

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230 Musnad al-Firdaws: 6742
231 al-Qur'an, 86:4
Questions: Transmission of Affinity

It is an accepted truth among the Sufis that the spiritual affinity which is passed on from master to master began as the legacy of the Messenger of Allāh. In this hadith, the word “learned” refers particularly to those who have attained spiritual knowledge. When they are termed the “heirs” to the prophets, it is quite obvious that it is the transmission of spiritual knowledge which is alluded to. In this way, the Sufi maxim concerning the transmission of spiritual affinity from breast to breast is confirmed by the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, Allāh bless him and give him peace and blessings everlasting.

Corrections: Avoiding Mention of the Obscure

Certain indiscreet Sufis have been known to sit in public and speak about recondite problems of taṣawwuf before people who either, thinking what they hear to be contrary to the Shari‘ah, become hostile to taṣawwuf or, in spite of their inability to comprehend what is being said, become antagonistic toward the Shari‘ah. In either case, and the latter of the two is surely the worse, these peo-

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232 Abū Dawūd: 3641, Ibn Majah: 223
233 In other words, do not speak to them about abstruse theological issues, for example, which are more likely to create, rather than put to rest, doubts in the minds of any but the most accomplished scholars.
234 Bukhārī: 127
people are actually showing antagonism to Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, as is evident from the ḥadith above, abstruse points of ṭasawwuf should never be mentioned in front of those who are incapable of comprehending them.

**ḤADĪTH 151**

"Gifted with the tongue of the Prophet, Allāh has placed in me a duty. I cannot exalt a few points in this manner. I am not one to enshroud a few points. Allāh knows them. (I am a transcriber.)"

On the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ who said, “When you speak to people about things they do not understand, you may be certain that some of them will be led astray.” Imam Muslim related it.235

**Commentary**

This and the preceding ḥadith [150] point to what has already been mentioned in the commentary on ḥadith [150].

**ḤADĪTH 152**

"Gifted with the tongue of the Prophet, Allāh has placed in me a duty. I cannot exalt a few points in this manner. I am not one to enshroud a few points. Allāh knows them. (I am a transcriber.)"

On the authority of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ ﷺ who said, “I used to write everything I heard from the Prophet ﷺ. But the Quraysh stopped me, saying, ‘You write everything, even though the Prophet ﷺ is only human and may sometimes say things in anger?’ So I stopped writing until I had a chance to ask the Prophet ﷺ about it myself. Then he ﷺ pointed his finger to his mouth and said, ‘Go ahead and write! By the One who holds my life in His hands, nothing comes out of here but the truth.’” Abū Dāwūd related it.236

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235 Muslim: 14 [Muqaddimah]
236 Abū Dāwūd: 3646
Customs: Recording Discourses

Many disciples are in the habit of recording (on paper or otherwise) the discourses of their masters. It should be clear from this hadith that while this is permitted, there is every need for caution as masters, like other humans, are subject to mistakes and are certainly not maṣūm (protected from wrongdoing).

**ḤADĪTH 153**

\[\text{عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: حطب رسول الله فذكر قصة الحديث، فقال أبووشاه: أكتبوا ليارسول الله! فقال: }\text{أكتبوا لابي شاه.} (أخرجه الترمذي وصالحه)\]

It is related on the authority of Abū Huraira رضي الله عنه who said, “Allah's Messenger ﷺ addressed us...” [the narrator then related the address in its entirety, after which one of those present, a man named Abū Shāh said,] “O Allah's Messenger! Write [this sermon] for me.” Then he ﷺ said [to one of his scribes] “Write it down for Abū Shāh.” Imam Tirmidhī related this hadith and considered it sound.237

Customs: Documenting Matters of Importance

The Prophet’s command to put his words into writing validates a number of Sufi practices like recording the sermons of the masters, writing out supplications and forms of remembrance, dhikr, for aspirants, transcribing the family trees of Sufi orders, and writing out records of spiritual succession, khilāfah. Thus, all of these may be said to be a part of the Sunna.

**ḤADĪTH 154**

\[\text{عن أبي أيوب رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: }\text{أولاَ أنكم تذيعون لذهب الله وعليكم خلق عليكم قلبي.} (أخرجه مسلم والترمذي) و وسلم عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه نحوه وزاد في سفر أبي عن ابنه. زاد رزين قال }\text{رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: }\text{والذي نفسي بيده لو لم تذيعوا لحصيت عليكم ماهو أحد منته و هو العجب.} \]

It is related on the authority of Abū Ayyūb رضي الله عنه that he said, “Allah’s Mes-
senger said, ‘Were it not for your wrongdoing, Allāh most High would have done away with you and created creatures to whom He could grant forgiveness.’ Imams Tirmidhi and Muslim related it. In another version related by Imām Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairā, the last sentence is as follows; “. . .He would have created creatures who seek forgiveness, so that He could forgive them.” Imam Razī related a version in which Allāh’s Messenger said, “By the One Who holds my life in His hand! If you did not do wrong, I would fear something even worse from you: pride.”

Questions: The Creation of Evil and Manifestation of the Divine Attributes

In our discussion of the two questions [in the heading] above we will refer to the version of the hadith related by Imams Muslim and Tirmidhi. With regard to the first, scholars have asserted that from the perspective of the Shari‘a, faith and righteousness are of significance in this world. However, from the perspective of creation (or nature), things like disbelief and wrongdoing are also of significance and must be allowed to come into being. With regard to the second question, which may be viewed as the wisdom behind the first, the scholars write that all the names of Allāh are becoming, jamīl, and, as such, require manifestation. The manifestation of each name (attribute) will then become the cause for the occurrence of different kinds of events. The connection between the hadith and the first question should be fairly evident, as the hadith emphasises the need for the occurrence of wrongdoing. Furthermore, upon closer examination, the words, “to whom He could grant forgiveness,” will be seen to relate to the second question, as the wisdom or secret behind His creation of evil has to do with forgiveness. Among the names of Allāh is al-Ghaffār or The Forgiving, which can only be manifested in connection with the occurrence of wrongdoing. The poet of Shiraz, Hāfiz, alluded nicely to both of these issues in the following verses:

In the workshop of rapture, for kufr there must be room.
Were there no Abū Lahab, who would the flames consume?

The “workshop of rapture” here refers to the physical world. This is because of the following statement that is commonly ascribed to the Almighty, “I was as a buried treasure until I had a desire to be known. That was when I created creation.” So the reason for the creation of the world was the Almighty’s desire to be known; and rapture and desire are synonymous. To summarise, therefore, since

238 Muslim: 2748, Tirmidhi: 3539. Razī’s addition has been recorded by adh-Dhahābī in Mizān al-Ītīdāl under the biography of Sllām ibn Abī aṣ-Ṣāḥbā’.
among the names of Allāh is *Al-Muntaqim* or The Avenger, the manifestation of the same requires the occurrence of *kufr*, disbelief, and rebellion. It should be remembered that when we speak of “requiring” in connection with the Almighty we are not speaking literally because Allāh most High is far above being required to do anything. Nor do we mean to encourage anyone to do wrong because we refer to this as something “required” or “necessary”. The texts of the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth are nothing if not clearly in opposition to such a notion. (Similarly, it should be remembered that Allāh’s desiring something is entirely different from the desire we know as humans.) Rather, what is intended here is an explanation of the wisdom behind this phenomenon, in addition to encouragement for those who commit wrongdoing and are then sincerely repentant.

*Teachings: The Reason for Certain Kinds of Spiritual Contraction*

The topic to be discussed here has as its starting point the wording of the Ḥadīth above as related by Imām Razīn. The Sufi masters teach that one kind of contraction, *qabīf*, is that which attends the commission of an act of wrongdoing. It often happens that after performing such an act the disciple will become so depressed and disgusted with himself that if he is not checked there is every possibility that he will either cause harm to himself or lose hope and abandon everything he acquired on the Sufi way. At such a time it is essential that he be made to understand that he needs only to repent of his wrongs and sincerely seek forgiveness from Allāh; and that afterwards there will be no reason for him to be upset. This is because there is actually a good reason for wrongdoing. Indeed, were it not for one's occasional wrongdoings one would almost certainly become the victim of pride. Therefore, the Sufi who does wrong can be said to have received treatment for something worse. Once this is understood, the Sufi should have no difficulty in shaking off his depression and attending to the more important business of seeking forgiveness.

**ḤADĪTH 155**

> عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا عُمْرُ بْنُ الْحَتْطَابِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: لَمَّا كَانَ يَعْمَلُ نِسَاءٌ عَلَى سَحْلِ الْلَّهِ يُؤْمِنُ وَسَلَّمَ الْقَرْنِينَ وَالْعَلِيمَينَ وَأَصْحَابَهُ مِنَ الْمُسَلِّمِينَ وَسَلَّمَ عُثْمَانَ بْنَ عَمَّارٍ رَأَى أَفْتَاقَةً فَأَسْتَفْلَأَ الْقَبْلَةَ، ثُمَّ مَدَّ يَدَهُ فَقَعَلَ بِهِ أَفْتَاقَةً فَقَالَ: الْلَّهُمَّ أَنْجِيِّنِي مَا وَعَزْنِيَّ إِنَّكَ لَمْ تَبْلِكَ هَذِهِ الْعَصْبَةَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ لَنَعْبُدَنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَقَالَ الْلَّهُمَّ بَيِّنْ فِي أَفْتَاقَةِ مَا أَذِينِيَةَ حَتَّى سَفَطَ رَأْؤُهُ عَنْ مَنْكِبِيَّهُ.الحديث (أخرجه مسلم والمزدي)
It is related on the authority of Ibn 'Abbâs that he related on the authority of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said, "On the day of the battle of Badr, Allâh's Messenger looked in the direction of the pagan enemy who numbered a thousand, when his own forces numbered only three hundred and nineteen. Then he turned toward the direction of the Qiblâ, extended his arms, and began beseeching his Lord, saying, 'O Allâh! Fulfil Your promise to me. O Allâh! Bring to pass what You promised me. O Allâh! If You destroy this band of believers, no one will be left on earth to worship You.' In this wise, he continued to beseech his Lord until his cloak fell off of his shoulders." Imams Muslim and Tirmidhî related it.

States: Taking Liberties with the Almighty

_Idlâl_, which literally means coquetry or taking liberties with a loved one, is the name of a spiritual state which sometimes comes over those Sufis who are so immersed in the love of Allâh that they, in effect, forget who they are and behave toward the Almighty with the familiarity of a lover for the beloved. The hadîth above may be interpreted in the context of this state, _idlâl_, (as the Prophet seemed to all outward appearances to have been threatening the Almighty; which was clearly not the case!). The Sufi poet, _Hâfiz_ of Shiraz, speaks of this spiritual state in the following couplet:

If the shadow (succour and favour) of the Beloved (the Almighty) should fall on the lover
What of it? After all, while we need Him, He is not without desire for us.

In other words, what is desired is our obedience and devotion. And the word "desire" is used in this verse of poetry to refer to the divine will.

_ḤADĪTH 156_

عن أنس رضي الله عنه في قصة غزوة أخذ قول أنس بن النصر قائلًا: "يا سعد بن معاذ! الجنة ورب النصر، إنني لأجد رجعها من دون أحد. الحديث. (أخرجه الشيخان والترمذي)

It is related on the authority of Anas ibn Mâlik who, in his narration concerning the battle of 'Uḥd, related the words of his uncle, 'Anas ibn an-Naḍar, who said [to his companion in battle], "O Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh! [239 Muslim: 1763, Tirmidhî: 3081]
Paradise, by the Lord of Naḍar, I detect its fragrance by the foot of Mount 'Uḥud.' Imams Muslim, Bukhārī and Tirmidhi related it. ²⁴⁰

**States: The World of the Unseen**
The unveiling of things from the world of the Unseen, ṣāliḥ al-ghayb, indicates that the recipient of these communications, on condition that he/she is a Muslim who devotedly adheres to the Šari‘a, has attained an elevated spiritual station.

**ḤADĪTH 157**

> عَنْ سَعْدٍ بنِ أبي وَقَاصِرٍ رضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: رَأَيْتُ عَلَى بَيْنِي وَسْلُوْلِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَعَلَى شَهِدَتِي بَيْنِي أَمَامَينَ رَجُلَيْنِ، عَلَيْهِمَا بَيْنُّ يَدَيْنِي بَيْضُ، يُقَاتِلَا نَأَمَدَانِ كَأَمَدَ الْيَتَالَاءَ مَا رَأَيْتُهُمَا قَبْلُ وَلَا بَعْدُ، يُعْيُنُ بَيْضُ وَمَيْكَانُ. (أخبره الشيخان)

It is related that Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqāṣ said, “On the day of [the Battle of] ‘Uḥud I saw two men in white fighting on the left and the right of Allāh’s Messenger. I had never seen them before, and I never saw them again; Jibrīl and Mikā’īl.” Imams Muslim and Bukhārī related it. ²⁴¹

**States: Unveiling Angels and Questions: Assimilation**
From the ḥadīth above it is clear that Jibrīl and Mikā’īl were actually seen by Sa’d. The question of assimilation has already been discussed in the commentary of ḥadīth [1]. In the case of the sighting reported in the ḥadīth above, we may assume that if others also saw the two angels, then the ḥadīth in which assimilation is mentioned explains what happened. If others did not see the two angels, then this is explained by the preceding ḥadīth [156].

**ḤADĪTH 158**

> عَنْ أَبِي مُرْبِيَةَ رضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ فِي قَصَةِ غَزْوَةِ الْرَجُلَيْنِ مِنَ الحَدِيثِ الطَّوِيلِ عَنْ بَعْضِ بِنَاتِ الْحَرَثِ كَانَتْ تَقُولُ: مَا زِلْتُ أَميِّرًا فَقَطْ خَيْرًا أَنْ خُبْيَتْ، لْقَدْ رَأَيْتُهُ يَافَكُّ مِنْ قَطْفِ عَبْدِي، وَمَا بِيـثَةٍ يَوْمَيْدِ ْتَمْرُقٌ وَإِنَّهُ لمَوْقُعٌ بِالْحَدِيثِ، وَما كَانَ إِلَّا رَفَقًا رَفَقُهُ اللَّهُ خَبْيَتَا، وَقَفْهُ وَبَعْثْتُ فِرْقَةً إِلَى عَاصِمٍ لِيُؤَوْنَا بَيْنَيْنِ مِنْ جَسَدِهِ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهِ وَكَانَ فَقَلَل

²⁴⁰ Bukhārī: 2805, Muslim: 1903, Tirmidhi: 3200
²⁴¹ Bukhārī: 4054, Muslim: 2306
Abū Huraira related in his account of the Battle of al-Rajj that one of the daughters of al-Ḥārith used to say, “Never have I seen a better prisoner than Khubaib. I have seen him bound in chains, eating from a cluster of grapes at a time when fruit was not to be found in all of Makka. Verily, that could have been nothing other than provision provided to him by Allāh most High.” Later in the same narration, [but concerning ʿĀṣim], Abū Huraira said, “Then the Quraysh commanded that a piece of ʿĀṣim’s [dead] body be brought to them, for ʿĀṣim had killed one of their chiefs in the battle of Badr. But Allāh sent a cloud of hornets to cover his corpse so that it was protected from the Quraysh. In this wise, they were unable to do anything to him.” Imams Bukhārī and Abū Dāwūd related it.

States: Karāmah
The compelling miracles mentioned in the hadith above in regard to Khubaib and ʿĀṣim are indicative, as both men were steadfast in their adherence to the Shari’a, of the elevated spiritual states which they had attained.

**Hadith 159**

It is related on the authority of Anas concerning the battle at the Well
of Maʿūna, that Allah's Messenger ﷺ sent a group of Muslims from Banī Sulaím to [the unbelieving] Banī ʿAmir [for the purpose of calling them to Islam]. Another version of Anas' account begins like this: “My uncle, Ḥarām ibn Malhān ﷺ, the brother of my mother, Umm Sulaym ﷺ, was sent on a mission with seventy horsemen. When they arrived, my uncle said to the others, ‘I will go ahead on my own. If they promise to keep me safe, and allow me to address the tribe about the teachings of Allah's Messenger ﷺ then fine. But, if they do not, then you will not be far from me [and may soon come to my aid].’ In this manner, he approached them, and they promised to keep him safe. As he, Ḥarām, was speaking to them about Allah's Messenger ﷺ a signal was given by his hosts, and one of the tribe ran him through with a sword. At that, Ḥarām exclaimed, ‘Allāhu Akbar! I have succeeded. By the Lord of the Ka'bah!’” Imams Bukhārī and Muslim related it.

In another version of the Ḥadīth related by Imām Bukhārī, Anas ﷺ says, “When Ḥarām ibn Malhān was stabbed at the Well of Maʿūna, he took his own blood in his hands and wiped it on his face and head and then said, ‘I have succeeded. By the Lord of the Ka'bah!’” 243

**States: Yearning for Death**

From the words and deeds of Anas' uncle it is quite evident that he had an exceptionally fervent desire to end his life in the favour of Allāh ﷺ and that when death did come to him in this way he was overjoyed. It is this very same desire which becomes the basis for the death wishes expressed by the Sufi masters in their poetry and other works.

**Sayings: Ablutions in Blood**

Certain Sufis have written about performing their ablutions with blood rather than water. If there is any need to corroborate the metaphorical with the literal, the example of Ḥarām ﷺ wiping his face and head in his own blood is certainly about as literal as one can be.

### ḤADĪTH 160

"عن أنس رضي الله عنه قال: خرج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى الصدقة، فإذا المهاجرين و الآنصار جُمِّعُونُ في غدٍ بارد، ولم يكن هم عبيد يعمُّلونَ ذلك هم،..."

243 Bukhārī: 2801, 4092, Muslim: 677
Anas said, “When the Prophet went out to the trench, the Muhajirs and Anṣār were digging there in the morning cold, as they had no prisoners or slaves to do the work. When the Prophet found that they were tired and hungry, he said [in verse], ‘O Allah! Surely the life is the life to come. Forgive, then, the Anṣār and the Muhajirs!’ At that, the diggers answered him, saying, [also in verse], ‘We are the ones who are pledged to Muhammad, to fight for him as long as we live!’” Imams Bukhārī, Muslim and Tirmidhī related it.  

**Practices: Samā‘ to Stimulate the Soul**

Certain Sufis are of the conviction that when, owing to circumstances of a temporary nature, the disciple or aspirant becomes spiritually irresolute, lax, or contracted, then in order to remedy the situation the aspirant may, while strictly adhering to the conditions under which samā‘ is permissible, indulge in samā‘. In this way, the aspirant’s irresolution may be dispelled, and a desire to worship will be facilitated. Thus, samā‘ should be understood to be the means to an end, when the end, or objective, is worship. The hadith above will be seen to record a precedent for this practice. The digging of the Trench was the objective; while fatigue and hunger might have led to irresolution. And the recitation of the rhymed and metered verses performed the function of lifting spirits and preventing indolence. In view of these factors, then, this would seem to be the wisdom behind this practice. It must be remembered, however, that to suppose samā‘ itself to be the objective, or to practise it without concern for propriety, is tantamount to tampering with religion.

**ḤADĪTH 161**

"عن عائشة رضي الله تعالى عنها قالت: لما رجع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من الح날،"  

244 Bukhārī: 2834, Muslim: 1805, Tirmidhī: 3857  

245 Samā‘ may be defined as audition, or one’s listening to rhymed and metered verse that is recited by a professional. Such verse, when recited professionally, will obviously have rhythmic and musical qualities. During the author’s time, and throughout Muslim history, the institution of samā‘ has suffered many abuses, both from those who support it and those who oppose it. What the author is pointing to here, however, is the straightforward recitation of poetry without frivolity. YTD.
The Hadith states: "A'isha in her narration concerning the Battle of the Trench, said, "When Allah's Messenger returned from the Trench [he found out that] the medial vein in Sa'd ibn Mu'adh's arm had been severed [in the fighting]. Therefore, the Prophet ordered that a tent be erected in the masjid for Sa'd so that he could attend to Sa'd from close by. Then Sa'd prayed, 'O Allah! Surely you know that there is no one I like to fight more than the people who discredited your Prophet and turned him out. O Allah! It now appears to me that You have put an end to the fighting between us [the Muslims and Quraysh]. But if I am wrong about this, and there is to be more fighting, then let me live so that I may fight for You against them. And if the fighting is truly at an end, then let my wound continue to flow so that I may die of it.' That night his wound opened so that the people in the masjid were startled at the sight of his blood flowing toward them. That was the night Sa'd succumbed to his wound and died." Imams Bukhari and Muslim related it. 246

HAĐĪTH 162

عن حارثة رضي الله عنه قال: إن سعد بن معاذ رضي الله عنه قبض بدأ أكلة أو أكلة، فقضا عنه رسول الله صل الله عليه وسلم بالدار، فتفضحته يده فتركه، فنزعت ihm الدم ففضحته أخرى فتنفخته بده، فقله دا رأى ذلك قال: الله له لا ترضع نفخ حتى تجر عيني من بني قريظة، فاستعصى عرفه في قطر قطرة حتى نزلوا عليه حكمه، فحكم فيهم أن يقتل رجالهم ويتستحي نساءهم فقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: 'أصبتح حكم.
Jābir said, Sa'd ibn Mu'adh was wounded by an arrow on the Day of the Hosts (during the Battle of the Trench) so that the medial vein in his arm was severed. Therefore, Allah's Messenger attempted to cauterize it. However, when he did, the arm began to swell, and after a short while the blood was flowing again. Again an attempt was made to cauterize the wound, and again the arm grew swollen. When Sa'd saw what had happened, he said, "O Lord! Don't take my life until my eyes have been soothed by the sight of Bani Qurayza. Then the blood ceased to flow from his wound, and not a single drop of blood seeped from it until [finally, after having been brought to their knees by the Muslim blockade of their quarter] Bani Qurayza agreed to submit to whatever Sa'd decided concerning them. Then Sa'd decided that their men must be put to death, and that their women [and children] be allowed to live. Allah's Messenger said, 'You have decided their fate in conformance with the decision of Allah.' The number of their men was four hundred. When [the sentence had been carried out and] the men of Qurayza had been executed, Sa'd's wound began to flow as before. A short while later, he died of it. Imam Tirmidhī related it and attested to its authenticity.

States: Kashf and Karāmah

An example of kashf may be found in Sa'd's saying, "It now appears to me that You have put an end to the fighting between us." Indeed, with the Battle of the Trench all fighting between the Muslims and the idolators of Quraysh had come to an end. There was a brief skirmish at Makka (about two years later), but most historians hesitate even to call it that. There are two examples of karāmah in the story of Sa'd. One was the stoppage of the flow of blood mentioned in the second hadith [162], and the second was the re-opening of the closed

247 The Qurayza were a Hebrew tribe living in Madina with the Muslims under a truce, who had traitorously sided with the idolators against the Muslim defenders of the city in the Battle of the Trench. Therefore, when the siege had been lifted, Allah's Messenger directed that the quarter of Madina in which the Qurayza resided be surrounded. Thus, the meaning of Sa'd's prayer was that he wished to live to see Bani Qurayza punished for their treachery.

248 The Qurayza sent word to Allah's Messenger that they would surrender only if the terms were dictated by Sa'd ibn Mu'adh. Since the Qurayza had always maintained cordial relations with Sa'd in the days before the advent of Islam, they evidently hoped that he would be lenient with them on the basis of their prior relationship.

249 Tirmidhī: 1582
wound mentioned in the first hadith [161]. Furthermore, there is no reason to suppose that there is any contradiction in the prayers of Sa'd as recorded in the two hadiths above. What happened first was that the blood flowing from his wound stopped as a result of his prayer, as recorded in the second hadith. Then, as a result of his prayer, as mentioned in the first hadith, the blood again started to flow. Thus, in the second hadith, the narrator’s saying, “When the men of Qurayza...” should be viewed as his own condensation of events. Actually, the full story would read more like this: When the men of Qurayza had been executed, and Sa’d had supplicated his Lord with the prayer mentioned in the first hadith, Sa’d’s wound began to flow as before.

**States: The Love of Life and the Love of Death**

While certain of the writings of the Sufi masters clearly indicate a love of life on their part, certain other of their works would seem to indicate the opposite. From the prayer of Sa’d, however, the rationale behind both points of view is expressed quite clearly. Thus, their love of life springs from their love of involvement in the practices of worship and devotion. Sa’d said, “Then let me live so that I may fight for You against them,” when jihād is a form of worship. Their desire for death is based on no more than their wish to preserve their religion and be united with the Almighty.

**Hadīth 163**

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عن عَرُوْةَ بن الزُّبرِيْرِ عَنْ الْجُهَرُوْرِ بْنِ مَحْمُوْدِ وَمُرْوَانَ، (الحديث الطويل) وفيه فَضْلُ الحَدِيثِ، ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَرُوْةَ بْنَ مَسْعُودٍ جَعَلَ يَرْتِمُ أُصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى الله عليه وسلم بِعَبَارَتِهِ قَالَ: فَوَمَاخْتَجُبَ رَسُولُ الله ﷺ نَحْيَةً إِلَّا وَقَعَتْ فِي كُفْ رَجُلٍ مِّنْهُمْ فَذَلِكَ بِهَا وَجْهُهُ وَجْلَدُهُ، وَإِذَا أَمَرَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَمَرَهُ، وَإِذَا تَوَضَّأَ كَاذَّبَوْا فَقُلْتُنَّ عَلَى وَضُوْءِهِ، وَإِذَا نَكَلَّمُ خَضِصُوا أَصْوَاهُمْ عَنْهُ، وَمَا مِجِدُونَ النَّظَرَ إِلَّا يَعْظَمُهُ نَّلَّهُ، وَفِي هَذَا الحَدِيثِ قَالَ: عَمْرُ بْنُ الْعَطَابِ. فَأَلْتَى نَبِيَّ الله صَلَّى الله عليه وسلم فَقُلْتُ: يَا نَبِيَّ الله! أَلْسَتُ نَبِيَّ الله حَقًا؟ قَالَ: نَبِيُّ اللهْ عَلَى الْجُهَرُوْرَ بْنِ مَحْمُوْدِ وَمُرْوَانَ. فَقُلْتُ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللهْ عَلَى الْجُهَرُوْرَ بْنِ مَحْمُوْدِ وَمُرْوَانَ. قَالَ: نَبِيُّ اللهْ عَلَى الْجُهَرُوْرَ بْنِ مَحْمُوْدِ وَمُرْوَانَ. فَقُلْتُ: أَوْ لِيُعْطِيُّ الْبَذِّيَةَ فِي هَذَا إِنْذَانَ قَالَ: إِنِّي رَسُولُ الله وَلَسْتُ أَعْبَسُهُ وَهُوَ نَاصِرٌ قَالَ: فَلَأْتُ بَلُوطًا أَنَا سَتَنَا النَّبيَّ بَلُوطُ بِيَةٍ؟ قَالَ: نَبِيُّ اللهْ عَلَى الْجُهَرُوْرَ بْنِ مَحْمُوْدِ وَمُرْوَانَ. فَقُلْتُ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللهْ عَلَى الْجُهَرُوْرَ بْنِ مَحْمُوْدِ وَمُرْوَانَ. قَالَ: أَفَأَخْرَجْتِ يَدًا تَأَطَّعَهَا النَّارُ؟ قَالَ: فَلَأْتُ بَلُوطًا أَنَا سَتَنَا النَّبيَّ بَلُوطُ بِيَةٍ؟ قَالَ: نَبِيُّ اللهْ عَلَى الْجُهَرُوْرَ بْنِ مَحْمُوْدِ وَمُرْوَانَ. فَقُلْتُ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللهِ. قَالَ: فَلَأْتُ بَلُوطًا أَنَا سَتَنَا النَّبيَّ بَلُوطُ بِيَةٍ؟ قَالَ: نَبِيُّ اللهْ عَلَى الْجُهَرُوْرَ بْنِ مَحْمُوْدِ وَمُرْوَانَ. فَقُلْتُ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللهِ. قَالَ: فَلَأْتُ بَلُوطًا أَنَا سَتَنَا النَّبيَّ بَلُوطُ بِيَةٍ؟ قَالَ: نَبِيُّ اللهْ عَلَى الْجُهَرُوْرَ بْنِ مَحْمُوْدِ وَمُرْوَانَ. فَقُلْتُ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللهِ. قَالَ: فَلَأْتُ بَلُوطًا أَنَا سَتَنَا النَّبيَّ بَلُوطُ بِيَةٍ؟ قَالَ: نَبِيُّ اللهْ عَلَى الْجُهَرُوْرَ بْنِ مَحْمُوْدِ وَمُرْوَانَ. فَقُلْتُ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللهِ. قَالَ: فَلَأْتُ بَلُوطًا أَنَا سَتَنَا النَّبيَّ بَلُوطُ بِيَةٍ؟ قَالَ: نَبِيُّ اللهْ عَلَى الْجُهَرُوْرَ بْنِ مَحْمُوْدِ وَمُرْوَانَ. فَقُلْتُ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللهِ. قَالَ: فَلَأْتُ بَلُوطًا أَنَا سَتَنَا النَّبيَّ بَلُوطُ بِيَةٍ؟ قَالَ: نَبِيُّ اللهْ عَلَى الْجُهَرُوْرَ بْنِ مَحْمُوْدِ وَمُرْوَانَ. فَقُلْتُ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللهِ. C
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Urwa b. al-Zubayr related from al-Miswar ibn Makhramah and Marwān a lengthy narration concerning the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyyah in which it is recorded that: “[a leader of the Makkani idolators who had been sent to determine the strength and numbers of the believers gathered at Hudaybiyyah] began staring at the Companions of the Prophet and reported, ‘By Allah! The Prophet could not even sneeze without having his mucus fall into the hands of one of his Companions who would then rub it over his face and skin. If he ordered them to do anything, they would all attempt to be the first to comply. If he performed ablutions, they would nearly kill each other for the water he had used. If he spoke, they immediately lowered their voices in his presence. And never, out of their respect for him, did they stare at him.” In the same narration [of the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah in which the terms dictated by the pagan Quraysh were accepted, some of which appeared unfavourable to the believers], it is also recorded that ‘Umar b. al-Khattab said, “So I went to Allah’s Prophet and [in a state of agitation over the terms of the treaty] said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Are you not truly the Messenger of Allah?’ He replied, ‘I certainly am; Then I said, ‘Are we not followers of the truth while our enemies are followers of falsehood?’ He replied, ‘Certainly; Then I said, ‘So why do we agree to humiliation with respect to our religion?’ He replied, ‘Verily, I am Allah’s Prophet, and verily I will never disobey Him! [In other words, whatever I have done or agreed to do has been in accordance with the will of Allah.] He will always be my Helper.’ So, I said, ‘But didn’t you tell us that we will go to the House [i.e., the Ka’bah in Makkah and perform tawāf there?’ He replied, ‘Certainly, I did. But did I say that you’d go to it this year?’ So I said, ‘No.’ Then he replied, ‘You will go to it. And you will circumambulate it.’ At that, I went to Abū Bakr and said, ‘O Abū Bakr! Is he not truly the Messenger of Allah?’ Abū Bakr replied, ‘Verily, he is.’ Then I said, ‘Are we not followers of the truth while our enemies are followers of falsehood?’ Abū Bakr replied, ‘Certainly.’ Then I said, ‘So why do we agree to humiliation with respect
to our religion? He replied, 'Listen, man! Verily, he is Allah's Prophet ﷺ, and verily he will never disobey His Lord. As long as he obeys, Allah will be his Helper. So be steadfast in your obedience to him because, by Allah, he is doing the right thing.' So I said, 'But didn't he say to us that we would visit the House and circumambulate it?' He replied, 'Verily. But did he say that you would visit it this year?' I replied, 'No.' Abū Bakr ﷺ said, 'Then you will visit it. And you will circumambulate it.' 'Umar ﷺ said, "For that [i.e., in order to make up for my having questioned the Prophet in that manner] I did many, many good deeds." Bukhārī and Abū Dāwūd related this ḥadīth.\textsuperscript{250}

**Customs: Excess in Love for and Devotion to the Master**

From the behaviour of the Companions ﷺ described in the beginning of this ḥadīth it is clearly established that the Sufis' love for their masters, even to the point of giving their lives for him, so that their loyalty to him is greater than that for any worldly authority. Obviously, however, such devotion must never go beyond the bounds established by the Sharī‘a.

**States: Losing Oneself in Love for the Sheikh**

While the ḥadīth does not address this matter specifically, it is clear when one ponders the matter, that this may certainly be understood from the text of the ḥadīth. In other words, from the words spoken by Abū Bakr ﷺ at the end of the ḥadīth in reply to 'Umar's ﷺ questions, it is obvious that his heart and mind were at one with the heart and mind of the Prophet ﷺ. A connection of this sort, in view of the habits of the especially gifted Sufi masters, is what is known as "Losing oneself in love for one's master." The existence of an attribute, moreover, is a certain indicator, dalil qat‘ī, that there are those who actually possess that attribute. When such a connection is established by the text of a ḥadīth, then this state (of losing oneself in love for one's spiritual master) is also established. The reality of this state may be witnessed in the affinity of an aspirant for his or her spiritual guide, as expressed (and developed) by means of love and devotion.

**ḤADĪTH 164**

\[\text{عَنْ سَلَامَةَ بْنِ الأَكْوَفِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَلْدِمَا الْحَدِيثَيْنِ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ الحدِيثَ. وَقَالَ فِيْهِ: نَعِمُ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ دَعَاهُ لَيَبْعَثُهُ فِي أَصِلُّ الْسَّجْرَةُ فَبَابَعَهُ فِي أَوْلِ} \]

\textsuperscript{250} Bukhārī: 2731, 2732, Abū Dāwūd: 2765
Salamah ibn al-Akwa said, "We approached Ḥudaibiyyah with Allāh’s Prophet and so on." In the same narration, Salamah said, "Allāh’s Prophet called upon us to swear allegiance to him beneath a tree, and so I swore allegiance among the first of those who swore it. Then the Prophet continued taking oaths of allegiance from more and more people until, when he was through half of them, he called out to me, ‘O Salamah! Swear allegiance.’ I replied, ‘I have already sworn allegiance, among the first people to do so.’ He replied, ‘Do it again.’ So I again swore allegiance to him and, when he noticed I was without a weapon, he gave me a shield. Then he returned to taking the oath of allegiance from more and more people until he reached the last of them. Then he said to me, ‘O Salamah! Why don’t you swear allegiance to me?’ So I said, ‘O Allāh’s Prophet! I swore allegiance to you among the first of those who swore it! And then again among those in the middle! Do you now want me to swear with those at the end?’ He replied, ‘Again.’ So he took my oath, and in that manner I swore allegiance three times!” This was related by Muslim.251

**Customs: Renewing Bay’ah for Emphasis**

At times it may be beneficial to have even a seasoned aspirant renew the oath of allegiance, bay’ah. This ḥadith openly establishes the precedent for such a practice.

**ḤADĪTH 165**

"وَعَنْ عَلِيٍّ عَلِيٌّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمُ الصَّالِحِينَ - في قِصَّةَ كِتَابِ خَاطِبٍ وقَالَ عَمَرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمُ عَلِيٌّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمُ بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وسَلَّمُ: "إِنَّهُ قَدْ سَهَدَ بِذِرَا وَمَا يَذْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَ اطْلُبُ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِكَ فَقَالَ: أَعْمَلُوا مَا أَمَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأَصْلِحُوا لَكُمْ" (أَخْرِجَهُ الحَمَسَةُ إِلَيْنَا نَسَائِي)"
A Reed Study of Ḥadīth

Ali related, in his narrative concerning Ḥāṭīb’s letter,552 “‘Umar said, ‘Let me, O Allāh’s Prophet, strike that hypocrite’s neck!’ So Allāh’s Prophet said, ‘Verily, he fought at the Battle of Badr. So, how are you to know if Allāh saw what they did and then said to them, “Go and do whatever you wish. For I have forgiven you.”’” This was included in five of the six most authentic collections, excluding al-Nasā’ī.553

Reform: The Invalidity of the Belief in Infallibility

According to certain ignorant Sufis and heretics, when a person attains ‘perfection’ he is free to do as he wishes and, for such a one, nothing is unlawful. This school of thought is known as al-Ībāḥiyah, and the amazing thing is that its adherents present this Ḥadīth as proof of their claim. It is as if they are saying, ‘See what the ruling was for those who fought at Badr.’ The truth of the matter, however, is that this Ḥadīth openly refutes their claim because the words ‘I have forgiven . . .’ mean that the deeds they commit will have to be unlawful for them to receive forgiveness. Owing to the extreme generosity of the Almighty, He (may have) made this particular promise to only this particular group of people. Otherwise, there is no need to forgive what is lawful. If, on the other hand, the Almighty had said, ‘I have made this lawful for you,’ it might have been possible to draw such a conclusion. Moreover, it is not possible to compare those who fought at Badr with anyone else because there is textual evidence to confirm the promise of forgiveness that was made to them, whereas no such evidence exists for anyone else. So how can anyone possibly compare themselves with the veterans of Badr? In fact, this article of faith by the Ḫāḥiyah is kufr, disbelief; and anyone who holds it will require correction.

Hadīth 166

Wahb said, “I questioned Jābir concerning the oath of allegiance sworn

252 Ḥāṭīb had written to the pagans in Makka describing some of the military plans of the Prophet. When the letter was intercepted, Ḥāṭīb was taken by the Companions to the Prophet for questioning. At that time, Ḥāṭīb’s explanation was accepted. Even so, ‘Umar still wanted to kill the man as a traitor.

253 Bukhāri: 3007, Muslim: 2494, Abū Dāwūd: 2650, Tirmidhī: 3305
by the Thaqif [tribe]. He said, 'They stipulated that they would do so only if they did not have to pay zakah or participate in Jihad.' And he heard Allah's Prophet ﷺ say, ‘They will pay [zakah] and fight [in jihad], if they truly convert to Islam.’ This was related by Abū Dāwūd.255

Habits: Occasional Leniency in Regard to Essentials

At times, Masters have been known to exhibit restraint, even to the point of ignoring the shortcomings of those they deal with on both an occasional and a regular basis. For people in this state, the Masters have even prescribed special recitations and dhikr without waiting for them to actually discontinue their incorrect practices. This has prompted some people to suspect that the Masters are guilty of hypocrisy. The truth of this matter, however, is that the Masters use their God-given insight to decide when the good practices they prescribe for people will, step by step, erase the incorrect behaviour that those people exhibit. The Masters are also sensitive to the fact that severity on their parts may have the effect of preventing people from doing what is right, and may even discourage them from repenting of their errant ways. Thus, whatever good can be found in such people should be encouraged. Indeed, some people simply do not have the strength to resolve suddenly to refrain from sinful acts. Such resolve, then, needs to be developed by stages. This hadith may help to explain how the Masters deal with such cases.

**Hadith 167**

عرَنَ أبو موسى رضي الله عنه قال لمعاذ: كيف نقرأ أنت؟ قال: سأُنْبِثُكُ بِذِلِكَ، أَمَّا أَنتَ فَأَقُومُ فَأَقْرَأْ، وَأَقْرَأْ فِي تَوْضِيحِ مَا أَحْصِبُ فِي قُوْلِي. (أخره جماعة إلا الترمذي)

Abū Mūsā Narrated that he once asked Mu‘ādh [when both were deputed to govern in Yemen], “How do you recite [your night prayers]?” He replied, “I will tell you about that. For myself, first I sleep [in other words, I do not stay awake all night long] and then I stand [in prayer] and recite. In this manner, I earn as many blessings from my sleep as I do

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254 In other words, it is not necessary to let details get in the way of someone’s conversion or practice of Islam. Rather, once they have converted, have gained a better understanding of the religion and its ways, and have been in the company of the believers, it may be hoped that they will begin to appreciate the religion in all of its various aspects.

255 Abū Dāwūd: 3025
from my prayers." This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasā`ī.²⁵⁶

Questions: The Habits of the Masters as Worship
From the ḥadīth above, it should be clear that when one's knowledge matures to the point of propriety, such that even mundane activities are undertaken with a higher purpose in mind, then those activities will acquire the characteristics of worship; and they will occasion blessings and bring one closer to the Almighty. Thus, one's sleep, if it is undertaken for the purpose of rest and renewal of strength for worship, may actually be accounted an act of worship. Likewise, at times the purpose may be to exhibit one's frailty and need. At other times, the purpose may be to conserve strength for service to others, or to humanity in general. In all such cases, one's sleep may surely be accounted an act of worship. In the same way, other deeds may take on the aspect of worship. The sayings of the Masters attest to this, and the ḥadīth above indicates the same.

ḤADĪTH 168

Jarīr ibn `Abdullāh related that Allāh's Prophet said, "Will you not rid us of Dhi 'l-Khalṣah?" which was a temple in the territory of Khath'am that was also known as the Ka'bah of Yemen. Jarīr said, "So I went with a party of one hundred and fifty riders from [the tribe of] Aḥmas who were true horsemen while I was barely able to keep myself in the saddle. So he struck my breast so hard that I could see the impression of his fingers on [the skin of] my chest, and recited, 'O Allāh, stabilise him"²⁵⁷ and make him one who is a guide and rightly-guided!" Thereafter, the unit

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²⁵⁶ Bukhārī: 4341, Muslim: 1732, Abū Dāwūd: 4354, Nasā`ī: 5598
²⁵⁷ It is evident from the context that the purpose of the prayer was to ask for stability for Jarīr in both the saddle and religion.
went to the temple and destroyed it, setting it on fire.” This was related by Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawud.

Questions: Natural Characteristics are not Erased from those who Attain Perfection

Scholars have stated that just because one attains a state of spiritual perfection\textsuperscript{258} this does not mean that such a person will no longer be subject to human nature. Nonetheless, that person will undoubtedly be less susceptible to the sort of human frailties that will lead him or her to act contrary to the Sharī’ah. From the hadith above, it is clear that the Prophet ﷺ felt the effects of outside influences on his heart and soul. At the same time, however, he would never have acted without a clear reason from the Sharī’ah to do so. Still, he needed from time to time to bring his impulses under control. Thus, it should be clear that the efforts of certain Sufis to attain absolute perfection are akin to their attempting to catch the wind and hold it in their fists! Stories concerning the perfection of certain Sufis actually describe their coming under the influence of a temporary state rather than anything of a permanent nature.

\textbf{Hadith 170}

\begin{quote}
\textit{‘Amir ibn Sa‘īd narrated, “I visited Qurāzah ibn Ka‘b and Abū Sa‘ūd al-Anṣārī during a wedding where girls were singing, so I said, ‘The two of you are Companions of the Prophet ﷺ and veterans of the Battle of Badr. So how could such a thing happen in your presence?’ The two of them answered me. ‘Sit with us, if you like. Or go. For we have been given license to do such things on these occasions.’” This hadith was related by al-Nasā’î.\textsuperscript{259}}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{258} Obviously, spiritual perfection may be defined in a variety of ways. Suffice it to say, however, that all the Sufi masters acknowledge the fact that no human is capable of perfection in every respect. Thus, the meaning of perfection here may be understood as a high degree of accomplishment in spirituality. *YTD.*

\textsuperscript{259} Nasā’î: 3385
Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir said, “I have heard it said that the Almighty will say on Judgment Day, ‘Where are those who protected their ears from indulging in pleasure’ and from the instruments of Satan? Allow them to enter into gardens of musk. Then he will say to the angels, ‘Let them hear My praises! And tell them they have nothing to fear... nor shall they grieve!’” This ḥadith was related by Razin.

Habits: The Samā’ of the Chishti Order and the Opposition of the Naqshbandi

The opinions of the rightly-guided followers of both of these orders, those who approve of audition and those who disapprove, are derived from authentic sources of evidence. In one instance, however, the aspect of spiritual exuberance, shawq is dominant; while in the other instance, it is prudence that is dominant. The first of the two ḥadiths above, ḥadith [170], would seem to indicate the first order’s preference, while the second, ḥadith [171], would seem to indicate the preference of the other Sufi order. Logically, when a degree of physical diversion is allowed (by the Shari‘a), it would seem to follow that a degree of spiritual diversion must also be allowed. The actual degrees to which such activity may be allowed is a matter for the experts. It should be clear, however, that to transgress the limits is definitely sinful. All of this is discussed in detail in the books of rules that deal with the subject. From the ḥadiths above it should be clear that the sort of samā’ that may be condoned will never go beyond the limits of spiritual diversion, as the two Companions explained (in ḥadith [170]). Moreover, if the degree of disapproval is disapproval occasioned by prudence (which is the preferred degree, as is evident from the second ḥadith in which comparison is made to the instruments of Satan), then it is clear that samā’ is neither a good thing in and of itself, nor a bad thing. This is because pleasure is not necessarily bad or

260 Literally, min al-lahw, which is generally understood to be music or the joyful recitation of poetry on special occasions.YTD.
262 See the translator’s footnote at ḥadith [160] for a more precise definition of what is intended by the word, samā’.
good, in and of itself.\textsuperscript{263} The sort of pleasure that is allowed, however, is indicated in the ḥadith by means of comparison.

\textbf{ḤADĪTH 172}

\begin{quote}

"\begin{quote}

\text{"\textquoteright}أَنَّ يَقُولُ أَنَا أَحْبَرْتُ مِنْ يُونُسَ بْنِ مَطَّٰيّ." (أَخْرِجَ الشَّيْخُانَ وَأَبُو دَاَوُذَ)

\end{quote}

\end{quote}

Abū Huraira \textsuperscript{264} related that Allah's Prophet \textsuperscript{265} said, "No servant of Allāh should say [concerning me] that I am better than Yūnūs ibn Mattā." This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Dāwūd.\textsuperscript{266}

\textit{Reform: Glorifying a Master by Detracting from Another}

Yūnūs \textsuperscript{267} was mentioned in this ḥadith because his story would appear to include a reprimand from the Almighty which, in turn, would indicate that he was somehow ranked lower than other prophets. This assumption is what the ḥadith sets out to refute. The practice on the part of certain Sufis to celebrate the virtues of their own master, or of their own Sufi order, by criticising others is certainly wrong. This hadith clearly illustrates this point. Certainly, there is nothing wrong in one's holding such beliefs as a personal matter. In instances in which there is no definitive textual evidence, it is lawful to hold an opinion, but unlawful to suppose that opinion to be binding. In instances in which such an opinion is based on no more than one's love (for a particular Sufi master or order), then this is perfectly natural and beyond the scope of legal responsibility. No one can be blamed for holding such an opinion.\textsuperscript{268}

\textbf{ḤADĪTH 173}

\begin{quote}

\begin{quote}

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\end{quote}

\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{263} What the author is trying to convey to the reader is that these are relative matters. Thus, under certain circumstances, certain pleasures are lawful and permitted while, under other circumstances, the very same pleasures are unlawful. In regard to 	extit{samā'} the relative circumstances are thus all-important. The author is attempting here to reconcile two apparently opposite positions on the issue. His approach is a subtle one and should be appreciated as such by the discerning reader. For the aspirant, the most important thing is to follow the rules established by the order and those who have become accomplished in its disciplines. \textit{YTD.}

\textsuperscript{264} Bukhārī: 3395, Muslim: 2376, Abū Dāwūd: 4669

\textsuperscript{265} No blame will attach as long as one remains within the bounds of one's own opinion, and does not suppose the matter to be anything more than personal opinion. \textit{YTD.}

\textsuperscript{266} Bukhārī: 3395, Muslim: 2376, Abū Dāwūd: 4669

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Habits: Testing the Intentions of an Aspirant by Radical Means

It has been the practice of many Sufi masters to gauge the intention and faith of aspirants, in situations in which they deem that to do so is necessary, by saying or doing things the outer aspect of which appear to contradict the inner. So, while in fact these actually comply with the Shari'a, their appearance might lead one to assume that they do not. For example, Sheikh Sādiq Gangohi, may Allah have mercy on his soul, once said to one of his disciples, "There is no god but Allah, and truthful (ṣādiq) is Allah's Prophet!" Of course, the intended meaning was that Allah's Prophet was truthful in his claim to prophethood. However, the apparent meaning is one that may give rise to doubts, as if the Sheikh (whose name was Sādiq) were claiming to be a prophet! (Sādiq is God's Prophet!) If the aspirant was a simple-minded literalist, he might have run away from the Sheikh right then and there. If he possessed a penetrating mind, however, he would have understood that there was a possibility, at least, that he was being tested by these words, and he would have had recourse to their context, and to his past experience with the Sheikh who uttered them. If those experiences had been positive and indicated that the Sheikh was indeed an accomplished and orthodox master, then he would have interpreted the words of the Sheikh, in either a particular or a general way, and then remained steadfast in his attachment to the Sheikh. The Ḥadīth above may be understood as a precedent for such an evaluation.

ḤADĪTH 174

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Abū Hurairah related that Allāh’s Messenger said, “While Ayyūb was bathing naked, a cloud of golden locusts descended upon him and he immediately began collecting these in his clothing. Then, the Lord called out to him, saying, ‘O Ayyūb! Have I not relieved you of the need for what you see here?’ Ayyūb replied, ‘Certainly, O Lord! But I will never be free of my need for Your blessings.’” This was related by al-Bukhārī and al-Nasā’ī.

Habits: Not Declining to Accept Luxuries

It has been the practice of the spiritually adept when God-given luxuries are made available to them, and there is no apparent reason to fear that they will lead to corruption, to understand these as having originated with the Divine Benefactor (al-Munīm) and to accept them. The hadith above would appear to indicate the legality of this practice. Even so, the masters would never allow such things to become a preoccupation.

HADĪTH 175

Abū Sa‘īd related that Allāh’s Prophet said, “Do not choose between the prophets.” This was included in the collection of Abū Dāwūd.

Reform:
The meaning here is similar to that in hadith [172].

HADĪTH 176

Abū Dāwūd: 4668

267 Bukhārī: 3391, Nasā’ī: 409
268 A well-known legal maxim states that it is lawful, for those who trust themselves to show proper appreciation, shukr, to desire the accumulation of lawful wealth. Yrd.
269 Abū Dāwūd: 4668
Ibn Maṣūd related that Allāh’s Prophet performed his evening prayers and, when he had finished, he took my hand and went out to the rocky flood plain of Makka where he sat me down. Then he drew a circle around me and said, “Do not cross beyond your line. Many people will come to you. Do not speak to them, and they will not speak to you.” This was related by al-Bukhārī.  

**Miscellaneous: Taking Measures**

At times the masters will take measures themselves, generally to rectify one situation or another, and then prescribe the same for others. For example, they may tell someone to go and recite something after drawing a circle around the place where they are to do the reciting. This is called ḥaṣār or spiritual confinement. The effect of ḥaṣār, in most cases, is that despite the comings and goings of others, the one so confined will remain oblivious to outside influences. The above hadith would seem to indicate a precedent for such a practice.

**Hadith 177**

'Abdūllāh ibn Hishām related, “We were with Allāh’s Prophet and he had taken hold of ʿUmar’s hand. So, ʿUmar said to him, ‘O Allāh’s Prophet! Verily, you are more beloved to me than any other thing, excepting my own life.’ At that the Prophet remarked, ‘No. By the One Who holds my soul in His hand, not until I am more beloved to you than

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270 Bukhārī: 7281, Tirmidhī: 2861
271 i.e., you will not attain the degree of perfection that you seek. YTD.
even your life!' So, ‘Umar replied, ‘Indeed, now you are more beloved to me than even my life!' So Allāh’s Prophet said, ‘At last,272 O ‘Umar!'273

This hadith was related by al-Bukhārī.274

Questions: Blind Love as a Condition for Certain Perfections

Certain literalist critics refuse to believe that it is possible to have a relationship with a master that is based on natural, emotional love. The hadith above would appear to refute that position. Also, it seems quite clear from the hadith that this sort of love is actually a condition for the attainment of certain forms of spiritual achievement.

Hadith 178

Abū Huraira related that Allāh’s Prophet said, “Do not speak negatively about my Companions. By the One Who holds my life in His hands! If one of you were to spend the weight of Mount ‘Uḥud in gold, it would still not equal one of their bushel-weights, or even the half of that!” This was related by Muslim.275

Rewards of Experts in Multiples Compared to those of non-Experts

It is mentioned in the books on the subject of tašawwuf that the deeds of an

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272 i.e., at last you have attained the degree of perfection that you seek. YTD.
273 When the Prophet made this pronouncement, ‘Umar immediately attained the degree of perfection that he had sought. Moreover, the love alluded to here is not rational (as opposed to emotional) love because otherwise the exception made by ‘Umar would have been meaningless. Thus, it was emotional love and that sort of love is clearly not a condition for faith. Certainly, however, it is a requisite for spiritual development. This sort of love is also referred to as losing oneself in love for the Master, or fanā’ fi l-Sheikh. Mention of this phenomenon was made in the commentary for hadith [163]. YTD.
274 Bukhārī: 6632
275 Muslim: 2540, Nasā’i: 2529
accomplished master are far more valuable in terms of reward and virtue than those performed by ordinary people. I have heard from my own master that two cycles, rak'ah, of prayer performed by a master are better than a hundred thousand cycles performed by those who are not masters. This ḥadīth may be adduced as evidence for the same. Even though it is the Companions that are named specifically, the ratio legis or occasioning factor is shared; and that is the superiority of both groups in terms of the sincerity of their devotion, ikhlāṣ. Moreover, the validity of this factor as an effective influence on such a categorisation, ḥukm,²⁷⁶ is established by means of other scriptural evidence:

The parable of those who spend their possessions out of a longing to please Allāh, and out of their own inner certainty, is that of a garden on high, fertile ground; a rainstorm smites it, and thereupon it brings forth its fruit twofold; and if no rainstorm smites it, then soft rain [falls upon it] (al-Qur'ān, 2:265),

and,

Allāh's Prophet ﷺ said, "A single dirham once out-valued a thousand dirhams." When he was asked how that could be, he replied, "One man had only two dirhams. He gave away the best of the two²⁷⁷ as a charitable donation; while another man went to his treasury, withdrew a thousand dirhams, and gave them away to charity."²⁷⁸ This was related by al-Nasāī.

No one should entertain the doubt here that perhaps the occasioning factor in

²⁷⁶ In other words, both the Companions and the masters share a distinguishing characteristic, the sincerity of their devotion. In both cases, this characteristic of unselfish devotion to the Almighty may be identified as the effective cause, or occasioning factor, of the different categorisation or value accorded their acts of worship. When the occasioning factor can be thus identified, it is a simple matter to apply the categorisation mentioned in the hadith, by extension, to the situation of the accomplished masters of tasawwuf whose worship, too, is characterised by unselfish devotion and sincerity. In this manner, it is possible to say that the worship of the masters is likewise of far greater value than the acts of worship, including charitable giving, performed by those less accomplished. YTD.

²⁷⁷ Not all dirhams were valued equally, owing to the practice common at the time of making change by paring them down. YTD.

²⁷⁸ 'Allāma Sindhi, in his commentary on al-Nasā'i, explained the meaning of the ḥadīth in the following manner: The apparent meaning of this ḥadīth is that rewards are given in proportion to the status of the giver, not in proportion to the amount that is given. Thus, the one who had only two dirhams gave away half of everything that he owned, so that he was rewarded in proportion to his zeal and determination. The wealthy person, on the other hand, did not give away half of his wealth and therefore received a smaller reward. It is also possible, although 'Allāma Sindhi felt that the text of the ḥadīth really didn't support this, to understand the hadith as saying that when the poor man gave away half of everything that he owned, this so impressed the wealthy person that he was inspired to give away a thousand dirhams. In such a case, the reward of the poor man would be increased because he became the reason for the giving of the thousand dirhams to charity. YTD.
the ḥadith above (178) was the companionship\textsuperscript{279} of the Companions \textsuperscript{2} which is obviously a quality that others cannot share with them. At the same time, however, there is no doubt that even while the reason for their increased rewards is the sincerity of their devotions, their “companionship” does figure into the equation by establishing the highest possible level for rewards.

\textbf{ḤADĪTH 179}

\begin{quote}
\textit{عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فِي حَدِيثٍ طُوِّلُهُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: وَأَصْحَابِيَّ}

أَمِنَّا لَأَمِنَّي فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ أَصْحَابِي أُنَّ أَمِنَّي مَأْوَىٰ عَدُونَ (أَخْرِجْهُ مُسْلِمُ)}
\end{quote}

Abū Mūsā \textsuperscript{2} stated, as part of a lengthy ḥadīth, that Allāh’s Prophet \textsuperscript{2} said, “My Companions are the security of my community. When my Companions pass away, to my community there will come that\textsuperscript{280} of which they were cautioned.” This was related by Muslim.\textsuperscript{281}

\textit{Questions: The Diffusion of the Blessings of the Godly to Others}

Scholars have pointed out that certain of the blessings of the godly may be classified as volitional, like their spiritual teaching and direction. Others of their blessings, however, are non-volitional in the sense that they occur without the godly intending for them to occur. These are things like their presence in the world being a source of mercy, or like their illumination passing on to seekers of the truth. This ḥadith appears to establish the validity of such non-volitional blessings.

\textbf{ḤADĪTH 180}

\begin{quote}
\textit{عَنْ بُرِيَّةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم: "أَيَا بِلَالٍ! يَمِينُ سَبْقَتْنِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ؟ فَأَدْخَلَتْ الْجَنَّةَ فَإِلَّا سَيِّعَتْ تَحْفَتْكَ أَماَّمِي" فَقَالَ: يَارَسُولُ اللَّهِ!

ما أَدْخَلْتْ فَإِلَّا سَيِّيْبِيْنُ رَكَعَتَنِي وَما أَدْخَلْتْ فَإِلَّا وَتَوَضَّأْتْ عَنْهُ وَرَأَيْتَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى رَكَعَتَنِي فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: "يِبَّا" (أَخْرِجْهُ الْبَرْمِدِيَ وَصَحَحَهُ)}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{279} i.e., the fact that they had actually been in the presence of the Prophet \textsuperscript{2} and were thus deserving of the name Companion, \textit{sahāba}, and everything that that name entails (as elaborated in the works of theology, ‘\textit{aqida}). YTD.

\textsuperscript{280} The apparent meaning here is that once the Companions are no more, the community will be beset by all manner of temptations and corruption. And, indeed, history bears witness to exactly that. YTD.

\textsuperscript{281} Muslim: 2531
Burayda related that Allāh’s Prophet said, “O Bilāl! By means of what [deeds] have you preceded me to Paradise? For I had barely entered Paradise when I heard your footsteps in front of me!” He replied, “O Allāh’s Prophet! Never did I make the call to prayer except that I also performed two cycles of prayer. And never did I break ritual purity except that I immediately performed ablutions and then considered myself responsible to Allāh for two cycles of prayer.” This was related by Tirmidhi who declared the hadith a sound one.

Questions: Dispelling False Notions Arising from Visions

Certain travellers on the Sufi Way have experienced visions in which they apparently take precedence over the prophets and messengers of Allāh. If the traveller is ignorant, such visions may lead him to religious ruination. If the traveller is learned, however, he will immediately understand that what he has witnessed is theologically impossible and will accordingly attempt to interpret his vision. In the hadith above, Bilāl’s precedence represents the most advanced degree of a servile relationship with Allāh’s Prophet. From all of this, the importance of an education in the Shari’a sciences should be obvious. It was perhaps for this reason that Sa’di wrote the following verses:

Now, an ignoramus musing in seclusion,
Later, a victim stricken by his own delusion.

Hadith 181

282 The “preceding” spoken of in this hadith is of the nature of a servant’s preceding his master. Of course, to be the servant of the Prophet is in itself one of the greatest of honours.

283 Clearly, Allah’s Prophet, Allah bless him and give him peace, was not speaking literally as entrance to Paradise will occur after the Day of Judgement. Even so, the Prophet, from time to time, was granted glimpses into the Afterworld by the Almighty so that he could then tell his followers about the glories of the world to come.

284 The author explains here that Bilāl’s use of the expression “considered myself responsible...” was actually an idiomatic expression for his constancy in this practice. He did not mean to say that these two extra cycles were in any way binding or wajib, as that would imply that Bilāl had the ability to legislate for himself; and that is clearly the prerogative of the Almighty alone!

285 Tirmidhi: 3689
Anas related that Usayd ibn Ɂuḍayr and Ɂabbād ibn Bishr were with Allāh’s Prophet on a dark night. When they left him and went outside two lights were there directly in front of them. When the two men parted company, a light went with each one of them. This was related by Bukhārī.²⁸⁶

States: Miracles
The miracle that occurred in relation to both of these Companions is recorded in this hadith. Since there is consensus that miracles are not the exclusive domain of the Companions, this hadith may be adduced as evidence in support of the occurrence of miracles in general.

Hadīth 182

‘A’isha reported, “Abū Bakr came to see Allah’s Prophet and when he did, the Prophet said to him, ‘Rejoice! For Allah has set you free from the Fire!’” She added, “Thereafter, Abū Bakr was called ‘Atiq, or freed.” This was related by Bukhārī.²⁸⁷

Behaviour: Giving Good Tidings to Aspirants
It is the habit of most masters, when their students attain a spiritual objective, or acquire a praiseworthy state, to inform them of the same. This hadith indicates that to do so is in accordance with the Sunna. There are many benefits in doing this, including the easing of worry, strengthening resolve to do good deeds, and increasing the aspirant’s love for the Almighty Benefactor and the one who facilitated those benefits.

Customs: Giving Names to Aspirants
It has been recorded and witnessed that spiritual masters will sometimes begin calling an aspirant by a name that is appropriate to the aspirant’s specific cir-

²⁸⁶ Bukhārī: 3805
²⁸⁷ Tirmidhī: 3679
²⁸⁸ i.e. the aspirant’s spiritual guide or master. YTD.
cumstances. Sometimes, then, he may call him king, for instance, or something else. The hadith above, in which Abū Bakr is called Ātiq, clearly advocates this custom.

**HADITH 183**


Abū Huraira reported that Allāh’s Prophet said [as part of a lengthy hadith], “I have never known Islam to go to anyone except that the person stumbled, other than Abū Bakr. For he never once wavered.” Tirmidhī related this hadith. 289

Questions: The Reality of True Friendship

The scholars who have explained the reality of true friendship, those who have developed a thorough understanding of this state through their familiarity with Islamic theological theory, have found themselves so influenced by this state that the performance of their devotions automatically improved. This hadith would appear to indicate the same. In regard to people who have experienced the reality of true friendship, theory becomes self-evident and devotions become habitual. The first of these transformations is actually the result of Divine power, while the second is the result of the perfection of character. It is only the second of these that spells true spiritual perfection. 291

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289 This report is not found in Tirmidhī. Kanz al-‘Ummāl: 32609

290 Abū Bakr was best known as al-Siddiq or the True Friend. The reality of true friendship or Siddiqiyah, then, is a reference to the spiritual station that Abū Bakr had attained through his friendship with the Prophet. As such, Abū Bakr has come to represent the ideal for this particular spiritual state. Abū Bakr was not only one of the Prophet’s oldest friends, but he was also the friend who stood beside him throughout every trial and every hardship of his mission to humankind. The root of the word, ṣ-d-q, in the Arabic language is an infinitive that means to keep faith with, to be truthful, and to be sincere. Thus, the spiritual state known as siddiqiyah, or “true friendship” is one of exceeding perfection in which its possessor combines the elements of truth, faith and sincerity. YTD.

291 Here, the author explains that while Allah may grant a degree of Siddiqiyah to someone, perfection may only come about through the efforts of the individual. Obviously, while Abū Bakr was endowed by Allāh with many of the qualities that constitute “true friendship”, it was through his own toil and perseverance that he attained the highest degree of that particular spiritual station. YTD.
Abū 'l-Darda' said, “I was sitting with Allāh's Prophet when Abū Bakr approached...” In the same hadith, he said, “So the Prophet said [to a Companion who had spoken disrespectfully of Abū Bakr], ‘Verily, Allāh sent me to you and you [at first] said, “You lie!” while Abū Bakr said, “You tell the truth!” and he made me his equal with regard to his life and his wealth. So, will you please refrain from tormenting my friend!’” [Abū 'l-Darda' said,] He repeated this two or three times. Thereafter, he [Abū Bakr] was not picked upon. This was related by al-Bukhārī.

**Hadith 185**

Ibn 'Umar said that Allāh's Prophet said, “Verily, Allāh Almighty has put the truth on the tongue of 'Umar, and in his heart.” Ibn 'Umar said, “Never did a matter occur to the people in which they voiced their
opinions and 'Umar voiced his except that revelation came through the Qur'an confirming the opinion of 'Umar! This was related by Tirmidhi.\footnote{293 Tirmidhi: 3682}

States: Inspiration and Spiritual Intuition
Both of these states are indicated by the ḥadith above and, in reality, are categories of spiritual vision, kashf.

\textbf{ḤADĪTH 186}

Ibn 'Umar, in answer to the insinuations of a certain Egyptian concerning 'Uthmān, said [among other things in a lengthy ḥadith], “As to his not being present at the Pledge of al-Riḍwān,\footnote{294 There was, at the time, a need for someone to go and negotiate with the Makkan idolators, someone who was himself a respected and important Makkan and thus not likely to be killed by the Makkans, someone like 'Uthmān.} if there was anyone more revered by the people of Makka, that person would have been sent.\footnote{295 The message that 'Uthmān carried from the Prophet, Allah bless him and give him peace, was that the Muslims had come as pilgrims in peace for the purpose of performing the Hajj, and not as an army determined to attack Makka and take it by force. The Pledge of al-Ridwan that is alluded to here was the pledge of obedience given by the Companions who had set out from Madina for the purpose of performing the Hajj. The significance of the pledge was that it bore witness to the faith of the Companions whose faith was tested when the Prophet, Allah bless him and give him peace, agreed to the terms of the Makkans by postponing their visit to Makka for another year, thereby greatly disappointing the Muslims. \textit{YTD.}} But the Pledge of al-Riḍwān took place after 'Uthmān had left [to go on his mission to Makka]. Allah's Prophet while holding his left hand in his right, said\footnote{296 This is what the Prophet said to those gathered for the Pledge. \textit{YTD.}} of his left hand, “This is the hand of 'Uthmān!” In this manner, the left hand of the Prophet that was for 'Uthmān was
better\textsuperscript{297} than all of the right hands [of those present]. This was related by Bukhārī and Tirmidhī.\textsuperscript{298}

\textit{Behaviour: Pledging in absentia}

Many masters observe the practice of accepting pledges, \textit{bay'ah}, from aspirants who are not physically present. All of this was discussed previously in my commentary on ḥadith [68].

\textit{Customs: Placing the Master's Hand over the Aspirant's while Pledging}

It is the practice of some Sufi masters to place their own hand above the hand of the aspirant while taking the pledge of their allegiance to him. The words in the ḥadith above would seem to indicate the validity of this practice. Likewise, the verse in the Qur'ān: \textit{The hand of Allāh is over their hands}\textsuperscript{299} (48:10) would appear to indicate the same. Doubts may arise from the words of the ḥadith indicating that it was the left hand of the aspirant that was used, when the practice among Sufis is that the aspirant places his right hand in the right hand of the master. These may be dispelled when we see that the holding of the left hand was by necessity only. Otherwise, the words of the ḥadith, “... better than all of the right hands,” clearly indicate the right hands of both parties are to be used for the pledge. Whatever the case, the physical arrangement is not the important thing here. In fact, even if there is no hand-clasp at all, the pledge may still take place, as in the case of the pledge of a woman aspirant, or one that takes place in absentia. The essential element is the verbal expression of allegiance. Otherwise, in many cases, rather than the master's hand, aspirants will be asked to grasp his clothing, or his turban, or the like.

\textit{ḤADĪTH 187}

\begin{quote}
\begin{center}
\textit{عن أبي عمر رضي الله عنّه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم جبن جهنم}\
\end{center}
\end{quote}

\begin{addendum}
\item \textsuperscript{297} Even though 'Uthmān \textsuperscript{4} was not physically present, the Prophet \textsuperscript{4} used his own hand to represent 'Uthmān's \textsuperscript{4} hand. In this manner, 'Uthmān \textsuperscript{4} took the pledge even though he was not present. YTD.
\item \textsuperscript{298} Bukhārī: 4066, Tirmidhī: 3706
\item \textsuperscript{299} This verse was revealed on the occasion of the \textit{Bay'at al-Ridwān}, and begins with the words: “Behold, all who pledge their allegiance to you pledge their allegiance to Allāh.” Thus, the simple hand-clasp takes on the further significance of pledging one's allegiance, or committing one's self, body and soul, firstly to the master, or to the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace, and then, by extension, to the Almighty Himself. Those who ridicule the Sufi way would do well to reflect on the symbolic nature of these practices, and on how that symbolism was a part of the practices of the Prophet \textsuperscript{4} and his Companions \textsuperscript{4}. YTD.
\end{addendum}
Ibn 'Umar stated that Allāh's Prophet said at the time preparations for the campaign known as al-'usrah were being made: "Regardless of what he does after this, 'Uthmān has nothing to worry about! Regardless of what he does after this, 'Uthmān has nothing to worry about!" This was related by Tirmidhi.

Questions: Perfect Masters who Abandon Spiritual Disciplines
Since Sufi masters who have attained spiritual perfection are constantly involved in devotions, whether openly or otherwise, which are of the highest degree and thus bring them very close to the Almighty, if they no longer practise the basic sorts of spiritual disciplines this will not cause them any difficulties. The ḥadīth above would seem to indicate this.

**ḤADĪTH 188**

Jābir said, "Allāh's Prophet called for 'Āli at the Battle of Tā'īf and then had a whispered conversation with him. People began talking among themselves about how long the conversation with his nephew had become. At that, the Prophet declared, 'I have not whispered to him. Allāh whispered to him!'" This was related by Tirmidhi.

Questions: Unicity in Praxis
In the writings of the Sufis one may find the deeds of both the most accom-

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300 These preparations included major contributions of money and supplies donated by 'Uthmān, may Allah be pleased with him.

301 This campaign, leading to the Battle of Tabūk, was known as al-'usrah owing to the difficulties and hardships endured by those who took part in it. YTD.

302 Tirmidhi: 3700

303 It should be obvious the disciplines referred to here are not required or even recommended acts of worship but rather the extra spiritual disciplines prescribed for aspirants by the Order or the Sheikh. YTD.

304 Tirmidhi: 3726
plished worshippers and the deeds of ordinary worshippers ascribed to the Almighty. Such deeds are termed *tawhid-e-af'ali* or unicity in praxis. These are also indicated by the phrase: ‘There is no Doer other than Allāh.’ In the ḥadith above, the statement, ‘I am not whispering to him. Allāh is whispering to him!’ clearly indicates the first sort of unicity in praxis. The effective cause here is occurrence by means of the Divine will. In the same way that an effective cause may be identified for a legal matter, the same may also be done for a natural matter. Then, by analogy, the second sort of unicity in praxis may be explained. In the Qur’ān it is written: “It was not you who slew the enemy, but it was Allāh Who slew them” (8:17) and “It was not you who shot [the arrows], but it was Allāh Who shot them” (8:17).

In these verses, a natural matter would appear to be the nexus of the effective cause. However, from a theological perspective, the belief that what is essential and what is merely possible are one and the same is heretical in the same way that denial of the will of the individual is heretical. It is for this reason that Junayd of Baghdad made his well-known statement; “If I had the power, then any person who said (in an attempt to excuse his unlawful behaviour) that there is no Doer other than Allāh, would have his head cut off!” The reason for such an extreme punishment in that instance is that the person using that excuse is actually undermining the Shari‘a.

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305 There are a number of issues here for the consideration of the reader. Obviously, at many levels, tasawwuf and theology converge; and it is for this reason that the author always dealt with his aspirants and their spiritual development in accordance with the level of their knowledge of Shari‘a, by which he meant the classical Shari‘a sciences and disciplines, including theology. The question of free will from an Islamic theological perspective is not an easy matter to understand. However, in essence, Islam teaches that humans are endowed with free will and that they will be judged on the basis of the deeds they choose to do in their lifetimes. At the same time, however, the source of all deeds, of all that happens on earth and in heaven, is the Almighty. What the ḥadith indicates, and what the author is speaking of in his commentary, is that at times the will of the servant and the will of the Almighty become as one, such that there is a unicity of wills; and then the deeds, or praxis, of the servant become one with the deeds of the Almighty. The author is careful to point out, however, that such a unicity does not mean that the servant and the Almighty are, or become, one in their persons. To hold such a belief is clearly heretical. This also explains why the author has quoted Junayd here. YTD.

306 i.e., that he acts of his own volition. YTD.

307 It may further be pointed out here that it is ignorance of the Shari‘a sciences that has led so many Sufi aspirants, regardless of how good their intentions might have been, to go astray and, in doing so, to give tasawwuf a bad name. As questions of theology are often so complex, even Sufis who have not gone astray have appeared that way to the general public and, in some cases, to rulers and judges with disastrous results. Generally speaking, it is best to leave theology to the theologians. Those who equate theology with religion do themselves, and their religion, a great disservice. YTD.
Questions: Concern for the Welfare of Family\textsuperscript{310}
Certain ignorant people, observing that a master is concerned about his family, suppose that the master is less than completely accomplished. The hadith above indicates clearly that such concern is in fact a part of the Sunna. At the same time, it should be obvious that excess in this regard, like excess in most matters, is indicative of a degree of spiritual inadequacy.

Miscellaneous: Service to the Family of a Master is Service to the Master Himself
In the hadith above, those who cared for the Mothers of the Faithful were referred to as highly devoted and accomplished. Such a characterisation is indicative of how service to a master's family shows the degree of a person's relationship with the master. Service of this kind is very nearly a matter of second nature among the true Sufis.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{308} i.e., for the way that he had cared for the wives of the Prophet.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{309} Tirmidhi: 3749}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{310} This is the abbreviated form of the title. The entire title reads as follows: Concern for the Welfare of Family does not Negate Spiritual Perfection on Condition that it Remain within the Bounds of Equity and Kindness. YTD.}
States: Dreams That Come True
Seeing in dreams events that later come true is a praiseworthy spiritual state. The hadith attests to this because the event witnessed in the dream occurred at the same time as Umm Salama &dreamt about it.

Questions: The Presence of the Spirit
After the soul leaves the physical world, when its original place is elsewhere, then if by Allāh’s leave it should be allowed to return to the physical world, then this is possible. For example, the blessed soul of the Prophet & was witnessed on the field of battle after his death. Moreover, as there is no evidence to indicate otherwise, there is no need to interpret such reports or to suppose them to be metaphorical. Rather, these may be understood literally.

**Hadith 190**

Salma &, a woman of the Anṣār, stated, “I went to see Umm Salama & and discovered her crying, so I asked, ‘Why are you crying?’ She replied that she had just then seen Allāh’s Prophet & in a dream, with dirt on his head and beard, and he was crying. When she asked him why he was crying, he replied, ‘I have just now witnessed the martyrdom of al-Husayn &.’” This was related by Tirmidhī.
‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Zayd stated, “I asked Ḥudhayfah if he knew someone who resembled the Prophet in terms of his manner, his ways, and his conduct; someone from whom we may learn. He replied, ‘I know of no one who more resembled the Prophet in terms of his manner, his ways, and his conduct, than Ibn Umm ‘Abd, as long as he stands in the shade of his house.’” This was related by Bukhārī and Tirmidhī.

Behaviour: Taking on the Aspect of the Master
In certain of the stories told about Sufis it is mentioned how aspirants, far from confining themselves to emulating their masters in matters of worship, have also sought to be like their masters in their dress, in their dining habits, and even in the ways that they walk and talk. For many Sufis such emulation becomes second nature and habitual, so that they do it without even intending to do so. The connection between aspirant and master often becomes so strong that it may be described by the following verses of poetry:

I become you, then, you become me, just so.
I become body and you become soul. And so,
After this than me none will say you’re other
Or that I am other than you, you know.

The Ḥadīth above clearly indicates this sort of behaviour. Whether or not ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd intended to resemble the Prophet his doing so was praiseworthy as is evident from the Ḥadīth. On the other hand, if he did intend to do so, then that was clearly a good thing.

ḤADĪTH 192

In his narration of the story of how he converted to Islam, Abū Dharr stated, “I lingered thirty days and nights without sustenance other than the

312 This last part of Hudhayfah’s statement is indicative of the prudence exhibited by the Companions in giving witness. In other words, Hudhayfah was saying that he could attest to the resemblance only in terms of what was apparent to him in regard to Ibn Mas‘ūd, as he was not privy to knowledge of what went on inside.

313 Bukhārī: 3765, Tirmidhī: 3807
water of Zamzam. But I grew fat from it, so that my belly button protruded and I could sense no traces of hunger.” This was related by Muslim.\textsuperscript{314}

**Miscellaneous: Remaining without Nourishment**

Certain ascetic Sufis have claimed the ability to fast for forty days, or to so limit their intake of nourishment for days and weeks on end at levels that under normal circumstances would hardly be expected to sustain life. Hearing such claims, shortsighted critics of Sufism have responded with scepticism. The hadith above, in which Abū Dharr speaks of his own experience, counters all such attempts at doubt and denial. If one were to counter by saying that it was Zamzam water he drank, it may be pointed out that even if it was Zamzam water, what Abū Dharr described is not natural. Water simply does not have the nutrients required for this.\textsuperscript{315} What Zamzam does possess, however, are blessings; then, if someone who remembers Allāh often drinks Zamzam and brings blessings to himself, then what is so strange about that?

**Hadith 193**

\textit{‘Abū Dhar r. t. said, “The Throne was shaken.”} and in another version, he said, “The Throne of the Merciful was shaken . . . at the death of Sa’d ibn Mu‘ādh.” This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim and Tirmidhī.\textsuperscript{316}

**States: Miracle**

This hadith attributes what was clearly a miracle to one of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ.

**Hadith 194**

\textit{Abū ‘Amir r. t. of Allāh said, “I lost my sight, then Allāh gave me sight.”}
Anas stated, “When the funeral bier of Sa‘d ibn Mu‘ādh was lifted, the hypocrites remarked, ‘How light is his funeral bier!’ referring to his ruling in regard to the Qurayzah tribe. When this [disparaging comment] reached Allāh’s Prophet, he said, ‘That’s because there were angels to carry it.’” This was related by Tirmidhi.

States: Miracle

This ḥadīth, too, records a significant miracle.

**Ṣuwā‘ al-Dīn:**

Anas stated, “When the funeral bier of Sa‘d ibn Mu‘ādh was lifted, the hypocrites remarked, ‘How light is his funeral bier!’ referring to his ruling in regard to the Qurayzah tribe. When this [disparaging comment] reached Allāh’s Prophet, he said, ‘That’s because there were angels to carry it.’” This was related by Tirmidhi.

Abū Mūsā stated, “Allāh’s Prophet said to me, ‘If only you had seen me this morning as I listened to your recitation [of the Qur’ān]! Surely, you have been granted a musical instrument from among the musical instruments of the family of Dāwūd!’ This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim and Tirmidhī. In the version related from al-Burqānī by Muslim, the following words are included: “By Allāh! Had I known that you were listening to my recitation, I would have inked it for you in bold letters!”

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317 See ḥadīth [162] for details of his decision.
318 Tirmidhī: 3849
319 The Prophet Dāwūd was famed as a lyricist and was the author of the Zabur, or the Psalms of the Bible. YTD.
320 Bukhārī: 5048, Muslim: 793, Tirmidhī: 3855
321 The meaning here is that Abū Mūsā told the Prophet that he would have beautified and embellished his recitation had he known that the Prophet himself was listening to him. The verb used in Muslim’s version is h-b-r, which means to beautify, to adorn, or to embellish language, speech, recitation, and even meaning. The word for ink, ḥibr, is derived from this root because the written word embellishes speech. While there is no reason for me to revert to this meaning in my translation, I have done so in recognition of the ink of the scholars and the blood of the martyrs. YTD.
322 Al-Burqānī’s addition has been narrated by Abū Ya‘lā in his Musnad, as quoted in Fath al-Bārī: 9:114
Questions: Perfecting Performance for Another

In order to please a pious person or an elder, one’s extra exertions may appear at first glance to be no more than posturing and hypocrisy. However, since the effort to please the pious or, for that matter, any believer is actually in itself an act of worship, then when this is coupled with another act of worship this can in no way be considered posturing when it is done with sincerity. The hadith above clearly indicates approval for this. For some time, this uninformed one held the suspicion that perhaps it was not a good thing when people went to extra lengths to recite the Qur’an beautifully when requested by others to recite it. Thank Allah, the subtleties of this hadith have found their way into my heart and put that suspicion to rest! Upon deeper consideration of this hadith, another virtue of the pious may be ascertained. For, indeed, to seek their pleasure is like seeking the pleasure of the Almighty. The reason for this is that their pleasure is actually a means to the pleasure of the Almighty. In other words, what is really being sought by the aspirant is the pleasure of the Almighty. The relevant maxim here is: Effort expended along the way is effort expended toward achieving the objective.

Hadith 196

Anas ibn Malik stated that Allah’s Prophet said, “How many people are there with dishevelled hair, and covered in dust, who possess no more than the clothes on their backs so that no one takes notice of them; yet if they swear something by Allah, the Almighty will bring it to pass. Among such people is al-Bara’ ibn Malik.” This was related by Tirmidhi.324

Virtues: Allah’s Acceptance of the Pious

This hadith clearly points to Allah’s acceptance of those who dedicate their lives to the pleasure of the Almighty. The initial description, dusty and dishevelled, should not be understood as conditional, as certain ignorant ones would have us believe. Rather, what the hadith expresses is that appearance has nothing

323 I have abbreviated this heading. The original Persian reads: How Perfecting the Performance of an Act (of Devotion) in Order to Please the Pious is not posturing. YTD.
324 Tirmidhi: 3854
to do with spiritual perfection. It is the wealthy and the prideful who would have us believe that the poor are somehow less than we are.

**Hadith 197**

Abū Hurairah stated, “I said, ‘O Allāh’s Prophet! I hear you say many things, but I do not remember them.’ He replied, ‘Spread your cloak.’ So I spread it open. Then he related many things to me and I forgot none of them!” This was related by Bukhāri and Muslim. It was also related by Tirmidhi, and these are the words of his version.

**Hadith 198**

‘Amir ibn Sa’d related from his father who said, “The Prophet of Allāh entered the masjid of Banū Mu‘āwiyyah and prayed two cycles, while we prayed with him. Then he a supplicated his Lord for a long time before getting up and coming over to us. He then said, ‘I asked my Lord for three things, and He granted me two of them and refused one. I asked Him not to destroy my ummah all at once in a general famine, and He granted me that. Then I asked Him not to destroy my ummah in a flood, and He granted me that. Then I asked Him not to set my ummah against itself, and He refused to grant me that.”’ This hadith was related by Muslim.
Reform: The Possibility that the Prayers of the Spiritually Adept May Go Unanswered

This hadith lays bare the folly of the belief that the prayers of the spiritually adept will always be answered. Such a conviction inevitably leads to excesses in practice and belief.

**Hadith 199**

ʿUmar ʿAbdu ʿllāh ibn ʿAbdullāh ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbdullāh, 328 related that the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ said: “Do not hate me, for that will take you from your religion.” So I [Salman] asked, “How could I hate you, 0 Prophet of God, when it was through you that God guided me?” He replied, “Hate the Arabs, and you will hate me.” This was related by al-Tirmidhi.328

**Miscellaneous: Showing Respect for the People of a Master’s Homeland**

Among the common customs of the Sufis is that they develop natural feelings of affection and respect for the people of their master’s homeland, and that they treat them accordingly. This hadith is indicative of the same fact. How well the poet expressed this:

People and places engage my affections but,
Lovers will love whatever they will, you see.

**Hadith 200**

ʿUmar ʿAbdu ʿllāh ibn ʿAbdullāh, 328 stated that the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ said: “There will come to you one Uways ibn ʿAmir...” In the same hadith, he said, “If you can ask him to seek forgiveness for you, then do so.” This was related by Muslim.329

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328 Tirmidhi: 3927
329 Muslim: 2542
Questions: A Master’s Deriving Benefit from One Less Accomplished
In the same way that the less accomplished may benefit from those more accomplished than themselves, the more accomplished may benefit from those less accomplished than themselves. In this hadith, ‘Umar, who was a Companion of high standing was advised to seek to benefit in a particular way from Uways, who was of the successor generation. Similarly, a master will sometimes benefit from an aspirant, in terms of knowledge, or spiritual states, or character, or supplication. Therefore, no master should ever suppose himself superior in every respect to those around him.

Hadith 201

Al-Musayyab ibn Ḥazan stated that it was in regard to Abū Talib that the verse was revealed: ‘Verily, you guide not whom you love; but it is Allah who guides whomsoever He wills.’ 33

This hadith was related by Bukhārī, Muslim and Nasā’ī.

Reform: The Masters Cannot Necessarily Dispose of Affairs as they Choose
Many people mistakenly suppose that the masters are capable of disposing of their affairs in whatever way they wish. Some of these people go as far as suppling the masters, both living and dead, in the same way that they supplicate the Almighty. This hadith and the verse it mentions clearly refute such a notion. 332

Hadith 202

Anas stated that the Prophet of Allah said, “Verily, ‘Uḥud is a mountain that loves us; and we love it!” This was related by Abū Dāwūd, Nasa’ī, Ibn Mājah and Tirmidhī. 333

330 Al-Qur’an, 28:56
331 Bukhārī: 4772, Muslim: 24, Nasā’ī: 2037
332 Obviously, such supplication is akin to according to others attributes that reside exclusively with the Divine. This is also known as shirk, and is the most overt kind of disbelief possible. YTD.
333 Bukhārī: 4083, Muslim: 1393, Tirmidhī: 3922, Ibn Mājah: 3115. A report with these words could not
Question: Sense Perception on the Part of Inanimate Objects  
As there is nothing in the text to indicate that other than the literal meaning is intended here, the words “that loves us” should be understood as meaning just that. As an issue related to spiritual perception, we may deduce that inanimate objects can sense things since love is based on sensing, in the same way that, “and we love it,” is by consensus to be understood literally. Finally, this is an issue for conjecture and not to be taken as a core belief or an article of faith.

Hadīth 203

Abū Huraira related that the Prophet of Allāh a.s. said that God Almighty stated, “Whosoever acts with enmity toward those who are close to Me, I will declare war upon that person! Nothing that My servant does to gain proximity to Me is more loved by Me than his performing the things I have commanded [him to perform]. Indeed, as he continues to seek My favour through the performance of supererogatory acts of worship, I will eventually come to love him. Then, when I love him, I become the ears with which he hears, the eyes with which he sees, the hand with which he strikes, and the feet with which he walks.” This hadīth was related by Bukhārī.

Virtues: The Rank of the Sufi  
This hadīth clearly indicates the rank of the Sufis.

Questions: Protection from Sin  
It is a well-known article of faith that the prophets are free of sin while the saints [those most devoted to God] are protected from the same. The words of the hadīth, even in translation, are meant to convey this meaning.

be found in Abū Dawūd.
**Hadith 204**

Ibn 'Abbas related that the Prophet of Allah said, “One night, a presence from my Lord presented itself...” In another version of the hadith, he said, “My Lord presented Himself... in the most excellent form.” This was related by Tirmidhi.335

*Explanations: The Appearance of the Almighty in Creation without Indwelling and the Meaning of Unification*

In Sufi literature the two expressions in the (above) title indicate special terminology. The reality of the first term is that the form and characteristics of the Almighty will sometimes appear in creation without actually being present, in the same way that a writer may be present in his writings, or a speaker in his speeches. In this manner, creation may be thought of as the manifestation and the Almighty may be thought of as the Manifestor. The reality of the second term is that there is such a powerful connection between the Manifestor and the manifestation that it is impossible to differentiate between the two. Both of these terms (and the issues that surround them) are based on reason (as opposed to revelation). Even so, the expressions (used to allude to these terms) are disconcerting to a degree. After the meaning of the terms has been explained, however, it should become clear following careful consideration that the hadith may indeed indicate the same. Therefore, “a presence from my Lord” may be understood to correspond with the first term, while “My Lord presented Himself” may be understood to correspond with the second. Also, if the preposition “from” is understood to be exclusive,336 then the words “in the most excellent form” may likewise be understood as indicative of the second term because in the confusion over the separated form it becomes necessary to call the unmanifested a manifestation. In this manner, a syntactical connection comes about between the unmanifested and the manifestation. Furthermore, if the two versions of the hadith are to be understood as two different events, it is still possible338 to deduce the same meaning from “in the most excellent form”. It must be noted, however,

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335 Tirmidhi: 3233
336 i.e. such that the presence could only have come from the Lord. YTD.
337 The separated form is the presence of the Lord presenting itself, whereas the direct form is that of the Lord presenting Himself. YTD.
338 i.e. owing to the strength of the connection. YTD.
that it is not correct to assign the words “manifestation” and “unification” literal meanings, in the way that many of the ignorant public insist on doing, thus corrupting their beliefs. I have written on these matters in detail in my Kalid-i-Mathnawi (commentary on Rumi’s Mathnawi).

**Hadīth 205**

Abū Huraira related that the Prophet of Allah said that on the Day of Judgment, the Almighty will say to certain people, “I was ill and you did not come to visit Me.” When the people reply, “But, O Lord! How could I visit You, when You are the Lord of the Worlds?” The Lord will say, “Did you not know that My servant, so-and-so, was ill? Yet you did not visit him. Had you gone to visit him, you might have found Me with him.” Then the same questions will be asked in relation to food and drink. This was related by Muslim.

**Explanations: “Unification” with the Aforementioned Meaning**

In the previous hadīth an explanation of (the term linked to) this expression was given. In this hadīth, when the Lord refers to His servant’s illness as His own, “I was ill…” the meaning of that term is clarified even further. Moreover, if the sick person is understood to be a particularly favoured servant of the Lord, then the meaning of the hadīth supports the well known teaching of the Sufis that sometimes this sort of unification is afforded to certain of the Almighty’s special servants and devotees. The words in the hadīth, “… you might have found Me with him,” are also recorded in other versions of the hadīth to say: “… you might have found the same with Me.” Actually, the second version is an explanation of the first, in that it offers a warning that such expressions are metaphorical.
in nature and should not be taken literally because a literal interpretation will lead to faulty beliefs. I have alluded to the same thing in my commentary on the previous hadith [204].

\section*{Hadith 206}
\begin{quote}

\textit{Abū Huraira Related, in the hadith about the seven people who would be shaded by the Almighty on the Day of Judgment, that the Prophet of Allāh said, \ldots and two people who love one another for the sake of Allah, who came together because of Him and who depart because of Him.} This was related in each of the Six Most Authentic collections, save that of Abū Dāwūd.\end{quote}

\section*{Virtues: Brothers on the Way}

While the love between a master and an aspirant may certainly be of this nature, the love between two aspirants is an even better fit for this hadith.

\section*{Hadith 207}
\begin{quote}

\textit{‘Āsim al-Aḥwal stated: \ldots} So Anas wanted to replace the rim with one of silver or gold. Abū Ṭalḥah said, \ldots

\footnotesize

\begin{tabular}{l}
341 Buhārī: 1423, Muslim: 1031, Tirmidhi: 2391, Nasā‘i: 5382, \textit{Muwatta}': pg. 377 \\
342 Note here that the rim, the part that touches the lips, was not silver. YTD.
\end{tabular}

\end{quote}
change anything that the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ did, and then left behind.”
This was related by Bukhārī.\(^\text{343}\)

**Customs: Preserving Blessed Objects and Not Subjecting them to Alteration**
Most Sufis observe this practice by preserving in their original state, to the extent possible, whatever blessed objects they may possess. The showing of respect in this manner is considered a matter of etiquette by the Sufis.

**ḤADĪTH 208**

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عنَّ ابي سعِيَّد رضي الله عنَّه قالَ: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: “یوسُفُ أَن
یکُونُ خَيرَ مَا لَلْمُسْلِمِ عَنَّم بَتَبْعُهَا شَعَبُ الْجِبَالِ، وَمَواَقعُ الْقَفْرِ، وَقَمْرِدْنِیْهِ مِن
الْجِبَالِ.” (أخرجه البخاري ومالك وأبو داود والنسائي)
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Abū Saʿīd related that the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ said, “Soon [a time will come when] the best wealth owned by a Muslim will be a herd of goats with which he may dwell on the highest peaks of a mountain or the lowest of river beds [so that he may] flee with his religion [intact] from controversies.” This was related by Bukhārī, Mālik, Abū Dāwūd and Nasā’ī.\(^\text{344}\)

**Usages: Benefits of Seclusion**
Certain Sufis, when their circumstances require, will seek seclusion. The ḥadīth above appears to give permission for such isolation, and even to encourage it when society poses a threat to one’s religion.\(^\text{345}\)

**Earning a Living and Seeking Spiritual Advancement are Not Mutually Exclusive**
It should be clear that a herd of goats represents a means of living. Therefore, the intended meaning of the ḥadīth should also be clear, even if many people suppose wealth and religion to be exclusive of each other.

**ḤADĪTH 209**

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عنَّ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رضي الله عنَّه قالَ: كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يعْطِينُ الْعَظَّامَ
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\(^{343}\) Bukhārī: 5637  
\(^{344}\) Bukhārī: 19, Abū Dāwūd: 4267, Nasā’ī: 5039, Ibn Mājah: 3980, Muwatta’: pg. 382  
\(^{345}\) The noted scholar of taṣwīw, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī, wrote a treatise on the Virtues of Seclusion.
Ibn 'Umar said, “The Prophet of Allah used to give me gifts, and I would say, ‘Give this to someone who is in greater need of it than I.’ But then the Prophet would reply, ‘Take it, and whatever comes to you [as earnings] from it, so that you never covet [another’s wealth] and you never ask [for financial help from another]. Take it and invest it. Then, if you like, eat from it and, if you like, give it away as charity. And never set your heart on what will not come your way.” Then Sālim said, “It was for this reason that 'Abdullāh [Ibn 'Umar] never asked anyone for anything, and never returned any gift that was given to him.” This Ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī, Muslim and Nasā’ī.

**ḤADĪTH 210**

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khuḍrī related that the Prophet of Allah said, “The Dajjāl will come...” And later in that Ḥadīth, “The Dajjāl will say, ‘Don’t you see? If I kill this person and then revive him, will you still doubt me? And the people will say, “No.” So he will kill someone and then revive him.” This Ḥadīth was related by Bukhārī and Muslim.

*Reform: Not Being Deceived by Seeming Miracles*

Most people suppose seeming miracles to be signs of the godliness of those who perform them. This, however, is a serious mistake. Who could possibly be more lost than the Dajjāl? And what seeming miracle could be greater than reviving the dead? Yet, even though he will perform such a seeming miracle, no believer doubts that the Dajjāl has lost his way.

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346 Bukhārī: 7164, Muslim: 1045
347 Bukhārī: 7132, Muslim: 2938
In telling the story of Ibn Šayyād,148 Ibn ʿUmar related that the Prophet of Allah said to him [to Ibn Šayyād], “What do you see?” Then Ibn Šayyād replied, “Truthful ones come to me and liars.” So the Prophet said, “You are confused by the matter.” Then the Prophet said, “Can you tell me what I am thinking?”349 So Ibn Šayyād replied, “It is smo...”350 Then the Prophet replied, “Away with you! You’ll not surpass your station.” This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhi.351

Reform: Even the Deluded may Experience Visions and Insights

Like the preceding hadith, the meaning to be deduced from this hadith is that sometimes even the most deluded and disoriented of individuals may have spiritual insights and visions. Therefore, these must not be supposed to be signs of godliness. Instead, they may serve to mislead the naïve and trusting.

348 Ibn Šayyād was well-known among the Arabs of the times as something of a mystic. According to the reports, he was rarely lucid. Even so, his occasional insights had brought him a degree of popularity among the commoners. YTD.

349 What he said, literally, was: “I have hidden something for you,” challenging Ibn Šayyād to guess what it might be. Most commentators explain that the Prophet was thinking of a verse from the Qurʿān: So await the day on which the skies will bring forth a pall of smoke... (44:10).

350 I have translated the half word, dukh, as smo, as dukh is a part of dukhān and smo is a part of smoke. YTD.

351 Bukhārī: 1354, Muslim: 2924, Abū Dāwūd: 4329, Tirmidhi: 2246
Abū Hurairā related that the Prophet of Allah said, “Have you heard of a city, a part of which is on land and a part of which is on the sea?” They replied, “Yes.” Then he said, “The Day of Judgment will not come until that city has been attacked by seventy thousand warriors from the tribe of Iṣḥāq who, when they approach it, will neither fight with their weapons nor shoot their arrows. Rather, when they recite, ‘There is no god but Allāh, and Allāh is the Greatest’ the part of the city over the water will collapse; and when they again recite, ‘There is no god but Allāh, and Allāh is the Greatest,’ the part of the city on land will collapse.” This was related by Muslim.\(^353\)

Questions: The Occurrence of Miracles

Certain scholars with rationalist leanings deny the occurrence of miracles at the hands of God’s special devotees. This Ḥadīth tells of a patently evident miracle that is to occur at the hands of the tribe of Iṣḥāq.

\(\text{ḤADĪTH 213}\)

‘Alī related that the Prophet of Allah said, “When my community has committed fifteen kinds of sins, it will be subjected to calamity…” Among the sins mentioned were those related to, “singing girls and musical instruments.” This was related by Tirmidhī.\(^353\)

Reform: The Prohibition of Popular Singing and Dancing

Certain ignorant Sufis have gone so far in their love of music as to frequent sessions in which both women and instruments are employed. The Ḥadīth clearly points to the prohibition of such things.
Mawlānā Ashraf 'Ali Thānawi

Hadīth 214

Narrated Ibn Shihab. ‘Amr ibn Al-Farab answered the Prophet, peace be upon him, and said: “Verily, there is an organ within the body such that when it is sound, the entire body is sound; and when it is corrupt the entire body is corrupt. Verily, that organ is the heart.” This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā’ī and Abū Dāwūd.354

Miscellaneous: The Core of the Sufi Way

Success on the Sufi way is linked to rectification of the aspirant’s heart. This hadīth explains why so much emphasis is given to this matter.

Hadīth 215

Abū Mas‘ūd al-Badrī related that the Prophet of Allāh prohibited the proceeds from the sale of a dog, the bride price of an adultress, and the offerings made to a soothsayer. This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Nasā’ī, Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah.355

Reform: Earning Money from Selling Charms

At the present time, many so-called Sufis are involved in these things. For example, they are lax about accepting offerings, even from women from the bazaars (of questionable occupation), and they earn money by selling talismans and charms. This hadīth clearly states that these are blameworthy practices.

Malik related that he had heard that Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ said, “The servant of God may lie or attempt to lie so that [every time he does so] a black mark is made on his heart; until finally his whole heart is blackened.” This was related by Malik.356

Sayings: Blackness of the Heart
Very often one may find in the works of the Sufi masters references to certain practices or other matters that will result in “blackening the heart.” This hadith may be taken as evidence for this sort of thing.

Asmā’ ﷺ related that the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ said, “One who attempts to show oneself in possession of what one does not really possess is like one who wears two false garments.” This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Nasā’i, and Tirmidhī.358

Reform: Pretending to be a Master by Appearing to be a Master
Since the words of the hadith “...what one does not really possess” are general359 they may be understood to include spiritual accomplishments. For this reason, the hadith may be understood as critical of those who, despite their lack of spirit-

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356 Muwatta’: pg. 388
357 The classical commentators point out that the reason for the dual here, i.e., “two false garments”, may be to point out that the person is falsifying two circumstances; firstly that he has nothing (is bereft of spiritual accomplishments) and secondly that he is incapable of giving to others (is incapable of instructing others in the way of the spirit). Other commentators are more literal in their explanations, saying that the reference is to the two customary garments worn by Arabs at the time, the upper and the lower garments; signifying that such a person was false from head to toe. YTD.
358 Bukhārī: 5219, Muslim: 2129, Abū Dāwūd: 4997, Nasā’i: 8921
359 The rule here, from theoretical jurisprudence (usūl al-fiqh), is that the words are general and therefore inclusive. Whereas, if they had been specific they would therefore be exclusive. In such instances, qualified commentators may include whatever they consider reasonable. YTD.
ual ability, persist in appearing to others by means of their speech or their actions as if they were the most accomplished of all spiritual masters. This is especially blameworthy when such people pretend that they are able to instruct others.

**Hadîth 218**

عَنْ مُعَذَّبِ بنُ أَنْسِ رَضِيَّ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «مِنْ تَرَكَ الْحَلَايِنَّ تَوَاضَعًا وَهُوَ يُقِدِّرُ عَلَيْهِ, دُعِّهِ اللَّهُ تَعَالَ يُومَ الْقِيَمَةِ عَلَى رَزَوْوَاتِ الْحَلَايِنِّي حَتَّى يُحْمِرَ مِنْ أُيُّ حَلَْلِي الإِيَّاَيِّ سَيَءَ بَيْضُهَا». (أَخْرَجَهُ الْتَرَمِيذِيِّ)

Mu’âdh ibn Anas related that the Prophet of Allah said, “Anyone who, out of humility, shuns fine clothing when they have the ability to wear it will be called by the Almighty on the Day of Judgment before all of creation and given the opportunity to choose whatever garments of faith they would like to wear.” This hadîth was related by Tirmidhi.

**Usages: Intentional Lack of Attention to One’s Appearance**

The practice of the Sufi masters in this regard differs. Some paid no attention either way, neither to their appearance nor to their disregard of the same. On the other hand, the attention or disregard of some Sufi masters was clearly intentional. In all cases, the matter hinges on their intentions for, after all, “actions are but by intentions”.

**Hadîth 219**

عَنْ أَبِي رَمَيْلِ قَالَ: حَدَّثَيْنِي اِبْنُ عَبَّاسِ رَضِيَّ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: لَمَّا حَرَجَتَ الْحَزَوْرِيَّةُ أُتِّبَاعُ عَلَيْ بِهِ فَقَالَ: إِنَّ هؤُلاءَ الْقُوَّمُ فَلِيِّسَ أَحْسَنُ مَايَكُونُ ثَانِيِي مِنْ حَلَْلِي الْيَمِينَ فَلِيِّسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا: مَرْحَبَ بِكَ يَا إِبْنُ عَبَّاسِ! مَا هذَهُ الْحَلَْلَةُ؟ قَلْتُ: مَا تَعْبِينُ عَلَيْ؟ لَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَحْسَنَ مَايَكُونُ مِنْ الْحَلَْلِيّ. (أَخْرَجَهُ أَبُو دَؤُودِ)

360 The “garments of faith” mentioned here are those that will be given in recompense for the degree of one’s faith. Then, in the same way that faith differs in terms of how it is practised, likewise the garments of faith will also differ in quality. The person in the hadîth may not necessarily be deserving of the finest of these garments, owing to the quality of his faith. However, owing to his humility in regard to dress, he will be given the choice of the very best garments of faith in the next world. YTD.

361 Tirmidhi: 2481
Abū Zumayl related that Ibn ʿAbbas said to him, “When the Harūrí tribe revolted, I went to ‘Ali and he told me to go to them. So I dressed in the best of my Yemenite clothing and, when we met they said, ‘Welcome, O son of ‘Abbas! What clothes are these?’ So I replied, ‘Don’t find fault with me. For, verily, I have seen the Prophet of Allah wearing clothes even finer than these.’” This was related by Abū Dāwūd.  

### Usages: Lack of Attention to One’s Appearance

The explanation of this ḥadīth may be found in the explanation of the previous ḥadīth [218]. This ḥadīth is evidence for the usage mentioned there. No one should entertain the doubt that this ḥadīth supports the position that constant attention must be paid to one’s appearance. This is because such attention would mean that a habit would have to be made of attending to one’s appearance, and that is clearly not a good thing. If, however, a special occasion requires that a master pay special attention to his appearance then there is no harm in that. The actual practice of the Prophet and his Companions was a lack of attention to their personal appearance; therefore the ḥadīth should be understood as indicating not disregard for their appearance but a lack of attention to such disregard.

### ḤADĪTH 220

ʿغن أبي رضي الله عنه قال: رآيت على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم نورين

(أخيره أصحاب السنن)

Abū Rimthah related that he saw two green garments on the Prophet of Allah. This was related by Abū Dāwūd, Nasāʾi, Ibn Mājah and Tirmidhī.  

### Usages: Wearing Clothing of the Same Colour

It is the regular practice of some Sufis to be dressed from head to toe in clothing of the same colour. Now, obviously, if they do this in order to show off, then it is blameworthy. On the other hand, if they do so out of some practical consideration, like if they find that clothing of one color or another shows less dirt and wears longer, then there is no problem with that.

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362 Abū Dāwūd: 4037  
363 Abū Dāwūd: 4065, Tirmidhī: 2812, Nasāʾi: 5321
HADITH 221

Abū Burda said, “I went to see 'A'ishah, and she took out for us a rough blanket and a thick izār, saying, ‘These are what the Prophet of Allāh was wearing when he was taken.’” This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd.

Usages: Wearing Wool

Some Sufis regularly wear woollen blankets. Indeed, it comes as no surprise to this insignificant one that some people say the name Sufi is derived from the word for wool, or šūf. Then, as long as this is done for reasons other than hypocrisy, this hadith may be said to be the source for such a practice.

HADITH 222

Ibn Mas'ūd related that the Prophet of Allāh said, “On the day that the Almighty spoke to Mūsā he was wearing woollen trousers, a woollen jubbah [floor-length shirt], a woollen blanket and woollen sleeves.” This was related by Tirmidhī.

Usages: Wool

This hadith, too, points in an ever more complete manner to what was mentioned in the commentary on the previous hadith [121].

364 Bukhārī: 3108, Muslim: 2080, Abū Dāwūd: 4036, Tirmidhī: 1733
365 Tirmidhī: 1734
**Hadith 223**

Sahl ibn Sa’d related that ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib went to Fātima... In this hadith, Fatima told ‘Ali to go to a certain Jewish merchant and buy flour from him. When ‘Ali was buying the flour, the Jewish merchant asked him, “Are you not the son-in-law of the one who claims to be God’s Prophet?” ‘Ali replied, “Yes.” Then the merchant said, “Then take your money. The flour is yours [for free].” This was related by Abū Dāwūd. 366

*Usages: Accepting Gifts and Favours from Disbelievers*

Some of those critical of Sufism have objected that the masters are known to have accepted gifts and favours from non-Muslims. This hadith shows that such objections are baseless. However, if such acceptance is linked to a corrupting factor, or if non-acceptance is linked to a good reason, then it will be better not to accept. Another point made clear by the hadith is that if someone’s reputation (as a master, for example) or someone’s relationship with someone who has such a reputation leads to another’s sincerely offering them a service or a favour, then there is no harm in their accepting because this will not place them in the position of “selling” their religion. However, if someone supposes that, owing to their own reputation or to their relationship with someone with such a reputation, they are deserving of favours, then that person is clearly guilty of hypocrisy and self-delusion.

**Hadith 224**

366 Abū Dāwūd: 1716
‘A’isha related an incident in which ‘Utbah [owing to his having had a son from an adulterous relationship with Zam’ah’s slave girl] instructed his brother, Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas to consider the child [in accordance with the pre-Islamic Arab custom] his nephew. [When Sa’d came to claim the child, Zam’ah’s son, ‘Abd ibn Zam’ah, objected, saying that the boy was his brother and his father’s son by the slave girl. When the matter was referred to the Prophet of Allah he noticed the strong resemblance between the boy and ‘Utbah. [Despite this circumstance, however,] he said, “The boy is yours [i.e., your father’s son and your brother], O ‘Abd ibn Zam’ah! For verily, a child belongs to its legitimate parents.” Thereafter, the Prophet ordered Sawdah bint Zam’ah [his wife and the daughter of Zam’ah] to cover herself when the boy was present [even though, in accordance with the Prophet’s decision, the boy was technically her brother]. This was related by Bukharî, Muslim, Abû Dâwûd, Nasa’î and Mâlik.

Usages: Avoiding for the Sake of Prudence What is Permitted

According to the Shari’â ruling, Sawdah was permitted to appear before this boy without covering. However, as a matter of prudence, the Prophet ruled that she cover herself. This clearly establishes the legitimacy of the practice of avoiding the lawful for the sake of prudence. However, to do so without a good reason, or to turn the matter over to one of belief, will clearly be a form of religious extremism.

HADITH 225

367 The legitimacy of the relationship between owner and slave was accorded precedence over the adulterous relationship. YTD.

368 If the boy was in fact her brother, then it would not have been necessary for Sawdah to cover herself in his presence. However, despite the Prophet’s ruling that Zam’ah was the boy’s legal father, and that the boy was therefore Sawdah’s legal brother, it was obvious that ‘Utbah was the boy’s birth father. This is why the Prophet took the precaution to ask Sawdah to cover herself in his presence. YTD.


370 Indeed, one of the better known Islamic legal axioms is sadd al-dharâ’ or obstruction of ostensibly legitimate means for illegitimate ends. YTD.

371 In other words, to make covering under those circumstances into a matter of faith is extremism. To cover, however, simply as a matter of prudence is a different matter entirely. It is the lack of appreciation for such subtleties that leads people into error. YTD.
Abū Huraira related that the Prophet of Allah saw a man chasing after a pigeon and said, “There goes a devil, chasing after another devil.” This was related by Abū Dāwūd.\(^{371}\)

**Sayings: Whatever Takes You from Remembrance of the Almighty is Your Devil**

Among the Sufis, this is a well-known teaching. In this hadith, the pigeon is referred to as a devil only because the man chasing it had forgotten about everything else, including the Almighty.\(^ {373}\)

**HADĪTH 226**

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: قال الله تعالى:

يُؤْفِيُّيَنِيُّ أَبِنَ آدم صُبْحَ الدُّهْرِ وآتَا الدُّهْرِ، يَبْتُدِيُّ الْمَأَمَة أَقْلَبُ الْلَّيْلِ وَالْيَوْمُ (أخرجه

الثالثة وأبو داود)\(^ {372}\)

Abū Huraira related that the Prophet of Allah stated that the Almighty says: “The sons of Adam distress Me! They curse fortune, but I am fortune! In My hands I hold the command [for all that happens]; I turn night into day.”\(^ {374}\) This was related by Bukhrā, Muslim, Mālik and Abū Dāwūd.\(^ {375}\)

**Interpretations: All is He**

Obviously, the Almighty and time are not the same thing. Despite this lack of unity, however, according to the explanation given in this hadith and its transla-

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\(^{371}\) Abū Dāwūd: 4940. Ibn Majāh: 3765

\(^{373}\) Forgetting the Almighty includes forgetting all of one’s religious duties and responsibilities, whether toward one’s Lord, or one’s family, or one’s community. Obviously, there is a difference between recreation and obsession; and this man was clearly an example of the latter. It is sad to note, however, that there is a popular notion that somehow pigeons and pigeon-keeping are incompatible with Islam. Much the same misconception exists in regard to dogs, owing to other hadiths. Clearly, if anything is to be learned from this account, it is in regard to how people sometimes lose their sense of perspective, and then ignore their responsibilities. To suppose, however, that the purpose of the hadith is to point out that pigeons are evil is absurd. For an even-handed account of how the Prophet viewed dogs, and valued their forms and characteristics, see Ibn Marzūbān’s *Tafṣīl al-Kilāb ʿalā kathir min man labisa ath-thiyyāb* (Preferring Canines Over Many of Those Who Wear Clothing). YTD.\(^ {374}\)

\(^{374}\) Thus, when people curse fate, or fortune, they are actually cursing the Almighty because it is the Almighty Who determines the fate of everything in the universe. The Arabic word here, *dahr*, is used to mean fortune and fate because these things come with time and the original significance of the word is a long or indeterminate period of time or, in other words, an age. YTD.\(^ {375}\)

\(^{375}\) Bukhrā: 7491, Muslim: 2246, Abū Dāwūd: 5274, *Muwaṭṭa*: pg. 386
tion, a literal, superficial connection can be made between the two. According to experts, this explains how (in the popular Sufi saying that “All is He”) “all” may be connected to “He”. The meaning of “all” encompasses all things in addition to their deeds and the effects of those deeds, all of which is controlled by the Almighty. Thus, the One Who actually and in reality does the disposing, as an independent entity, is the Almighty and the Almighty Alone. So, “All” is really nothing at all (and “He” is everything). Thus, the hadith may be offered as support for the popular Sufi saying that, “All is He.” In other words, in the same way that the hadith seeks to establish the Almighty as the determinant, and to negate any notion of fortune as a determinant, the Sufi saying establishes the independence of the Creator and negates the independence of the created, or creation.

**Hadith 227**


Abū Tufayl related that a man went to 'Ali  ibn Abī Ṭālib and asked, “What secret matters did the Prophet of Allah  tell you?” ‘Ali  grew annoyed and replied, “The Prophet  never told me anything that he kept hidden from others. Even so, he did tell me four things.” When the man asked what those were, 'Ali  replied, “Allāh will curse those who sacrifice animals to other than Him...” This was related by Muslim and Nasā‘I. At the end, Razīn added, in his version of the same hadith, “Ibn ‘Abbās added, in his version, “...and cursed is the one who prevents the blind from finding their way.” 376

Reform: The Claim that the Knowledge of Sufism is Passed from Chest to Chest

Many ignorant folk seem to want to perpetuate the notion that knowledge of  tašawwuf  was secretly passed to the Caliph ‘Ali  and that the same has been...
passed on by similar means even until the present. The hadith above clearly explains that this claim is baseless and without merit. The purpose of those who strive to establish this claim is to prove that there are certain matters that, although contrary to the Shari‘a, are nonetheless permitted. Such an assertion is not only incorrect, but it borders on disbelief as well. The whispered conversation mentioned in hadith [188] of this collection had to do with some practical matter, as there is nothing to indicate that it was related to taşawwuf. The sort of thing that is passed from chest to chest is a spiritual relationship of the kind explained in hadith [149]. Finally, it should be clear that the instructions passed to aspirants in confidence by Sufi masters are in no way contrary to the Shari‘a. The confidential nature of such teachings is rather owing to the personalised approach taken by the master as explained in hadith [4].

Reform: Sacrificing in the Name of Other than God
Among ignorant Sufis and their followers the practice of consecrating a pledge by sacrificing an animal is widespread. The prohibition against sacrificing animals in the name of other than Allāh  Explains that such pledges are also prohibited because the prohibition of the first is general in meaning and therefore inclusive of the second. In addition, such pledges, though made in the name of Allāh, are actually performed to placate or influence others, as explained by the author of ad-Durr al-Mukhtār and other jurists. This is why the practice of consecrating pledges by sacrificing animals is clearly both blameworthy and akin to shirk or associating others with the Almighty.

Reform: Censure of Those Unqualified to be Masters
The hadith openly states that those who prevent the blind from finding their way are accursed. It is also obvious that the way to the afterlife is more important than the highways and byways of the present life. Therefore, those blind to the way to the afterlife are in more need of guidance than those who are blind to the ways of the world.

The Almighty says: It is not their eyes that are blinded but blinded are the hearts in their chests.377

So, if people who prevent the blind from finding their way in the world are accursed, people who prevent others from finding their way to the afterlife are even more deserving of such a curse. Those whose claims to be spiritual guides or masters are false, or are made out of ignorance, or in order to deceive others, are clearly the subject of this curse. For such people, it is necessary that they repent.

377 Al-Qur‘ān, 22:46
Hadith 228

Abū Huraira related that the Prophet of Allah stated that the Almighty says, “O son of Adam! If you devote yourself to worshipping Me, I will fill your chest [to overflowing with wealth and virtue], and I will render you free from want. But if you do not do this I will fill your two hands to overflowing with toil, and I will not render you free from want.” This was related by Tirmidhi.\(^{378}\)

Usages: Abandoning Worldly Toil

It has ever been the way of the Sufis to eschew concern with worldly affairs, and it has ever been the complaint of their critics to label them unproductive and a burden on society. The above hadith appears to indicate the virtue of what they do, though it should be pointed out that there are conditions to be satisfied, including ability, patience and the absence of subtle leaning of the heart [towards the world].

Hadith 229

Anas related that the Prophet of Allah stated as part of a lengthy discourse, “No servant ever approaches the Almighty in complete sincerity except that the Almighty makes the hearts of the believers incline toward that person with love and caring; while Allah is the first to bring that person every manner of goodness.” This was related by Tirmidhi.\(^{379}\)

Miscellaneous: The Truth of Inner Relationships

There are two essential factors for the heart to become attached to Allah: con-

\(^{378}\) Tirmidhi: 2466, Ibn Majah: 4107

\(^{379}\) Al-Haythami has recorded this in his Majmu' az-Zawa'id: 10/247
stant remembrance and constant obedience. Under most conditions, this may be said to be the essence of internal affinity (nisbat-e-bātini). The ḥadīth above alludes to this affinity.

Virtues: In Praise of those Concerned with Internal Purification
This hadith makes obvious reference to this phenomenon; and its effects are witnessed regularly.

**ḤADĪTH 230**

\[
\text{‘Alī related that: “There is no [real] benefit in recitation of the Qur’ān in which there is no reflection, nor in any act of worship in which there is no cognition.”}^{380}
\]

Commentary: The Need for Reflection and Cognition
The major focus of the path of Sufis is this very reflection and cognition. The need for this shows how necessary the path of the Sufis is.

**ḤADĪTH 231**

Mālik related that ‘Īsā ibn Maryam said: “Do not engage in excessive speech apart from the remembrance of Allāh or else your hearts will become hard [in other words, no humility will remain in them and this has been clearly experienced]. The heart that is hard is far from Allāh but you do not know this [that your hearts are gone far from Allāh. The reality of this will dawn upon you in the Hereafter. You may witness the effects of this in this world, but you do not perceive it because of inattention].

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\(^{380}\) Ad-Daylami has recorded this in his *al-Firdaws*: 1/135
Do not look at the sins of people as though you are masters, but look at your own sins as though you are slaves [in other words, it is the duty of the masters to look at the faults of their slaves, to put them right and to punish them. You are not masters, but slaves. And it is the duty of slaves to look at their own faults so that they can make up for them and set them right]. People are of two types: those who are put through trials and tribulations, and those who enjoy well-being. You should show mercy to those who are in trials and tribulations, and praise Allah for the well-being. [Sin is a trial; you should therefore not despise or criticise a person who is sinning. You should advise him with affection or pray for him. To be protected from sin is a form of well-being. You should therefore not be proud and haughty over this. Rather, you should express your gratitude to Him after considering it to be a bounty of Allah, which you received without being eligible for it.] This was related by Malik.\textsuperscript{381}

\textit{Commentary: Speaking Less and Humility}

It is obvious that this ḥadith makes reference to these characteristics which are praiseworthy. The merit of the path of the \textit{ahl bāṭin} is also gauged from this because it is really their \textit{modus operandi}.

\textbf{ḤADĪTH 232}

\begin{quote}

\textit{‘Anas ṭawīl said: \("\text{While I was leading you in }\text{ṣalāh}, \text{I was shown }\text{Paradise and the }\text{Hellfire, both projected before me on this wall. Never have I seen good and evil like today} [\text{because Paradise is the best of all good, and the Hellfire is the worst of all evil}].\"}'}

Anas \textsuperscript{382} related that the Messenger of Allah \textsuperscript{382} led us in \textit{ṣalāh} one day. He then climbed the pulpit, pointed with his hand towards the \textit{qiblah}, and said: "While I was leading you in \textit{ṣalāh}, I was shown Paradise and the Hellfire, both projected before me on this wall. Never have I seen good and evil like today [because Paradise is the best of all good, and the Hellfire is the worst of all evil]." This was related by Bukhārī.\textsuperscript{382}

\textit{Commentary: Affirmation of the World of Similitude}

This is clearly affirmed from the apparent words of this ḥadith. The essence of this world [of similitude] is mentioned in the \textit{Mathnawi}.

\textsuperscript{381} \textit{Muwatta’}: pg. 386
\textsuperscript{382} \textit{Bukhari}: 6468
Abū 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abī Bakr related that Abū Talḥah al-Anṣārī was offering salāh in his orchard when a bird flew into the orchard. It began flying around looking for an exit but could not find one. Abū Talḥah was pleased with this [fact that his orchard was so dense that a bird was finding it difficult to find a way out]. He followed it with his eyes for some time and then turned his attention back to his salāh. But he [had become so distracted that he] could not remember how many rakats he had offered. He thought to himself, saying: “This property of mine has put me into a great tribulation [for I could not concentrate in my salāh].”

He went to the Messenger of Allāh and informed him of what he experienced in his salāh. He said: “O Messenger of Allāh! I am giving this orchard away for the sake of Allāh. You may dispose of it as you like.” This was related by Mālik.\(^{383}\)

**Commentary: The Practice of Surveillance of the Heart**

Among the practices of the Sufis is to maintain constant vigilance over the heart, keeping it under surveillance to see what condition it is in. When they discern changes in its condition, they make appropriate adjustments. Gauged on the action of this Companion and the Messenger considering it to be permissible, the acceptability of this practice becomes clear because his coming back to attention [in salāh] resulted from his vigilance (murāqabah).\(^{384}\)

**The Condition of Self-respect**

To detest something which makes a person heedless of Allāh is a commendable condition. This is known as ghayrah (self-respect). This Ḥadīth affirms this condition.

\(^{383}\) *Muwatta*: pg. 34

\(^{384}\) Also referred to as vigilance and contemplation, murāqabah is mentioned in Ḥadīths 11, 37, and 52 of this translation. YTD.
Removing from One’s Ownership Something which Distracts One from the Truth

Many well known stories are told of the pious who, when they saw a ṭālib (one who is in quest of Allah) greatly attached to something, ordered him to divest himself of it. The present ḥadith is the source of this treatment. This Companion thought of this treatment [for himself] and the Messenger of Allah affirmed it. The science of ḥadith refers to this as a taqir (an affirmation made by the Messenger of Allah).

 подробное описание

Commentary: Abstaining from Excesses in Praising One’s Sheikh

It is learnt from this ḥadith that one should not go to excesses in praising one’s sheikh or any other pious personality to the extent that one reaches the limit of lies or polytheism. If such excesses are prohibited vis-à-vis a prophet, how can they be permitted for a (close friend of Allah)?

 подробное описание

385 Bukhārī: 3445
Abū Bakr related that the Messenger of Allāh said: “If it is essential for a person to praise his brother, he should say: ‘I think that such and such person is like this. Apart from this, Allāh knows best.’ He should not unduly praise anyone with Allāh. Even if he has to say: ‘I think that such and such person is like this,’ the pre-condition is for the person to be really like that in his knowledge [or else, he cannot even praise him in this manner].” This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Dāwūd.

Commentary: Abstaining from Labelling Someone as a Wali without Certainty

It is gauged from the general nature of this hadith that it is absolutely forbidden to refer to a person as a wali without any proof, based merely on assumption. Most people are not cautious in this regard. However, there is nothing wrong if it is said by way of thinking the person to be so. It is better for the person to expressly state his thoughts. But even if he does not expressly state them on the basis of the circumstances or the context of his speech, there is nothing wrong in this. Yes, to refer to a person as a sheikh is permissible even if said with certainty. The reason for this is that it is a matter which is witnessed. In other words, his knowledge of training and educating. On the contrary, referring to someone as a wali—that is, being accepted in the sight of Allāh—this is related to the Unseen.

Hadīth 236

Usayd ibn Ḥudayr related that a man from the Anṣār had a jovial temperament. One day, he was talking to some people and making them laugh. The Messenger of Allāh jabbed him lightly with a stick which he had in his hand. The man said: “O Messenger of Allah! You have to let me avenge this.” He said: “You may take revenge.” The man said: “You are wearing a shirt while I was not wearing a shirt [when you jabbed me].” The Messenger of Allāh raised his shirt and the man embraced him.

386 Bukhārī: 6061, Muslim: 3000, Abū Dāwūd: 4805, Ibn Mājah: 3744
and began kissing his waist. He said: “This is what I really wanted to do.”
This was related by Abū Dāwūd.\textsuperscript{387}

**Commentary: Joking does not Negate Perfection**

Some people are under the mistaken impression that to attain *wilāyah* and *kamāl* (perfection) it is necessary for a person to have an absolutely emotionless heart and that he should have no human traits in him. It is clear from this hadith that a balanced and cheerful disposition in speech or in action whereby the person does not belittle anyone nor hurt him does not negate perfection and piety. This is especially so when the purpose is to cheer someone up or, more than this, to make the person feel at ease so that he may be able to ask something about Islam openly [and without hesitation]. In such a situation, it [this joking and light-heartedness] will become an act of worship.

In a dream, I gave this reply to a European queen with whom I saw myself riding in a vehicle. The queen voiced an objection to the Prophet’s prophethood \( \text{سُنَّةُ} \) on the basis that he used to joke [with people] whereas joking negates dignity, and dignity is one of the intrinsic requisites of prophethood. She said: “There is no doubt about the authenticity of Islam apart from this [quality of joking of his].” When I shared the [above-mentioned] wisdom with her, she remained silent and accepted [what I said]. Thereafter, when I awoke, I learned through certain indications that the queen had probably embraced Islam in her heart.

We also learn from this hadith that although it is necessary for the aspirant *murīd* to be extremely respectful of his sheikh, if he sees that the sheikh himself is in a jovial mood, he should emulate him because this is what respect demands at such a time.

**Kissing the Body of the Sheikh**

It is also obvious from this hadith that there is nothing wrong with a person kissing the hands, feet, forehead, etc. of one’s sheikh. However, one should not transgress the limits of the *Shari‘a* in this regard.

\[ \text{HADĪTH 237} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رضي الله تعالى عنها قالت: لَمَّا أُرَادَوا عَصِيلُ الْمَيِّ الْمَيِّ صَلَّى الَّذِي صَلَّى الله عليه وسلم قالوا: وَاللَّهُ لاَ يُذْرِي أَنْجَرُدُ رَسُولُ الله صَلَّى الله عليه وسلم مِنْ تَبَابِهُ كَأَنْجَرُدُ مَوْتُاهَا} \\
أَوْ نَعْمِسِهُ وَعُلِّيْهِ تِبَابُهُ، فَلَمَّا اخْتَلَفُوا أَلْقَى الله تعالى عليهم النُّومَ حَتَّى مِنْهُمْ رَجَلٌ إِلَاً
\end{align*} \]

\textsuperscript{387} Abū Dāwūd: 5224
‘A’isha related that: When the people intended bathing the Messenger of Allāh [after his demise], they said: “By Allāh, we do not know whether we should remove the clothes of the Messenger of Allāh as we remove the clothes of our deceased or should we bathe him with his clothes on?” When they differed in this matter, Allāh caused them to fall asleep such that every single one of them had his chin touching his chest [because he was overcome by sleep]. Someone from the corner of the house addressed them—none knew who he was—saying: “Bathe the Messenger of Allāh with his clothes on.” They got up and bathed him with his shirt on. They poured water over the shirt and rubbed his body together with the shirt, without their hands touching his actual body. This was related by Abū Dawūd.388

Commentary: Unseen Speech
For an unseen voice to speak to a pious personality is also a praiseworthy condition. This is confirmed from this ḥadīth.

Acting on the Indication of an Unseen Voice Provided it is not Against the Shari‘a
There is widespread agreement among the masters that it is lawful to act on the indication of an unseen voice provided it says or asks nothing contrary to the Shari‘a. This is what was done in this incident: there was nothing to indicate that it is impermissible to bathe the deceased with his shirt on. [The Companions] therefore acted on the advice of the unseen voice. What if someone were to ask if it made any special difference if this order was obtained even before this inspiration and unseen voice? The reply is that it is learnt from the guidelines of the pious that through this inspiration or unseen voice, this specific order becomes a bit more emphasised for the person who was inspired. It does not mean that if they act against it, it will be harmful in the Hereafter. If any legal proof is attached to further emphasise the act, then the legal emphasis is obvious. By pondering over this incident we can say that through this [unseen] speech, the difference of opinion was removed. Moreover, since the consensus (ijmā‘) of the Companions is a legal proof in itself, it may be said that no other opinion in this case is lawful.

388 Abū Dawūd: 3141
Asmā’ bint Yazīd related that a woman asked: “O Messenger of Allāh! What is the good deed regarding which it is not permissible for us to disobey you?” He replied: “You must abstain from wailing [over the deceased].” She said: “O Messenger of Allāh! A certain family came and helped me [and wailed with me] when my uncle passed away. Now I have to pay them back [so permit me to perform this wailing one more time and I will not do it anymore].” But he refused. She made this request several times. The woman said: “He eventually permitted me to pay them back. Even so, I have not performed this wailing in repayment nor have I performed it for anyone else since then.” This was related by Tirmidhī.389

Commentary:
The point established by ḥadīth [166] is established here as well. The most probable reason for the Messenger of Allāh granting permission to “wail” just once is so that, once over, the person may not ever have to go back on his or her determination to repent. It may be noticed that the masters will sometimes give permission for impermissible employment or something similar when in actual fact permission is not their objective. Rather, by doing so, they intend to spare the person from a greater evil. As the wise men said:

The person who is compelled into making a choice between two evils should choose the lighter of the two.

This is especially so when some temperaments are such that when they are prohibited, they display weakness. And when they abstain, they lose courage and feel constricted. But when they are permitted, they feel energetic and free, and their temperament develops the strength and courage to give up evil. In such a situation permission becomes a matter of externals, while prohibition is an internal matter.

389 Tirmidhī: 3307
Hadith 239

Ibn 'Umar saw a tent over the grave of 'Abd ar-Rahmān. He said [to his attendant]: "Remove it, young man! For verily he is shaded by his deeds." This was related by Bukhārī. 390

Commentary: Abstaining from Erecting Tents and Buildings over Graves

Some of those who claim internal purity have got into the custom of erecting tents and buildings over the graves of the pious awliya'. This hadith exposes the uselessness and futility of this practice. If it leads to the corruption of beliefs, then this practice is far more evil.

Hadith 240

Jābir related that the Messenger of Allāh prohibited that a grave be plastered, that a building be constructed over it, that anyone sit on it, that anything be written on it, and that anyone walk over it. This was related by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'i. 391

Commentary: Matters Related to Graves

The essence of this hadith is to teach the balanced manner in which people should treat graves. Graves should not be shown excessive respect, nor should they be held in contempt. Those who transgress these simple rules engage in evil; those who solidify the graves, build edifices over them and write inscriptions on them. On the other extreme are those who are so strict as to ignore graves. If a grave is very old, and not on another's private property, then if there is a need to do so, it is permissible to remove all signs that it is a grave, to sit on it, and to walk over it.

390 Bukhārī: An unnumbered remark under the chapter-heading '[Placing a] wet branch on the grave' in the Book of Funerals.
Al-Muttalib ibn Abi Wadā‘ah said: When `Uthmān ibn Maz‘ūn passed away—and he was the first of the Emigrants to pass away in Madīna—and he was buried, the Messenger of Allāh ṣ.a.w. ordered a person to bring a rock to him so that the grave could be identified by this rock. The man chose a rock but could not carry it. The Messenger of Allāh ṣ.a.w. stood up, folded his sleeves, lifted the rock and placed it at the head of the grave. He ṣ.a.w. said: “I will recognise the grave of my brother ['Uthmān] through this rock, and bury whoever passes away from my family near his grave.” This was related by Abū Dāwūd. 392

To Place a Rock or Plant a Tree Near a Grave as a Means of Identification

Some people place these objects near graves merely to serve as a means of identification when they visit the grave or come to read something over it. If this is done with simplicity, and with the above-mentioned purpose [i.e. of identification], there is no harm in these practices. However, if it is a rock, no attention should be paid to making it well-shaped. Likewise, there should be no engraving on it, and nothing should be written on it. If someone goes to such extremes, however, these will suffice as proof that the person is not truthful in his claim to be doing this for a good reason; and the person is therefore prohibited from doing so.

Buraydah ṣ.a.w. related that his will provided that two branches of a date
palm be placed at his grave. This was related by al-Bukhārī in a chapter-heading.393

Commentary: The Custom of Planting a Tree Near a Grave

Some people plant a tree near a grave with the intention of the deceased deriving benefit from the *tasbih* (glorification) of the tree and enjoying the companionship of the tree. The basis for this is derived from this Ḥadith. The bequest of this Companion is probably based on the act of the Messenger of Allāh when he saw the inhabitants of two graves being punished. He placed two fresh date branches on each and said: “There is hope that the punishment may be lightened at least until these branches become dry.” The Companion, like many scholars after him, considered this act to be the *ratio legis* for the above-mentioned practice. Therefore, there is precedent for the practice if this is one’s intention.

Others are of the opinion that this lightening of the punishment was due only to the Prophet’s supplication, that the acceptance of the supplication was time-bound, and that the period of time was till the branches become dry.

Based on this, this custom has no connection whatsoever with this Ḥadith. But the majority of scholars prefer the first explanation. However, this does not prove the permissibility of laying flowers or a bed of flowers because the purpose of this is solely adornment or gaining proximity to the one in the grave. This practice or this belief is an absolute innovation (*bid'ah*). If this was not their purpose, why would they have first of all resorted to these formalities? Secondly, the graves of ordinary, sinful servants of Allāh were more eligible for this and not the graves of the *awliyā‘* (the pious servants of Allāh). There is greater need for this where there is the possibility of punishment.

**ḤADĪTH 243**

> َعَنْ أَنَسِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا وَضَعَ فِي قُبُورِهِ وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُ أَصْحَابَهُ أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ مَعُهُ فَيُصَوَّرُ عَلَيْهِمْ إِذَا أَصَرَّ فَوَا." (أخْرِجَهُ السَّبْعُ الخَمْسَةِ إِلَّا التَّرَمْدَيْ)

Anas related that the Messenger of Allāh said: “When a person is buried in his grave and his companions turn away to depart, he [the per-

393 Bukhārī: Under the chapter-heading '[Placing a] wet branch on the grave' in the Book of Funerals.
son in the grave] hears their footsteps." This was related by Bukhārī, Mus­lim, Abū Dāwūd and Nasā’ī.394

Commentary: The Issue of the Deceased’s Ability to Hear
This is a contentious issue. Some scholars affirm this on the basis of this ḥadith while others reject it on the basis of the Qur’ānic verse: “Surely you cannot make the deceased hear”395. Those who affirm the ability of the dead to hear say that the verse makes a figurative reference to the unbelievers as being “dead” and therefore has no connection with this issue. Those who reject the ability of the dead to hear reply that although the verse contains a figurative expression, the intrinsic meaning is essential in the thing which is used figuratively. Therefore, the inability to hear is established for the deceased in its real meaning. In turn, the reply of those who affirm the ability of the dead to hear is that this principle establishes only that the meaning of the “deceased” is the intrinsic meaning of deceased; while having nothing to do with the meaning of “you cannot make the deceased hear”. In this case there is a figurative giving of an unrestricted meaning to a restricted circumstance; and the ability to hear refers to hearing that is beneficial. This therefore means that the deceased, in the true meaning of being deceased, are unable to hear anything that is beneficial. In this case, the need to turn to a figurative interpretation is in order to reconcile the meanings of the two apparently contradictory texts. Evidence for the same is that it is obvious that while the unbelievers have the ability to hear, they are nonetheless unable to hear what is beneficial. In short, both sides of this debate go into lengthy discussions in this regard and there is leeway on both sides. However, the belief of the masses who consider the deceased to be omni-present, watching, possessing absolute powers over matters, etc. is an absolute deviation. If their belief cannot be rectified without rejection of the deceased’s ability to hear, it becomes obligatory to unilaterally reject the deceased’s ability to hear.

Hadīth 244

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "إِنَّ الْحَصَّةَ لِلنَّاسِ اِلَّذِينَ يَخْرَجُونَهَا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ لِيُذْلِكُمُ أَنَّهَا عَبْدَةٌ للهِ."

(Aḥrār al-Abd Dawd)

Abū Huraira related that the Messenger of Allah said: “The remaining pebbles in the masjid take the name of Allah and beseech the person

394 Bukhārī: 1374, Muslim: 2870, Abū Dāwūd: 4751, Nasā’ī: 2052
395 Al-Qur’ān, 27:80
who wants to throw them out of the masjid to leave them in the masjid.”
This was related by Abū Dāwūd. 196

Commentary: The Issue of Inanimate Objects Having the Power of Perception

The perception and speech of inanimate objects which are exposed to the people of kashf (unveiling) is obviously supported by this hadith. The pebble has such perception that it knows that it is being taken outside. It also has this power of speech whereby it resorts to the name of Allāh as an intermediary. There is no justification for turning away from the plain meaning [of this hadith]. The other hadith, which makes reference to the pillars [of the masjid crying], is even more explicit in this regard.

ḤADĪTH 245

Tālq ibn ʿAli related that: “We went as a delegation to the Messenger of Allāh and pledged allegiance to him and offered salāh with him. We informed him that there was a Christian place of worship in our land [and we wished to convert it into a masjid]. We asked him for some of his left over ablution water [which we would sprinkle at that place for blessings]. He asked for some water, performed ablution, gargled with it, and then poured it into a small water skin. He then said: “When you go to your land, raze the place of worship, sprinkle this water over it, and build a masjid at the spot.” We said: “Our land is far, and the heat is intense. The water will evaporate.” He said: “Add more water [to the water which I gave you] and its blessings will also increase.” This was related by Nasāʾī. 197

396 Abū Dāwūd: 459
397 Nasāʾī: 702
**Hadîth 246**

Anas related, “I saw the Messenger of Allâh when the barber was shaving his head. His Companions were standing around him, not allowing his hair to fall anywhere but into the hands of one of them [i.e. every hair of his fell into the hand of someone or the other].” This has been reported by Muslim.

**Hadîth 247**

Anas related that Umm Sulaym used to lay out a leather mat for the Messenger of Allâh [when he used to go to her house]. He used to take a siesta there [she was a close relative of his]. When he got up, she used to gather his perspiration and hair [which had fallen off his body] and place it in a bottle. She would then mix it with another perfume. When Anas [who was the son of Umm Sulaym] approached death, he made a request for this mixture to be added to his burial shroud.” This was related by Bukhârî, Muslim and Nasâ’î.

Commentary: The Practice of Acquiring Blessings

Having a desire and showing reverence for the items belonging to the pious masters, as well as seeking to acquire blessings from them, both when they are alive and dead, are established as acceptable practices from the above three hadîths.
Abū Musa related, “I heard an-Najashi, the ruler of Abyssinia, saying: ‘I testify that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh and he is the one whose glad tidings ‘Īsā conveyed. Were it not for this kingdom and the affairs of the people for which I am responsible, I would have gone to him and carried his shoes.”' This was related by Abū Dāwūd.\(^\text{400}\)

**Commentary: The Practice of Attending to the Pious**

It is considered to be an honour to carry the shoes of the spiritual masters. The desirability of this practice is obvious from this Ḥadīth. However, if the spiritual master personally prohibits this, obedience to his order is given preference over this service. To unnecessarily insist on carrying out this service entails causing discomfort to him and is a very detestable act.

\(\text{ḤADĪTH 249}\)

\(\text{Ibn ʿAbbās} \text{ related the conversation between Heraclius and Abū Sufyān [these statements of Heraclius were not refuted by the Companions, thus establishing their authenticity]. [Heraclius said]: “I asked you: ‘After embracing the religion of Muḥammad, does anyone renounce it out of displeasure with it?’ You replied: ‘No.’ This describes the state of true faith when its freshness is absorbed in the believers’ hearts.” This was related by Bukhārī and Muslim.}^\text{401}\)

**Commentary: There is One Thing [Imān] which Never Subsides**

This theme is well known by another statement: “When something achieves its goal and is perfected, it does not subside and it does not reject what it has achieved.” This is clearly supported by this Ḥadīth. Although this statement is attributed to Heraclius, it can be accepted as authentic since it was accepted by

\(^{400}\) Abū Dāwūd: 3205

\(^{401}\) Bukhārī: 7, Muslim: 1773
the scholars of the early generations. Seekers (sālikīn) who go astray should be understood as never having achieved their goal even though they may appear, and are understood, to have done so.

**Hadīth 250**

ʿĀʾisha related that, “Revelation to the Messenger of Allāh commenced with dreams that came true whatever dream he saw, he would see the realisation thereof as clear as the morning light. He then became attached to solitude and would go into seclusion in the cave of Hīrā and engage in worship for several nights in succession without going back to his family. He used to carry provisions [food, drink, etc.] for this stay. He would then return to Khadijah and again take provisions for a further period. This continued until the truth came to him while he was in the cave of Hīrā. The Angel [of revelation] came to him and said: ‘Read!’ He replied: ‘I cannot read.’ The Messenger of Allāh then said: ‘He seized me and squeezed me till I reached the limit of my strength [i.e. till I had no strength left]. Then he released me and said: ‘Read!’ I replied: ‘I cannot read.’ He again seized me and squeezed me till I reached the limit of my strength. Again he released me and said: ‘Read!’ I replied: ‘I cannot read.’ He seized me a third time and squeezed me till I reached the limit of my strength. He then released me and said: ‘Read!’ I replied: ‘I cannot read.’ He said: ‘Read in the name of your Lord Who created: He created man from
a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Noble, The One Who taught by
the pen; Who taught man that which he knew not.’ With his heart trem­
bling, the Messenger of Allâh returned home with these verses. He went to
Khadijah and said: ‘Cover me, cover me.’” This was related by Bukhârî.\textsuperscript{402}

\textit{Commentary: True Dreams}
This hadith makes obvious reference to this.

\textit{The Practice of Remaining in Solitude and Carrying Provisions for this Solitude}
These practices are clearly mentioned in this hadith.

\textit{The Practice of Directing One’s Attention and Conditioning}
The angel of revelation was Jibra’il. The command to read was not given in
the way that someone is asked to read something that he or she already knew
how to read. Rather, the command was similar to a teacher placing the letters
of the alphabet before a child and asking him or her to read. In other words,
the command was to “Read what I read to you.” The reply of the Messenger of
Allâh “I cannot read” was probably made on the basis that he did not consider
this particular meaning of the command “Read” [i.e. reading after a person], or
because he thought the angel would have him read something which required
the ability to read and write. Then, if the Prophet was to be able to receive
and accept the commanded recitation, it was necessary to fortify and perfect his
abilities. This is why the angel squeezed him several times, thus endowing his
heart with attentiveness and courage. The spiritual practice of embracing is thus
clearly established through this hadith.

\textit{The Limbs are Affected by Unseen Bestowals}
Since the heart is affected by unseen bestowals and the limbs are subservient to
the heart, if the bestowal is strong, its effect is felt by the limbs as well. At times,
the mere unseen takes place. This hadith mentions that the Prophet wrapped
himself in his clothes because the effects of trembling were on his body. This
[fact that the limbs are affected by unseen bestowals] is established from this.

\textit{Hadîth 251}

\begin{quote}
عن عمر رضي الله عنده قال: قال رسول الله صلّى الله علیه وسلم إذا تولَّى علیه الْوَحْيِ يُسْمَعُ عندَ وَجِيبِهِ كَذَٰلِكَ النَّحْلِ. الحديث (أخرجه الترمذي)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{402} Bukhârî: 3
Commentary: The Enunciation of a Voice from the Unseen

At times, a voice from the Unseen is enunciated as a consequence of a certain practice, due to blessings from the proximity of a pious personality or for some other reason. This hadith makes mention of such an enunciation. However, not every enunciation resulting from a practice (shughl) is a voice from the Unseen. In most cases, it is the spiritual aspirant’s (shâghil) breath that stops and moves in his mind and which consequently causes the perception of an enunciation.

Hadith 252

Anas related in the hadith of al-Isra’ (the night journey) wherein the Messenger of Allâh met Mûsâ in a group of other Prophets. He also related that the Messenger of Allâh said: “On the night of the ascension, I passed by Mûsâ standing and offering salâh at his grave which is near the red hill.” This was related by Muslim and Nasâ’i.

Commentary: The Possibility of the Souls of Perfect Servants Taking a Physical Form

It is established from both these narrations that although Mûsâ was already in his grave, he and the other Prophets met the Messenger of Allâh outside the grave. All the Prophets were certainly outside their graves. It may be deduced from this narration that it is possible for the souls of pious personalities to take a physical form, to occupy space, and to be visible. However, understand well that this condition is not permanent, nor is it within their control.

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403 Tirmidhî: 3173
404 Muslim: 2375, Nasâ’i: 1632
Abū Huraira رضي الله عنه related that when Khaybar was conquered the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was presented with a grilled sheep that was poisoned. This is reported by Bukhārī.

**Commentary: Exposure of the Unseen is not Continuous**

The latter part of this hadith states that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ actually ate some of it. But when he learned [that it was poisoned], his hand retracted [and he refrained from eating more of it]. However, the effect of this poison lasted till the end of his life. Two lessons may be learned from this: (1) knowledge of the Unseen is not granted on a permanent basis. Indeed, if that had been so, the poisonous nature of the meat would not have been concealed from him when he began eating. (2) Supernatural abilities are not permanent. If not, this poison would not have had an effect on him. When the paranormal knowledge and supernatural abilities of a Prophet are not permanent, what can be said of these things in relation to others?

Abū Huraira رضي الله عنه related, "I went to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ one day with some dates and said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! Pray for blessings in these dates.' He gathered them together, prayed for blessings in them, and said: 'Take them and place them in this bag of yours. Whenever you wish..."

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405 Bukhārī: 3169
to take dates from there, place your hand inside the bag and take out as many as you want, but do not empty the bag. This is what I did and I took out so many wasaqs (a dry measure) from it while in the cause of Allāh. I continued eating from it and gave others to eat as well. This bag never left my side until the day when ‘Uthmān was martyred, the bag burst and fell to the ground. I was greatly saddened by this.” This was related by Tirmidhī.

Commentary: The Reality of the Unseen Hand
Apart from the normal ways of earning one’s livelihood, there are three other categories: (1) By way of a supernatural act as related in this Ḥadīth. (2) A person reads a certain supplication and without seeing anyone openly giving him, he finds something daily in his pocket or under his pillow, etc. (3) The servants of Allāh serve and attend to him. The third category is known as futūḥāt (openings). The masses refer to the second category as the “unseen hand”. It is known that provision of the second category may be delivered by jinn irrespective of whether it comes from the wealth of others by illegal means, or from one’s own wealth. Such wealth may also be obtained under compulsion. Clearly, these categories are unlawful. However, the first category of the “unseen hand” is lawful and is essentially a miracle attributable to a Prophet or a pious personality.

ḤADĪTH 255

‘Alī related the incident when ‘Ali proposed to the daughter of Abū Jahl. He [al-Miswar] said: “I heard the Messenger of Allāh saying while on the pulpit: ‘Banû Hāshim ibn Mughīrah sought my permission to marry their daughter to ‘Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib. I will not permit this. I will not permit this. I will not permit this unless Ibn Abī Ṭālib wants to divorce my daughter first and then marry their daughter.”

406 Tirmidhī: 3839
Faṭīmah is a part of me, and whatever causes uneasiness to her causes uneasiness to me, and whatever hurts her hurts me.” This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhi. 407

Commentary: Expressing Anger Over Certain Lawful but Unpleasant Matters
Such a marriage was permissible and lawful, as is obvious from the teachings of the Shari’ā. In fact, there are express statements by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ to support the lawfulness of marriage to multiple women. Nonetheless, this particular marriage was one that the Prophet ﷺ disliked. It may be inferred from this Ḥadīth that under special circumstances, if unhappiness is expressed over a lawful matter, and others refrain from it in consideration of that displeasure, then refraining from that lawful act will not be considered an attempt to make the lawful unlawful. Such incidents are also witnessed with regard to spiritual masters.

ḤADĪTH 256

Thābit ibn ad-Ḍahḥāk related that a man said to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ: “I vowed to slaughter an animal at a certain place—a place where people in the times before Islam (jāhiliyyah) used to slaughter their animals.” He asked: “Was that a place where animals were slaughtered to idols?” He replied: “No.” He asked: “Were any pagan festivals celebrated at that place?” He replied: “No.” He said: “You may fulfil your vow.” This was related by Abū Dāwūd. 408

Commentary: An Incorrect Intention has an Effect on the Slaughtered Animal
It is certain that this person would have slaughtered the animal in the name of Allāh because he was a Muslim. Despite this, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ made inquiries about the description of the place in order to gauge the intention of the person who took this vow. It is clear from this Ḥadīth that even if a person slaughters an animal in the name of Allāh but has an evil intention; the evil

408 Abū Dāwūd: 3313
intention will have an effect on the slaughtered animal. The ruling with regard to slaughtering animals in the name of saints or pious personalities should be inferred from this hadith. Certain Sufis and like-minded people have been known to commit errors in this regard.

**Hadith 257**

"Whoever worships Allāh for forty days with sincerity, fountains of wisdom shall gush forth from his heart and issue from his tongue." This has been reported by Razīn.

**Commentary: The Practice of Forty Days**

Many spiritual masters have adopted the practice of remaining in seclusion for forty days for the purpose of worship. This hadith is the basis for this practice.

**Affirmation of Knowledge of Mysteries**

It is related in the statements of the spiritual masters that certain special servants of Allāh are bestowed with certain knowledge that is neither related [handed down from person to person] nor acquired [learned]. This knowledge is sometimes referred to as ‘ilm wahbī (bestowed knowledge) and also as ‘ilm asrār (knowledge of mysteries). At times, esoteric knowledge and spiritual truths are spoken by the spiritual masters even though these were never uttered by anyone before them. This hadith is the basis for the affirmation and consideration of such knowledge.

**Hadith 258**

409 Musnad ash-Shihāb: 1:285, al-Maqāsid al-Ḥasanah: pg. 395. It has also been reported by Abū Nu‘aym in his al-Ḥilyah.
Al-Aswad related, “We were seated in the assembly of 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd when Ḥudhayfah came and stood over us. He offered the salām and said: ‘Hypocrisy overcame a people some of whom were better even than you.’ We said [in surprise]: ‘Glory be to Allah! Allah says that the hypocrites shall be in the lowest level of the Hellfire, [so how can those people be better than we Muslims]?’ Then ‘Abdullah smiled while Ḥudhayfah sat down in one corner of the masjid. When ‘Abdullah stood up and his companions dispersed, Ḥudhayfah threw some pebbles at me and called me. I went to him and he said: ‘I am astonished at his [‘Abdullah’s] laughter, even though he understood what I said. [He ought to have clearly affirmed what I said. Those who were present could have misconstrued his laughter and assumed that he did not agree with my statement].’ Then Ḥudhayfah explained his statement, saying: ‘Hypocrisy did overcome some people who were better than you. But they repented and Allah accepted their repentance.’” This was related by Bukhari. 410

This means that those who repented from hypocrisy were actually some of the Companions [of the Messenger of Allah]. It is an accepted article of faith that the Companions were superior [in terms of their spiritual ranking] to the Successors, Tābi‘ūn [those who came after the Companions]. Since the Tābi‘ūn made up the majority in this particular assembly of people, the statement: “They were better than you and hypocrisy overcame them”, therefore, applies to the Companions. Both conditions [of hypocrisy and absence of hypocrisy], however, did not obtain at the same time. Those who heard this statement [in that assembly] took the obvious meaning of this statement, considered the period of both conditions to be one, and therefore expressed their surprise.

**Commentary: Speaking in Veiled Terms**

Some statements of certain spiritual masters appear to transgress the bounds of the Shari‘a. The purpose of the masters in making these statements is either to conceal something from those who are not capable of understanding it or to suggest a possible excuse. The following verse is an example of the first purpose:

410 Bukhārī: 4602
Do not share the secrets of love and its ecstasy with the vainglorious
Keep it from him so he can perish in the torment of self-conceit

And the following is an example of the second reason:

The talk of the lovers in matters of Divinity
Is a mere rapture of love, and never insolence

This hadith is the basis for all of this provided, of course, that the intention of the person making the statement is a good one. While the statement of this Companion appeared to be incorrect, it was in reality perfectly right. The most probable reason for his making this statement was to test his listeners and to demonstrate to them that the Almighty controls peoples' hearts and that they should therefore abstain from being conceited and thinking ill of others.

**HADITH 259**

١٤٠٢ مَعْنَى أَبِيَ مَلِيكَةٍ قَالَ: أَذْرَكْتُ ثَلَاثِينَ مِنْ أَصْحَابٍ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ شَهِيدٍ بَدْرًا، كَلَّامَهُمْ نَقَافٌ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَلَأَبَامْنُ الْمَكْرُ عَلَى دِينِهِ. (١٨٤٧)

Abū Mulaykah related, “I met thirty Companions of the Messenger of Allāh who participated in the battle of Badr [and thus earned special merit]. All of them feared hypocrisy for themselves and feared changes in their spiritual states.” This was related by Bukhārī.⁴¹

**Commentary: Considering Oneself to be Irreligious**

Such statements are often found in the speech and writings of the spiritual masters. The reason for this is that they are overpowered by fear. This hadith affirms the same condition with regard to the Companions. If this fear is with regard to the Hereafter, hypocrisy is taken in its obvious sense. If this fear is with regard to the present, hypocrisy refers to certain traces or acts of hypocrisy that represent to one degree or another a stage of hypocrisy.

**HADITH 260**

١٤٠٣ مَعْنَى أَبِيَ عَبْدِاللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: كَنْتُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
Ibn 'Abbâs related, “I was sitting behind the Messenger of Allâh on the same animal when he said: ‘O son! Remain constantly aware of Allâh and you will find Him before you.’” This same hadith also states: “If you can act for the pleasure of Allâh with conviction, then do so. If you cannot, then there is also a lot of good in exercising patience over distasteful matters.” This is reported by Razîn with these words.

Commentary: The Practice of Murâqabah
The meaning of the words “Remain constantly aware of Allâh” is the essence of murâqabah which is from among the essential practices of the ahl Tariq (aspirants treading the path of Sufism). As for the special posture that is to be adopted when engaging in murâqabah, this is merely to reinforce the practice of murâqabah and is not the objective in itself. There is therefore no need for textual evidence to establish the legitimacy of this particular practice.

Closeness and Proximity
The fruits of murâqabah are closeness and proximity [to Allâh]. The words “you will find Him before you” are the consequence of “Remain constantly aware of Allâh”.

The Superiority of an 'Arif [Gnostic] over an 'Abid [Worshipper]
According superiority to seeking the Almighty’s pleasure and to true conviction—both of which are among the practices of the spiritually adept, ahl bâtin—over exercising patience with distasteful matters—which is among the practices of the worshippers (‘abidin)—is clear proof of the superiority of the spiritually adept over those who practise outward deeds.

Hadîth 261

骨干: زید الہیب زیمی اللہ عینہفا قال: فلّت: یا رسول اللہ! تخبری ماعلامة اللہ فبیمن بیریدی وعاملا میتی میں لا بیریدی فقائی: “کیفیں اسیحیہ یا زید؟” فقلّت: اہب الہیب وعالیہ

412 Recorded in Hannâd ibn al-Sariy’s Kitâb az-Zuhd: 1:304
Zayd al-Khayr related: I asked, "O Messenger of Allāh! Tell me the signs that differentiate between a person for whom Allāh wills good and one for whom He does not will good." He asked: "O Zayd! Tell me how did you get up this morning?" I replied: "I love good and those who do good. If I find the ability to do good, I hasten towards it. If I lose such an opportunity, I become grieved and I become desirous of it." The Messenger of Allāh said: "That is the sign of a person for whom Allāh wills good. Had He willed something contrary to this for you, He would have prepared you for it." This was related by Tirmidhi. 413

Commentary: The Sign of Acceptance
This is clearly indicated in this hadith.

Hadith 262

Ibn 'Abbās related that someone said: "O Messenger of Allāh! We occasionally have such thoughts in our hearts and experience such things that we would rather burn and become coal than express them verbally." The Messenger of Allāh [became pleased and said]: "Allāh is Greatest! All thanks are due to Allāh Who turned Satan's trap into nothing more than whisperings [and did not permit them to go beyond that]." This was related by Abū Dāwūd. 414

Commentary: The Way to Ward off Whisperings
The masters teach that the way to deal with whisperings is by means of the treat-

413 This is how the source of this hadith has been given in the original. However, in Jāmi' al-'Uṣūl, it is referenced to Razin, which seems to be correct. It is also found in al-Īsābah, 1:572, under the entry for Zayd al-Khayr.

414 Abū Dāwūd: 5112
The essence of this treatment is that a person should not be troubled by whisperings. Instead, one should be pleased with them in the sense that Allâh spared one the sort of tribulations that are worse than whisperings. One benefit of this happiness is that Satan is unhappy when a believer is pleased. When Satan sees a person deriving pleasure from whisperings, Satan will cease whispering to that person. Whisperings may also play a role in saving a person from greater tribulations. This is because when the soul obsessively turns its attention to these whisperings, then at such times, it does not find the opportunity to occupy itself with other more serious external or internal acts of disobedience. It thus safeguards itself [from those acts of disobedience]. The Persian poet therefore said:

This is an affliction to kill off many other afflictions.

We used the words “obsessively turns its attention” because one should not wittingly turn one’s attention to those whisperings. Although this is not sinful, it is harmful. A hadîth of Bukhârî and Muslim contains an explicit order in this regard: “One must abstain”. The happiness alluded to in the commentary above also refers to this situation. It should be obvious that when a person is preoccupied by happiness, the attention he or she gives to such whisperings will be negligible.

Hadîth 263

Wâthilah ibn al-Asqa’ related that the Messenger of Allâh said:

“One of the greatest fabrications is for a person to attribute himself to someone other than his own father [in other words, he/she is the son/daughter of someone, but claims to be that of someone else. For example, it is the habit of some people to claim that they are sayyids—from the family of the Messenger of Allâh, Allâh bless him and give him peace,—when in actual fact they are not]. Or he claims to have seen something which he did not really see [this includes false dreams and false visions]. Or he attributes something to the Messenger of Allâh, Allâh bless him and give him peace, which he did not say.” This was related by Bukhârî.\footnote{Bukhârî: 3509}
Commentary: False Claims to Unveilings
This ḥadith makes obvious reference to this being a sin. Unfortunately, many of those who make such claims are actually [doing so falsely and are guilty of] committing a sin.

Carelessness in Narrating Ḥadith
One may be excused if, when quoting a ḥadith, one assumes that the narrator (from whom the ḥadith was related) was not mistaken (even though the narrator was mistaken). In their letters and writings, certain spiritual masters have used this license to include, whether intentionally or not, baseless ḥadiths. If, however, after being informed by legitimate scholars of ḥadith that the ḥadiths they have quoted are spurious, the masters persist in quoting such narrations, as is the way of many an ignorant Sufi, there can be no excuses.

ḤADĪTH 264

ʿUṯmān b. ʿAffī said: Ṭaḥleel al-ʿAmīr al-Mukhtarī. (Rāzī)

ʿĪsá ibn Wāqid related that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “When the year 180 arrives, I permit my ummah to abstain from marriage and to resort to living a solitary life on the mountain tops.” This was narrated by Razī.416

Commentary: Abstaining from Marriage and Living in Solitude
Some spiritual masters opted for this in order to avoid internal and external temptation are known to have adopted these means. The ḥadith here clearly permits this in such circumstances. The year is named in order to make reference to this very situation [of temptation] because it was a time of many temptations.417

416 ‘Ali al-Kanānī has recorded this in his Tanzīḥ ash-Shariʿa al-Marfuʿa: 2:346

417 It may seem incongruous to find a ḥadith of questionable authenticity coming immediately after the author has cautioned against the circulation of such ḥadiths by Sufi masters. The only explanation that comes to mind is that the author regarded the collection (Taysir al-Wusul by al-Shaybānī) from which he drew all the ḥadiths in this book, as reliable. However, while this is generally true, Taysir does include some dubious narrations and this, perhaps, is one of them. YTD.
Anas related that a man said to the Messenger of Allāh: “Should I tie my camel and place my trust in Allāh, or untie it and place my trust in Allāh?” He replied: “Tie it and place your trust in Allāh.” This was related by Tirmidhi.  

Commentary: Resorting to Means does not Negate Placing One’s Trust in Allāh
Abandoning the means is not necessary for tawakkul (placing one’s trust in Allāh). This hadith is clear in this regard. It is not permitted to abandon certain means for all people. While certain means may not be abandoned by the weak-hearted. This hadith can be explained in both ways.

Ibn ‘Abi Kathir related that Abū Sahm said: “A woman passed by me [in the street] and I brushed against her [being overcome by lust]. However, I immediately took my hand away [out of fear for Allāh]. The next day, the Messenger of Allāh was accepting pledges of allegiance, bay’ah, from people and I, too, went [to him for the same purpose]. He said to me: ‘Are you not the one who touched [that woman] yesterday?’ I replied: ‘

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418 Tirmidhi: 2517
419 The error alluded to in this hadith actually included a third party. The assumption must be made here that the woman in question was unaware of what transpired. Otherwise, had harm been caused, the matter would not have been dealt with lightly. In this instance, the lady neither reported the matter nor presented evidence to support a claim of wrongdoing. Interfering with women is clearly a prohibited and reprehensible act. Generally speaking, the Shari’a prohibits all acts, however negligible in their own right that may lead to prohibited acts. Thus, even following women about (when there is no good reason to do so) is prohibited. In this case, when the Prophet had extrasensory knowledge of the act, it is clear that he understood as well that the woman had not been aware of the touch and had therefore not been alarmed. Most importantly, the Prophet was satisfied that the guilty party had caused harm only to himself; and that the man had truly repented and would never commit such an act again. Finally, in the absence of either a complaint or evidence, no ruling could be made against the offender. It should also be noted that
Indeed, O Messenger of Allāh! But I will never do that again.’ He then took the pledge of allegiance from me.” This was reported by Razin.420

Commentary: Apprising an Aspirant of an Error Committed in Privacy

It is the practise of some spiritual masters when they learn, either through a spiritual vision, kashf, or through evidence or information, of an improper act committed by an aspirant, that they apprise the aspirant of the same for purposes of reprimanding and correcting. If they apprise the aspirant in the presence of others, they do so in vague terms so that the aspirant may not be publicly embarrassed. This hadith makes reference to all of this. However, spiritual visions are not to be used [or accepted] as legal evidence. Therefore, punishing the person or thinking ill of him or her on the basis of such visions is not permissible. At times a spiritual master may be aware of a wrong committed by an aspirant, and yet the master will not apprise him of it owing to some underlying reason such as the fear that it might make the aspirant more audacious, and so on.

Hadith 267

‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb related the hadith in which Jibra’il posed certain questions to the Messenger of Allāh. [One of the questions was this]: “Tell me. What is ihsān?” [The literal meaning of this word is to worship in the best possible manner. In other words, in a way that is devoid of ostentation and inattention. In short, such worship must have the qualities of sincerity and presence of mind]. He replied: “It refers to worshipping Allāh as though you are seeing Him. [In other words, if you were to see Allāh at such a time, how would you worship Him? That is how you should worship Allāh. It is inevitable that worship under such circumstances will be performed with the utmost sincerity and presence of mind. That is how you are supposed to worship Allāh. If you do not see Him, the need to worship Him like that is still present because] if you do extrasensory evidence, even when presented by the Prophet himself, cannot be considered admissible in a court of law. And Allāh knows best. YTD.

420 This is reported in al-Istifāb under the entry of Abū Sahm. Its chain is strong as Ḥāfīz Ibn Ḥajar has commented in al-İṣābah: 4:103.
not see Him, He certainly sees you [and this is sufficient reason to worship Him in this way].” This was related by Muslim.\textsuperscript{421}

Commentary: The Essential Sufi Way
This question was posed after the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ was asked about the essence of iman and Islam. It may be inferred from this that, apart from beliefs and outward deeds, there is something else worthy of acquiring. This is referred to as ihšān. Ihšān, as explained in this Ḥadīth, is the essence of the Sufi way. This Ḥadīth therefore affirms the correctness of the Sufi way.

\textbf{ḤADĪTH 268}

\begin{align*}
&
\text{‘Ubadah ibn ‘as-Ṣāmit }&\text{related that while a group of his Companions were around him, the Messenger of Allâh }\text{said: "Give me your pledge that you will not ascribe partners to Allâh and that you will not steal." This was related by Bukhārī and Muslim.\textsuperscript{422}}
\end{align*}

Commentary: Pledging Allegiance (bayā’ah)
This Ḥadīth clearly states that the people whose pledge he sought were Companions. Thus, it may be established that apart from pledging allegiance on embracing Islam and before waging jihād, a pledge to abstain from acts of disobedience and to adhere to acts of obedience and worship also used to be taken. Such a pledge is the same pledge which is practised by the Sufis. Rejection of this practice is therefore tantamount to ignorance.

\textbf{ḤADĪTH 269}

\begin{align*}
&
\text{Fuṭālah al-Kāmil }&\text{related that the Messenger of Allâh }\text{said: "A}
\end{align*}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{421}\text{Muslim: 8}
\item \textsuperscript{422}\text{Bukhārī: 18, Muslim: 1709, Tirmidhî: 1439, Nasā’î: 4215}
\end{itemize}
mujahid is one who strives against his desires in order to obey Allâh.”

This was related by Bayhaqi.\(^{423}\)

**Commentary: Jihad Against Desire is Referred to as the Greater Jihad**

Striving against one’s desires is referred to as the greater jihad in many of the sayings of the spiritual masters. This is established from the hadith above because the grammar in this expression “A mujahid is one who” indicates that the speaker intends to restrict the reference to a certain kind of mujahid and, when there is nothing to indicate otherwise, the assumption is that the kind of mujahid intended is the perfect mujahid. This sort of expression is well known to scholars of Arabic. The hadith therefore means that a perfect mujahid is a mujahid who struggles with his or her desires. It should be obvious from the foregoing that the most perfect form of jihad is jihad against desires. Here, the words “perfect” and “greater” have the same meaning.

**ḤADĪTH 270**

\(\text{عَنُّ عَطَّانَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: إِنَّ رَجَالًا مِّنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ جِينٍ}
\(\text{لَضِعَّ أَفْلَامَ وَرُكَابَ. قَالَ عَطَّانَ: وَكَانَتْ مِنْهُمُ الْقَبَّةَ أَنا جَالِسُ}
\(\text{مَرَّ عَلَيْنَا عُمَرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَمْ أَشْعِرَ بِهِ فَاَشْتَكَى عُمَرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَلَى أَبِي بْكَرٍ}
\(\text{رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: ثُمَّ أَقَبَلاً حَتَّى سَلَّمَا عَلَى جِيْمَانٍ وَقَالَ أَبُو بْكَرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: مَا حَكَلَ أَن}
\(\text{لَا يُرَدَّ عَلَى أَجْبِيكَ عُمَّرٍ سَلَامَةٍ؟ فَقَالَ: مَا فَعَلْتُ فَقَالَ عُمَّرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: بَلْ وَلِلَّهِ أُقْدِ}
\(\text{فَعَلْتُ فَقَالَ: قَلْتُ وَلِلَّهِ مَا أَشْعِرَتْ أَنَّكَ مَرَّتَ وَسَلَّمْتَ فَقَالَ أَبُو بْكَرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ:}
\(\text{صَدَقَ عَطَّانٍ فَقَدْ شَغْلَتْ عَنْ ذَلِكَ أَمَّرُ فَقَالَ أَجَلُ قَالَ: مَا هُوَ فَقَالَ: نَوْقُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَ}
\(\text{بَيْنِي صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ قَبِلَ أنْ سَأَلَّهُ عَنْ نَجَاةَ هذَا الأَمْرُ. الحَدِيثُ (رُوَاهُ أَحَمَدِ)}

‘Uthmân \& related: Many people from among the Companions of the Messenger of Allâh \& became quite grieved when he passed away, to the extent that some of them began experiencing whisperings. ‘Uthmân \& said: “I was also from among these people. While I was sitting down one day, ‘Umar \& passed by me and offered salâm to me but I did not even perceive his presence. ‘Umar \& went and complained to Abû Bakr \&. They both came to me and offered salâm to me together. Abû Bakr \&

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\(^{423}\) Al-Bayhaqi has reported this in his *Shu‘ab al-Imân*: 11123 [7:499]
then said: ‘Why is it that you did not reply to the salâm of your brother, 'Umar?’ I replied: ‘I did not do that.’ ‘Umar said: ‘I take an oath by Allâh that you did that.’ I said: ‘By Allâh, I did not even realise that you passed by me; nor did I know that you offered salâm to me.’ Abû Bakr said: “Uthmân is speaking the truth. It seems that some serious matter has kept you preoccupied.” I said: ‘Indeed.’ He asked: ‘What is the matter?’ I said: ‘Allâh took away His Messenger and we did not even have the opportunity to ask him the actual basis for salvation in this religion [of Islam].”’ (In other words, the Shari‘a specifies numerous injunctions, but what is the fundamental principle of all this?) The ḥadîth further states that Abû Bakr consoled ‘Uthmân by informing him that he had posed this question to the Messenger of Allâh and that the Prophet replied that it is belief in oneness and prophecy (that Allâh is One and that Muhammad is His Messenger). This was related by Āhmad.424

Commentary: Whisperings do not Negate Perfection in the Path
Can anyone have doubts about the perfection of ‘Uthmân? Yet he experienced whisperings. It should be clear from this incident that whisperings neither negate perfection nor are they harmful to one’s internal self.

Absence
To be lost in thought about something related to religion is something that occasionally happens to people. The intensity of this experience caused ‘Uthmân to ignore his surroundings. This state is known as absence and obliviousness. This ḥadîth affirms the same.

ḤADĪTH 271

Abû Huraira related that the Messenger of Allâh said: “Satan comes to a person and asks: ‘Who created this? Who created that?’ He eventually asks: ‘Who created your Lord?’ If he reaches such a stage, the person

424 Musnad Ahmad: 1:6
should seek refuge in Allâh and abstain [from having such thoughts].”

This was related by Bukhâri and Muslim.425

Commentary: The Means to Repel Whisperings

This was explained previously in hadith [262]. The present hadith provides another method, viz. to say: “I seek refuge in Allâh.” Apart from the blessedness of this supplication, it has another secret, viz. when the person turns his attention towards Allâh by seeking of refuge, this will draw his attention away from the whispering. This is because the soul cannot turn its attention to two things at the same time. The essence of this method is thus to become occupied in the remembrance of Allâh. Thereafter, there will be no need to focus specific attention on repelling the whisperings.

**Hadîth 272**

Al-Qâsim ibn Muhammad related that a person asked him saying: “I experience a lot of doubts when offering my salâh.” He said to him: “[Pay no attention to them] and continue offering your salâh [in this way] because even if you try to avoid such thoughts, they will never be repelled. Even when you complete your salâh, you will continue thinking to yourself that you did not complete your salâh [thinking that you have certainly left something out. You will therefore repeat your salâh and still have the same doubts upon completing this second salâh as well. So how many times are you going to repeat your salâh? It is therefore better not to even bother about such thoughts].” This was related by Mâlik.426

Commentary: The Means to Repel Whisperings

This narration provides another method, viz. the person should not bother about these whisperings, not act upon them, and not turn his attention to them. This treatment has proven to be the greatest cure.

This is explained in another way in Lama’ât and Mîrqâ: This whispering will

425 Buchâri: 3276, Muslim: 134
426 Muwatta’: pg. 35
not be warded off unless you complete your ṣalāh and say [to Satan]: “Even if I were to accept that my ṣalāh is incomplete, Allāh is Merciful—He will either accept it [as it is] or forgive me. I am not in need of your advice. This is between me and my Allāh.”

ḤADĪTH 273

ʿUthmān ḅ. related that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Whoever performs an ablution as I performed this ablution and then offers two rakʿātayn of ṣalāh without talking to himself about anything in these two rakʿātayn, his past sins [minor sins] are forgiven.” This was related by Bukhārī and Muslim.\footnote{Bukhārī: 159. Muslim: 229}

Commentary: Unintentional Thoughts in Ṣalāh are not Harmful
Most people are under the assumption that stray thoughts in ṣalāh are harmful to one’s concentration. Since the concentration is considered beyond one’s control, most people ignore the matter entirely. The ḥadith above uses the verb talking, yuhaddithu, which is an act within one’s control. It may be inferred from this that thoughts which are knowingly brought to mind are harmful to one’s concentration. Giving this up is within one’s control. As for thoughts that come unintentionally and unwittingly, they are not harmful. Paying attention to concentration in prayer is therefore necessary and also attainable.

ḤADĪTH 274

ʿUqbah ibn ʿAmir ṣ. related that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “When a person performs a perfect ablution and offers two cycles, rakʿatayn of
ṣalāh in such a manner that his heart and face [internal and external self] are totally devoted to them, Paradise most certainly awaits [becomes obligatory for] him.” This was related by Muslim.\textsuperscript{428}

**Commentary: concentration in Ṣalāḥ**

This method is gauged by pondering over the words: “that his heart and face are totally devoted to them”. The words “to them” refer to the two cycles. A cycle is made up of several words and actions. Being devoted to a cycle therefore entails devotion to the components of the cycle [i.e. to the words and actions of that cycle]. Therefore, the method of attaining a state of concentration in prayer is that the words and actions which are executed in the ṣalāh should be done with attention and intent. They should not be performed merely by rote. For example, when a person verbally says: “subḥānaka Allāhumma”, he should turn his attention to the fact that he is saying this with his tongue. When he says: “bi ḥamdika”, he must likewise turn his attention and intention to this. He must continue in this way till the end of the ṣalāh. In this way, all his time in ṣalāh will be devoted to the act of worship. When one’s attention is turned towards a particular thing, it cannot turn to something else. It is therefore inevitable that one’s attention will not be directed to anything apart from ṣalāh. In so doing, one will have achieved complete presence of heart.

The word “face” [in this ḥadith] makes reference to the fact that preoccupation with the limbs has the effect of keeping the heart preoccupied. Controlling the limbs is therefore necessary for perfection in concentration. If not, by turning the face around, one’s thoughts will also stray through the straying of the eyes.

**ḤADĪTH 275**

\[عَنْ أَنْسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "يَا أَنْسُ! اجْعَلْ بَصْرَكَ حَيْثُ تُسَجَّدُمَ. (رواية البهقَي)\]

Anas related that the Messenger of Allāh said: “O Anas! Direct your eyes to the point of prostration.” This was related by Bayhaqi.\textsuperscript{429}

**Commentary: Confining One’s Eyes**

It is established through experience that one is able to acquire concentration by

\textsuperscript{428} Muslim: 234, Abū Dāwūd: 906

\textsuperscript{429} Al-Bayhaqi in his Sunan: 2:284
confining one’s eyes [to one spot]. This is the object of several different spiritual practices or *ashghāl*. This ḥadīth is thus a basis for these practices.

**ḤADĪTH 276**

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عُنْ مَطْرَفٍ بِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنِ الشَّحِيْرَ عَنِ أَبِيهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: أَتَبْنُ النَّبِيبِ صَلَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ وَهُوَ يُصِلُّ وَلِحَوْفِهِ أَنْزَيْتُ كَأَنْزَيْتُ الْمُرْجَمَ بَيْنَ يَنْصِيَتِي بَيْنَيْكِي، وَفِي رَوَاهُ قَالَ: رَأَبْتُ النَّبِيبِ صَلَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ يُصِلُّ وَفِي صَدْرِهِ أَنْزَيْتُ كَأَنْزَيْتُ الْرَّحِي مَنَ الْبَكَاءِ. (رواه أحمد)
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Muṭarrif ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn ash-Shikhkhir related from his father who said: “I went to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ while he was offering *ṣalāh*. There was a sound in his chest like something boiling in a cauldron.” In other words, he was crying. Another narration states: “I saw the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ offering *ṣalāh* and in his chest was a sound like that of a grinding stone because he was crying.” Both narrations were related by Aḥmad, the first by Nasa’ī, and the second by Aḥād Dawūd.430

**Commentary: Wajd (ecstasy)**

To be overcome by a strange yet praiseworthy condition is known as *wajd*. This condition of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ [described in these narrations] was of this type. The *wajd* of the close servants of Allāh is in most cases intricate and subtle like this. It does not entail screaming, tearing of one’s clothes, etc. Those who unintentionally experience such things, however, [screaming, etc.] may be excused.

**ḤADĪTH 277**

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عَنْ عُمَّةَ الْدَّرْدَاءِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا الْدَّرْدَاءِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ يُقُولُ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَالقَابِسِ صَلَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُقُولُ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى قَالَ: يَا عِبْسِي إِنِّي بَايَعِتُ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ أَمَّةٍ. الخَالِدُ وَفَيْهِ: قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَعْطَيْنِي مِنْ حَلِيمٍ وَعَلِيمٍ. (رواه الbihiqi)
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Umm al-Darda’ ﷺ related: I heard Abū al-Darda’ ﷺ saying: I heard Abū al-Qāsim ﷺ saying: “Allāh said: ‘O ‘Īsā! I am going to send a nation after

430 Musnad Aḥmad: 4:26, Abū Dāwūd: 904, Nasa’ī: 1215
you [referring to the nation of Muhammad ﷺ].” This hadith also states: “Allâh said: ‘I will give them of My forbearance and knowledge.’” This was related by Bayhaqi.\(^{431}\)

**Commentary: Manifestation**

It is stated in the explanations of most monotheist theologians that certain attributes of the Almighty, which are both obligatory and possible, are manifested in certain of His creations. For example, the attribute of giving life is found in water, the quality of retracting (or withholding) is found in fire, and many other attributes are found in man. In short, only certain appropriate attributes have been identified in this sort of manifestation. However, some overly strict people are under the misconception that the spiritual master—Allâh forbid—believe in the transferral of these very attributes (to humans) or that they are equally possible and obligatory (for humans). The words “I will give them of My forbearance and knowledge” in this hadith obviously support this belief (of the monotheists). The explanation given by the masters is the very same which is provided by this hadith. At times, the entirety of creation is considered to be a unilateral manifestation of these appropriate and shared attributes. When such is the case, there can be no doubt about this matter; nor does it require further explanation.

**HADITH 278**

عَنْ عائشَةَ رضي الله تعالى عنها قالت: كَانَ أَدْخَلْتُ بِيْنَيْنِي إِلَى فَوْهَا فَلَمَّا دَفْنَ عُمَّرٍ مَعْهُم فَوَلَّهُ اللَّهُ مَا دَخَلَتْهُ إِلَّا وَأَنَا مُسْتَدْوَةَ عَلَى بَيْنَيْ حِيَابِي مِنْ عُمُرَ (رواه أحمد)

‘A’isha  related: “I used to go into my house [in which the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ and Abû Bakr  were buried]. But when ‘Umar  was buried with them, by Allâh, I never entered that room without first covering myself properly out of modesty for ‘Umar .” This was related by Ahmad.\(^{432}\)

**Commentary: According Respect to the Dead as it is Accorded to the Living**

The spiritual masters state that one may go to the grave of the deceased and accord as much respect to that person as one used to when the person was alive. This is on condition that one does not transgress the limits of the Shari‘a such that one, for example, sits the same distance from the grave as one used to sit

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\(^{431}\) Al-Bayhaqi has narrated it in *Shu‘ab al-Imân: 4482 [4:114]*

\(^{432}\) *Musnad Ahmad: 6:202*
from the deceased when he or she was alive, etc. This is established from this ḥadith. When ‘A’isha used to go to ‘Umar for any work when the latter was alive, she would thoroughly cover herself and go. She adopted the same practice when going to his grave and this was the reason for going in this way. This is the meaning of “out of modesty for ‘Umar”. As for using this as proof that the deceased have perception and knowledge [while in their graves], the heart definitely does not accept this.

**ḤADITH 279**

Ibn ‘Abbās related: “One of the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh pitched his tent over a grave without knowing that it was a grave. He then heard someone [apparently from the grave] reciting the Chapter of Dominion [from the Qur’ān], till he completed its recitation. The Companion went to the Messenger of Allāh and informed him of what he heard. The Messenger of Allāh said: ‘This chapter is a protector. It is a saviour—it saves its reader from the punishment of Allāh [that is meted out in the grave].’” This was related by Tirmidhī.433

**Commentary: Spiritual Vision from Graves**

Spiritual visions from graves sometimes occur unintentionally and without effort, as was the case with this Companion. Sometimes these occur as a result of one’s spiritual exertions and disciplines. Nevertheless, that such visions may occur is established from this ḥadith.

**Spiritual Benefit from Grave Dwellers**

There is no doubt whatsoever that listening to the Qur’ān bestows a spiritual benefit. The Companion mentioned in the ḥadith above obtained this benefit through the person who was buried in the grave. This proves that blessings may in fact be bestowed upon the living by those who dwell in their graves.

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433 Tirmidhī: 2890
Hadith 280

Ibn 'Umar related that the Messenger of Allah said: “These hearts become rusty just as steel becomes rusty when water falls onto it.” He was asked: “O Messenger of Allah! How can they be polished?” He replied: “Profuse remembrance of death and recitation of the Qur'an.” This was related by Bayhaqi.434

Commentary: Proof that the Heart Becomes Light or Dark

The statements of the spiritual masters often mention lightness and darkness of peoples' hearts. This hadith clearly affirms this.

Hadith 281

Tawüs related that the Messenger of Allah was asked: “Who has the best voice and best recitation of the Qur'an?” He replied: “The person whose recitation makes you feel he fears Allah.” Tawüs said: “Talq was [a person who recited] in this way.” This was related by Dārimi.435

Commentary: The Way of Reciting the Qur'an

Since humility is not experienced without imagining that one is presenting oneself before Allâh, this hadith makes reference to the fact that when one is reciting the Qur'an, one should imagine that one is sitting before Allâh, reciting to Him, and that He is listening. This is a good way of reciting the Qur'an and is also taught by the spiritual masters.

434 Al-Bayhaqi has reported it in his Shu'ab al-Imān: 2:353
435 Dārimi: 3489
Ubayy ibn Ka'b related: “I was in the masjid when a person came and offered salāh. He recited in a manner I considered wrong [because some of the words which he read were different from what I remembered]. Another person entered the masjid and his recitation was different from that of the first person. When we completed our salāh, we all went to the Messenger of Allāh and I said to him: ‘This person read the Qur’ān in a way which I considered wrong. This second person entered and recited the Qur’ān differently from the first person.’ He asked both of them to recite and, when they recited, he said that both their recitations were correct. My heart experienced a state of disbelief [to the extent of a whispering], but this state was not like that of jahiliyyah [but even more]. When the Messenger of Allāh saw this state which had overcome me, he struck me on my chest. I began perspiring profusely and was overcome by such fear as if I was seeing Allāh. He then gave the reason for considering their recitations to be correct by saying that it is permissible to recite in all these ways.” This was related by Muslim.436

Commentary: The Practice of Taṣāruf
Striking a person and causing him to experience this condition is known as taṣāruf (conditioning or imposing).

The Condition of Ecstasy and Enthralment
The condition experienced by ‘Ubayy after he was struck by the Prophet’s hand is known as ecstasy, wajd. Being overcome in this manner is an extreme
state of enthrallment, *istighrāq*. We learn that it was an extreme state because the person compared it to seeing Allāh. It is obvious that if it were really possible to see Allāh in this world, Ubayy Ḥ would certainly not have remained conscious.

**ḤADĪTH 283**

`Umar ibn al-Khattāb Ḥ related: “I sought permission from the Messenger of Allāh Ḥ to perform `umrah. He Ḥ gave me permission and said: ‘O my brother! Include us in your supplications and do not forget us.’ This [request for supplication] was such that I would not agree to exchanging it for the entire world.” This was related by Abū Dāwūd.437

Commentary: Benefiting from Those Below You

It is learnt from this ḥadīth that the people of perfection can obtain certain benefits from those below them. Therefore no one has the right to consider himself absolutely independent.

**ḤADĪTH 284**

`Abdullāh ibn `Umar Ḥ related that the Messenger of Allāh Ḥ used to say: “There is a polish for everything, and the polish for hearts is the remembrance of Allāh.” This was related by Bayhaqī.438

Commentary: Proof for the Polishing of the Heart

The spiritual masters make frequent mention of the polishing of the heart. This ḥadīth clearly proves this.

438 Al-Mundhiri has recorded it in *at-Targhib wa `t-Tarhib* from Ibn Abī`d-Dunyā and al-Bayhaqī: 2:254
Hadith 285

Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ related that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ recited the verse:

"Whomsoever Allâh wills to guide, He expands his breast for Islam,” he commented: “When light enters the breast, it expands.” He ﷺ was asked: “O Messenger of Allâh! Is there any way of identifying this?” He ﷺ replied: “Yes, avoidance of the abode of deception [this world], attention to the abode of eternity, and preparation for death before its descent.” This was related by Bayhaqi.439

Commentary: The Sign of Internal Affinity

Internal affinity for the Almighty is also known as enlightenment and expansion of the heart (šarh as-ṣadr). The signs of this state are mentioned in the Ḥadîth above. These signs may aid a person in his or her search for a spiritual guide. Other qualities are also necessary for a person to be eligible for the office of spiritual guide. But these qualities are also dependent (upon the presence of other qualifications). As such they should be understood as prerequisites and not reasons for eligibility as a spiritual guide.

Hadith 286

Abû Huraira ﷺ and Abû Khallâd ﷺ relate that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “If you see a person endowed with abstinence in this world and the

439 Al-Bayhaqi has recorded this in his Shu‘ab al-Imân: 10552
trait of speaking less, stay close to him for he is bestowed with wisdom [from Allâh].” This was related by Bayhaqi.\(^{440}\)

Commentary: Esoteric Knowledge
The sort of knowledge alluded to in the hadith above is also known as esoteric, ‘ilm ladunni and bestowed knowledge, ‘ilm wahbi (as opposed to acquired knowledge). Such knowledge may be gifted to the closest servants of the Almighty ﷺ. Indeed, many of the writings of these servants contain such knowledge and have been compiled and preserved. The literalists, owing to their lack of understanding, reject all this and may be understood to be those described in the following poem:

How many people find fault with a correct statement,
when their trouble is only that they suffer from poor understanding.

Hadîth 287

Umayyah ibn Khâlid ibn ‘Abdullâh ibn Usayd related that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ used to supplicate for victory through the poor Emigrants. This is related in the Sharh as-Sunnah.\(^{441}\)

Commentary: The Practice of Using an Intermediary
It is common practice, known as tawassul, for Sufis to supplicate the Almighty ﷺ through the offices of an intermediary among the accepted servants of Allâh ﷺ. The legitimacy of such a practice is established from the hadith above. This practice also explains the essence and purpose of reciting the aspirant’s spiritual family tree, shajarah (the names of spiritual masters in a continuous chain) which is popular among Sufis.

Hadîth 288

\(^{440}\) Al-Bayhaqi has recorded this in his Shu'ab al-Imân: 4985 [4:254]

\(^{441}\) Al-Baghawi has reported this in his Sharh as-Sunnah: 7:303
Anas related that “When they experienced a drought, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb used to supplicate for rain through ‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib saying: ‘O Allah! We used to supplicate for rain through our Prophet and You used to send rain to us. We are now supplicating You through the uncle of the Prophet, so send rain to us.’ Rain would then come down to them.” This was related by Bukhārī.

Commentary
Like the previous ḥadith, this ḥadith also proves the permissibility of tawassul. The permissibility of tawassul through the Messenger of Allāh was obvious. This statement of ‘Umar was to show that tawassul is permissible through people other than Prophets as well. Therefore, the assertion that there is a difference in the ruling for tawassul with regard to those who are alive and those who are deceased is a baseless assertion. First of all, the Messenger of Allāh is alive in his grave, as expressly stated in an authentic ḥadith. Secondly, since the basis for permissibility is found in both cases, why should the ruling not be the same for both?

ḤADĪTH 289

Abū ad-Dardā’ related that the Messenger of Allāh said: “Search for me [on the day of Resurrection] among your poor because [they enjoy such a status whereby] you receive sustenance or victory by virtue of your poor.” This was related by Abū Dāwūd.

Commentary
Like the previous two ḥadiths, this ḥadith also proves the permissibility of tawassul. In fact, this ḥadith establishes tawassul merely on the basis of Islam. This is because non-Muslims are certainly not intended in the ḥadith. The precondition is the person must have some basis for acceptance [in the sight of Allāh] such as poverty, as mentioned in this ḥadith.

442 Bukhārī: 1010
443 Abū Dāwūd: 2394, Tirmidhi: 1702, Nasā‘i: 3181
Abū Huraira related that a man entered his home and, seeing the needs of his family, went out to earn something for them. When his wife saw this, she went to the mill-stone and placed the upper stone onto the lower stone. Then she went to the oven and ignited it, making the following supplication: “O Allāh! Provide us with sustenance.” When she looked, she saw that the circle of the mill-stone was filled [with flour]. She went to the oven and saw that it was filled [with bread]. When her husband returned home, he asked: “Did you receive anything in my absence?” She replied: “Yes. We received it from our Sustainer.” Thus, the man went to the mill-stone [and lifted its stone]. This incident was related to the Messenger of Allāh who said: “Had he not lifted the stone, it would have continued milling till the day of Resurrection [and flour would have continued coming out of it].” This was related by Aḥmad.444

Commentary
See the commentary for ḥadīth [254].

Ibn Maṣʿūd related: “It is as though I can picture the Messenger of
Allah™ relating the story of one of the previous Prophets ﷺ whose people had beat him and caused blood to flow from his body. He was wiping the blood off his face and saying: 'O Allah! Forgive my people because they know not what they do.' This was related by Bukhari and Muslim.445

**Commentary: Picturing One's Spiritual Master**

Among the many benefits of envisioning one's spiritual master, though the vision is not real, and though the purpose of the exercise is not mentioned in the ḥadith above, is to draw one's attention toward the absent in the same way one's attention is drawn toward the present. Such a practice is clearly indicated in the ḥadith above. Even so, owing to a preponderence of ignorance among people today, the practice has become subject to abuse and, in view of these factors, most scholars lean toward its prohibition.

**ḤADĪTH 292**

Abū Huraira ﷺ related that the Messenger of Allah™ said: “In the latter days people will emerge who will deceptively acquire the world in exchange for their religion. They will wear the skins of sheep and their tongues will be sweeter than sugar, while in their hearts they will be wolves. Allah™ says: 'Are these people deluded by Me? Or are they displaying their audacity against Me? I take an oath on Myself. I will subject them to a tribulation which will leave even the most forebearing among them in trauma.'” This was related by Tirmidhi.446

**Commentary: Fake Sufis**

This ḥadith is clear in its condemnation of spiritual pretenders and false Sufis.

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445 Bukhari: 3477, Muslim: 1792
446 Tirmidhi: 2404
Abū Huraira related that the Messenger of Allāh's said: “There is a novelty to everything, and after every novelty there is boredom. If a person remains steadfast and balanced, there is hope for that person (in the sense that you may expect to continue to see good things from this person). But if he continues to attract attention from people (for no more than his novelty), do not think too much of him (as he is probably not worthy of consideration).” This was related by Tirmidhī.\(^447\)

Commentary: Moderation in Striving
The spiritual masters prohibit excess in an aspirant's striving, mujāhadah through spiritual disciplines. This is clearly taught in this ḥadīth. When a person commits excesses in this regard, the novelty wears off, he becomes fed up, and his health deteriorates. This also leads to his abandonment of good deeds and striving. It may also lead to lunacy at times.

Abū Huraira related that when this verse was revealed: “And warn your close relatives”, the Messenger of Allāh summoned the Quraysh and gathered them. This ḥadīth also states that he said [to Fatimah]: “O Fatimah! Save yourself from the Hellfire because I do not have the power to save you from Allāh.” This was related by Muslim.\(^448\)

Commentary: There is no Basis for Boasting of One's Lineage
Some people proudly boast that they are the offspring of such and such a pious

\(^{447}\) Tirmidhī: 2453
\(^{448}\) Muslim: 204, Tirmidhī: 3185, Nasā'i: 3674
personality, or that they pledged their allegiance (bay‘ah) to such and such a family or Sufi order. Consequently, they neglect their beliefs and actions. This ḥadith cuts the roots off of all such claims and boasting.

**ḤADĪTH 295**

وعن صَالِح بن دَرْمَه يَقُولَ: أَطْلَقَنا حَاجَّيْنَّا إِلَّا رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ لَنَا: إِلَى جَنَّتَكَمْ قَرَينِي يُقَالُ لَهَا الأُلَّةَ؟ فَلَنَا: نَعَمْ، قَالَ: مَن يُضِمْنَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَصْلِيَ لِيْ فِي مسجد العِشْاَر رَكْعَتَيْنِ ؟ أَرْبَعَأَمَّن يَقُولُ هَذَا لأَيِّهَا هَرْبَةَ ؟ سَمِعْتُ خَلِيلِي أَبَا القَابِس صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيهِ وَسَلَّمْ يَقُولُ: "إِنِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَدْعُ مِنْ مسجد العِشْاَر يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ شَهَدَاءَ، لا يَقُولُ مَعْ شَهَدَاءِ بَدْرِ عِيْبَرُهُمْ". (رواية أبو داود)

Ṣalih ibn Dirham related: “We departed for the Ḥajj and met a person on the way who asked us: ‘Is there any village near you by the name of al-Ubullah?’ We replied: ‘Yes.’ He asked: ‘Is there anyone among you who can take the responsibility of offering two or four cycles of prayer in the Masjid al-‘Ashshar [which is in this village] and say that these cycles are on behalf of Abu Huraira? I heard my bosom-friend Abu al-Qasim saying: ‘On the day of Resurrection Allāh will raise from the Masjid al-‘Ashshar such martyrs who will rise with the martyrs of Badr. No other martyrs will rise with them.’” This was related by Abu Dawud.⁴⁴⁹

**Commentary: Conveying Rewards to Others**

It is obvious that asking someone to offer [this ṣalāh] on behalf of Abu Huraira is solely for the purpose of conveying this reward to Abu Huraira. Two issues with regard to conveying spiritual rewards, ḥisāl thawāb are established from this ḥadith: (1) Just as the rewards for worship by expenditure [such as charity] reach [the person in whose name it is carried out], in like manner, the rewards for physical worship reach [the person in whose name it is carried out]. (2) Just as the rewards reach the deceased, they also reach those who are alive. This is because the person who made this request was Abu Huraira himself, and he was obviously alive at the time.

**Fulfilling Acts of Worship in Blessed Places**

It is noticed that some of those who love their spiritual masters pay particular

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⁴⁴⁹ Abu Dawud: 4308
attention to engaging in remembrance and other acts of worship at the places where their spiritual master lives or at the places where he performs his acts of worship. They do this because they consider these places to be blessed. The blessed nature of such places is obvious; and the Ḥadīth establishes the benefit of carrying out acts of worship in blessed places.

**Ḥadīth 296**

"Abū Aybān Suḥaylī r.a., when the Messenger of Allah salutations upon him said: ‘Abū Sa‘īd met Ibn Shayyād on one of the roads of Madīna. The Messenger of Allah salutations upon him asked him: ‘Do you testify that I am the Messenger of Allah?’ He replied: ‘Do you testify that I am the Messenger of Allah?’ The Messenger of Allah salutations upon him said: ‘I believe in Allah, His angels, His Books and His Messengers.’ [That is, ‘I do not testify to the prophethood of one who is not a prophet.’ However, in order to avoid conflict, the Messenger of Allah salutations upon him did not state this outwardly.] ‘Very well, now you tell me. What do you see?’ Ibn Shayyād replied: ‘I see a throne on the water.’ The Messenger of Allah salutations upon him said: ‘You see the throne of Satan over an ocean.’ This was related by Muslim.

*Commentary: Resorting to Ambiguity When Fearing Tribulation*

In order to safeguard themselves from the excesses of corrupt rulers or ignorant people in general, some spiritual masters will use ambiguous language to express themselves. People who consider everything literally are therefore under the illusion that the spiritual master is concealing the truth. However, if the reason for concealing is based on an underlying reason which is acceptable in the Shari‘a, then it is in total accordance with this Ḥadīth.

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450 See the notes regarding Ibn Shayyād at Ḥadīth 211.
451 Muslim: 2925
Deceptive Spiritual Visions

It may be inferred from this hadith that even people who are deluded may also experience spiritual visions, *kashf*. The hadith also explains that not every spiritual vision is either acceptable or commendable. Consequently, the vision of Satan's throne experienced by this person, Ibn Ṣayyād, is referred to in critical terms [by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ]. Therefore, those who consider a spiritual vision to be a sign of a close relationship with the Almighty, *wilāyah*, or who give credence to and rely upon every spiritual vision (without differentiating between what is true and what is false) must examine their beliefs in this regard after considering this hadith.

**ḤADĪTH 297**

غَنِبُ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: مُسِنَا مَعَ الرَّسُولِ الَّذِي صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ بِيْنَ مَكَّةَ وَالْمُدِينَةِ فَمَرَّنَا بِهَا فَقَالَ: أَيُّوأَهْذَا؟ فُقَالَ لا تَفَرَّقُ لَنا وَلَكَ إِلَى مَوْسِعِ عَلِيِّهِ السَّلَامِ - فَذَكَرَ مِنْ لُونِهِ وَشِعرِهِ تَبَيَّنَا - وَأَضْعَأ إِضْعَاءً إِنْ أَفْتَلَهُ، أَنَّ جَوَازِ إِلَى اللَّهِ بِالْتَّلَبِيَّةِ مَارًا بِهَذَا الْوَادِيِّ، قَالَ: فَذَكَرَ مُسِنَا حَتَّى أَتَيْنَا عَلَى تَبَيَّنٍ، فُقَالَ: أَيُّ ثَبَةٍ هِذَا؟ فُقَالَ: هُنَّ ظَهَرَى وَلَفَتَ، فُقَالَ: كَانَ أَنْظَرَ إِلَى يُونُسُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَى نَافَقِ حَرْمَاءٍ عَلَيْهِ جَبَلَةً صُفْفٍ، حَطَّامٌ تَافِقَهُ لِيَفْتُ حَلْبَةً مَّارًا بِهَذَا الْوَادِيِّ مَلَّابَيْاً. (رواه مسلم)

Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ related: “We were travelling with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ between Makka and Madina when we passed by a valley. He ﷺ asked: ‘What valley is this?’ The people replied: ‘This is the Azraq valley.’ He ﷺ said: ‘I can see Mūsā here as if he were present.’ He then described the complexion of his skin and something about his hair, adding that his fingers were in his ears and that he was chanting the pilgrims’ chant, *talbiyah* (i.e. saying *Labbayk*) to Allah as he passed through the valley.” Ibn Ťabbās ﷺ said: “We then proceeded until we reached a pass. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked: ‘Which pass is this?’ The people replied: ‘It is the Harshay or Laft pass.’ He ﷺ said: ‘I can see Yūnūs here as if he were present, riding a red camel and wearing a woollen cloak. The halter of his camel is made of the bark of the date palm. He is passing by this valley saying the *talbiyah.*” This was related by Muslim.452

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452 Muslim: 166
Commentary: The Appearance of the Soul at a Place after Death

This ḥadīth shows that Mūsā ﷺ and Yūnūs ﷺ were seen by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. This was a spiritual manifestation because at the time both of their bodies were in their graves.

**ḤADĪTH 298**

Jubayr ibn Mut‘im ﷺ related that a Bedouin came to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and said: “People have done everything they could do, but families are hungry, fortunes (orchards and plantations) have been destroyed, and cattle are dying. Pray to Allāh ﷺ for us and ask Him to send down rain. We petition you as an intercessor before Allāh ﷺ, and we petition Allāh ﷺ as an intercessor before you.” The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ (became distressed by these words: “we petition Allāh ﷺ as an intercessor before you” and) began saying, “Glory be to Allāh, glory be to Allāh, subḥānAllāh, subḥānAllāh.” He ﷺ repeated these words with such intensity that their effects were seen on the faces of his Companions. Finally he ﷺ said: “Woe unto you! Allāh is not to be considered an intercessor before anyone. Allāh’s status is far beyond that.” (In other words, an intercession entails a supplication and a need. Allāh does not supplicate anyone, nor is He in need of anyone. This statement supposes Allāh to have need, and is therefore repulsive). This ḥadīth was related by Abū Dāwūd.⁴⁵³

Commentary: Etiquette and the Status of the Almighty

Some Sufis are overly audacious when supplicating Allāh ﷺ. This hadith should provide guidance to such people. When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ so emphatically distanced himself from the supplication made by this ordinary person, how much more reprehensible will it be for a person who seeks a relationship with Allāh to say such things?! Some people are not audacious but make inappropri-
ate statements out of ignorance, as was the case with this Bedouin. It is essential, even in such situations, to avoid all impropriety. However, in such cases (in which things are said out of ignorance), the one saying these things will not be declared an unbeliever, as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not declare this Bedouin to be guilty of disbelief. It is nevertheless obligatory to bring the matter to the attention of the offender and to reject it to the clearest degree possible. Yes, those who are overcome by their spiritual condition may be excused for their enthusiasm and pardoned. Once they recover from their condition, however, the matter should be explained to them gently.

**Hadith 299**

أَعَنَّ أَبِي هَرُبَةَ رَضِيَ الَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم: "فَأَلَّا يُكَذِّبُ عَلَى الْأَرْضَ السُّفُلَ لِيَهْبَطُ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ." (رواية أحمد والترمذي)

Abū Huraira ﷺ related that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “I swear by the One Whose hands hold the life of Muḥammad! If you were to lower a rope to the lowest level on earth, it will fall on Allah.” (In other words, Allah ﷺ is present there as well). This was related by Aḥmad and Tirmidhi.

*Commentary: Allah is Everywhere*

In explaining the omnipresent attribute of the Almighty, the speech of many Sufis portrays His all-encompassing Being in physical form. To begin with, the issue of omnipresence is a subject of debate among the theologians; and likewise the issue of how this is manifested. The only certain way to avoid error in this regard is to maintain that the Almighty is above all earthly, material, corporeal and ephemeral phenomena. At the same time, according to scripture (the Qurʾān and authentic ḥadith literature) the Almighty assumes a position on a throne; and therefore there are literalists who mistakenly suppose the sayings of the Sufis to be contrary to the orthodox theological interpretations. The ḥadith above, however, upholds the position of the Sufis. To those who hold misgivings with regard to the Sufis we say that whatever explanation they offer for the ḥadith above is the same explanation the Sufis will give for the statements they make.

454 Musnad Aḥmad: 2:370, Tirmidhi: 3298
Commentary: The state of Spiritual Contraction

The cessation of spiritual expansion, for whatever reason, is known as contraction, qabid. That such a condition may occur is confirmed in this hadith.

The person who experiences contraction may be excused from committing suicide.

It sometimes happens that people who experience contraction become disheartened and dejected to the extent that they commit suicide. A close reading of the hadith above, however, reveals that it is not unreasonable to assume that such people may be excused in the sight of the Almighty. When the Messenger of Allah himself, despite his well-known powers of self-control, considered doing this, it is not difficult to see how others might fall into such a situation. There is nothing in the hadith or sirah literature to suggest that he was reprimanded for this intention. The same can be assumed if he actually committed the act.456

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455 Bukhari: 6982

456 Suicide is a painful and tragic act and must never be encouraged. This may explain why the Prophet avoided the funeral prayer for suicides and taught that community leaders and officials should also avoid them. This does not mean, however, that people should scorn or in any other way belittle or malign those who take their own lives. On the contrary, friends and family should join in the funeral proceedings, including the janazah prayer, both to seek blessings for the departed and as a way of giving solace to one another. Suicide is an act of desperation; and only the Almighty can know the reasons for its occurrence. Judgment is for Allah alone. For those left behind, there is grief and, in many cases, guilt. The funeral prayer is a way to bring closure to all of that. The author's commentary here is perceptive and, to my knowledge, unique. YTD.
Consolation from the Sheikh When a Person Experiences Contraction

Spiritual masters may also provide consolation to aspirants who are beset by such conditions by telling them that their condition is actually a praiseworthy one, and by explaining to them the underlying reasons and advantages of such a condition. All of this may actually benefit the murid.

Hadith 301

'Ā'isha related that al-Ḥārith ibn Hisham asked the Messenger of Allah: “O Messenger of Allah! How does revelation come to you?” The Messenger of Allah replied: “At times it comes to me like the ringing of a bell.” This was related by Bukhārī and Muslim.

Commentary: The Confirmation of an Unseen Voice

Unseen voices are often mentioned in the works of the spiritual masters. The validity of this is confirmed from this hadith. It is, however, a serious mistake to consider every voice to be an unseen voice when a person is engaged in spiritual exercises like murāqabah and dhikr. For example, when a person is engaged in certain breathing exercises, the person may experience what he assumes is a voice. So, while some people assume it to be a voice from the Unseen, it is more likely the result of the wave-like movement of air from one’s breathing. It was the belief among many Indian Sufis that this is indeed an unseen voice; and it was for this reason that they named it “unādī” which means “ancient”. This is a completely false and mistaken belief; firstly for considering it to come from the Unseen, and secondly for considering it to be the voice of truth or of the Almighty Himself. Allāh is most pure of this. This is the belief of our genuine Sufis.

Hadith 302

457 Bukhārī: 3, Muslim: 2333, Tirmidhi: 3634, Nasāʾī: 935
One Who Wishes to Sit with Allāh Should Sit with the People of Tasawwuf

This is a well-known statement of the Sufis. The correctness of this statement is established from this hadith in the following manner. The words of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ: “If you angered them...” demonstrate that Allāh ﷺ is treated in the manner in which the accepted servants of Allāh ﷺ are treated. Based on this, it is also correct to say that sitting in the company of the accepted servants of Allāh ﷺ is similar to sitting in the company of Allāh ﷺ. The words “sitting in the company” is proven from another hadith wherein Allāh ﷺ says: “I am the sitting companion (jalis) of the one who remembers Me.”

Hadīth 303

عَنْ شُرَایْحِ بْنِ عُبَیْدٍ قَالَ: ذُكِرَ أَهْلُ الشَّامِ عِنْدَ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ وَقَلِيلٍ: الْعَنْطَهُمْ بَلْ أُمِيرُ المُؤَمِّنِينَ قَالَ: لَا، إِنَّيْ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولٍ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: الْأَبْدَالُ يَكُونُونَ بِالشَّامِ وَهُمْ أَرْبَعُونَ رَجُلًا كَانُوا مَاتَ رَجُلُ أَبْدَلُ اللهِ مُكَانَةَ رَجُلٍ نيَّسِيَ بَيْنَ الْعَلَّى وَيَنْتَصِرُ بِهِمْ عَلَى الْأَعْدَاءِ وَيَنْصَرُ عَنْ أَهْلِ الشَّامِ بِهِمُ الْغَدُّبَ (رواية أحمد)

Shurayh ibn ‘Ubayd related that someone made mention of the people of Syria in the presence of ‘Ali ﷺ. Someone [who was present there] said: “O Commander of the Faithful! Curse them.” He replied: “No. I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ saying: “The abdāl [a category of friends (awliyā’) of Allāh] live in Syria. They are forty in number. When any of them passes away, Allāh replaces him with another person. It is through their blessings that the rain falls, it is through them that enemies are vanquished,
and it is through them that [worldly] punishment is averted from the people of Syria.” This was related by Aḥmad.459

Commentary: The Existence of Abdāl and Others
The statements and writings of the Sufis make reference to abdāl, aqtāb, awtād, ghawth, etc. and also speak of their qualities, blessings and actions. Since this ḥadīth makes reference to one category, the existence of other categories is not unreasonable to imagine. The existence of one giving support to the existence of another is an established and well-known fact. The blessings of these spiritual giants is clearly attested to in this ḥadīth. As for their actions in conceptual matters, this is affirmed from the story of Khīḍr in the Qurʿān.

HADĪTH 304

Shufayy al-ʿAṣbahī related: I said to Abū Huraira: “I am asking you for the sake of the truth, and again, for the sake of the truth, that you should narrate such a hadīth of the Messenger of Allāh which you fully understood and comprehended.” Abū Huraira said: “I will do so. I will relate a hadīth to you which the Messenger of Allāh related to me, and which I fully understand and comprehend.” Abū Huraira then screamed [either because of restlessness or intense fear because one has to be extremely

459 Musnad Aḥmad: 1:112
cautious about narrating a hadith without any omissions or additions. Or this might have been out of intense yearning, in the sense that the close companionship of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was right before his eyes. We waited for a long time until he recovered. He then said: “I will relate a hadith to you which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ related to me in this very place. There was no one there apart from me and him.” Abū Huraira ﷺ screamed loudly. He then recovered, wiped his face, and said: “I will relate a hadith to you which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ related to me in this very place. There was no one there apart from me and him.” Abū Huraira ﷺ then screamed loudly. He leaned forward and fell on his face. I gave him support for a long time. He then recovered and said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ related a hadith to me...” This was related by Tirmidhi.٤٦٠

Commentary: The Condition of Ecstasy
The hadith’s reference to this spiritual state is obvious. Owing to their ability to control themselves, the past masters rarely allowed themselves to be overcome while experiencing ecstasy of this magnitude. However, it is difficult not to imagine that, at times, even they were overcome.

Hadīth 305

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّي اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «الْمُرْعَةُ مَعَ مَنْ أَحْبَبَ وَلَهُ مَا أُكْسِبَ» (رَوَاهُ التَّرْمِذِي)
Anas ibn Malik ﷺ related that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “[On the day of Resurrection] a person will be with those he loved and will receive the reward for what he did.” This was related by Tirmidhi.٤٦١

Commentary: The Practice of Pledging Allegiance for Admission into a Silsilah
Although it is known that certain individuals will not live up to the promises they made when pledging allegiance, bay’ah, or that they will not fulfil their responsibilities with regard to the prescribed spiritual practices, such as dhikr, in some cases they will still be admitted into the Sufi order, silsilah. This hadith should be understood as the basis for this because the effect of bay’ah is that it becomes a cause of love for one’s spiritual master. Consequently, there is the hope of acquiring the blessings of this love, which are mentioned in this hadith.
Abdullāh ibn Hīshām related that he was present in the era of the Messenger of Allāh and that his mother, Zaynāb bint Hūmāyd, had taken him to meet the Messenger of Allāh saying: “O Messenger of Allāh! Take a pledge of allegiance (bālah) from him.” The Messenger of Allāh said: “He is a child.” He then passed his hand over his head and supplicated for him. This was related by Bukhārī.\footnote{Bukhārī: 2501, 2502}

Commentary: The Practice of Refusing Allegiance from a Child

It is the practice of the spiritual masters to refuse allegiance from a child. The obvious reason for this is that this allegiance is a pledge to uphold obligatory injunctions, and a child is not required to uphold obligatory injunctions. The essence of this allegiance cannot therefore be realised. When such allegiance is occasionally accepted, it is a nominal allegiance performed merely for the sake of blessings.
may leave the precinct of the masjid quickly because they saw Ṣafiyyah with him, and etiquette demanded that they do this]. The Messenger of Allāh said to them: ‘Walk slowly [there is no need to hurry]. This is Ṣafiyyah bint Ḥuyayy [my wife. Do not have any other thoughts].’ They said: ‘Glory to Allāh, O Messenger of Allāh! [Can we have any evil thoughts about you that some strange woman is in solitude with you?!”] He said: ‘Satan flows in man as blood flows through his veins. I feared he might cast some evil in your hearts; or he said: ‘some evil thoughts in your hearts.’” This was related by Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Dāwūd.463

Commentary: Avoiding Whatever Gives Rise to Suspicion
Some Sufis are extremely imprudent. Despite their adherence to the Shari‘a, they make careless statements or perform acts which cause not only the masses, but also their close associates to have negative thoughts about them. Such Sufis should ponder the lesson of this ḥadith, how cautious the Messenger of Allāh was! As for those Sufis who really do not consider it essential to follow the Shari‘a, what can be said about them?! These days, most aspirants are like this [not bothered about following the Shari‘a], and so are their masters.

ḤADĪTH 308

ṣawm al-ṣafīyāt ẓuq mi-l-lāh tawāl ‘al-’lā ‘an n-ṣa’wūl l-lāh y-sul l-lāh ‘al-’lā ‘al-’lā w-salīl d-ḥāl ‘al-’lā w-t-bīn y-ḥēbā a-rūba’l-af n-ḥawā’i n-saḥīh y-ḥīn. al-ḥadīth (r-wah Abū dawūd wa al-ḥākim). Ṣafiyyah related that the Messenger of Allāh came to her when she had in front of her 4000 date-pits which she was using [as counters] for the glorification of Allāh [i.e. saying subḥānAllāh]. This was related by Abū Dāwūd and Ḥākim.464

Commentary: The Practice of Using Counters
Most of those who engage in the remembrance of Allāh are in the practice of using counters (tasbiḥ) to count the different repetitions of dhikr. This ḥadith is the basis for this because there is no difference between date pits and the beads which they use. The string [which is used for the counter] is merely to keep the beads attached. This ḥadith shows that those date pits were kept together [and not scattered everywhere]. As for the objection that holding such a counter in

463 Bukhārī: 2035, Muslim: 2175, Abū Dāwūd: 2470, Ibn Mājah: 1779
464 Tirmidhī: 3554, Ḥākim: 154
one's hand smacks of ostentation, the reply to this is that it is necessary to abstain from the essence of ostentation and not the form [or outward appearance] of ostentation. Towards the end of this book is a hadith from Ţabarānī which clearly states that abstention from the outward form of ostentation is not obligatory.

**ḤADĪTH 309**

"O Abū Saʿīd! Say to those who do it: ‘Many will be the people in this world who engage in the remembrance of Allāh on soft cushions. Allāh shall admit them to lofty gardens.’" This was related by Abū Yaʿlā.\(^{465}\)

**Commentary: Comfort and Luxury do not Negate Wilāyat**

Most of the masses are under the illusion that deprivation is necessary for piety. It should be apparent from the hadith above that if a person remains steadfast in his/her practice of remembrance and obedience, while living in comfort and luxury, he/she can still enjoy the fruits of a close relationship with Allāh. However, there are occasions when it is necessary to avoid the circumstances of luxury, or to avoid the company of certain people for a specified time or, in some cases, altogether. This is prescribed by a spiritual master for the sake of spiritual striving, mujāhada. Such avoidance is prescribed in particular situations and is not in itself a prerequisite for spiritual success.

**ḤADĪTH 310**

(ذكره السيوطي في «البدور السافرة في أحوال الاخرى»)
Abū Ya‘lā related from ‘A’isha that the Messenger of Allāh said: “The silent dhikr which even the angel scribes, al-kirām al-kātibān, cannot hear is seventy times superior to [vocal dhikr] on the day of Resurrection. Allāh will gather all of creation for the accounting of their deeds and the angel scribes will come forward with whatever they preserved or recorded. Allāh will say to them: ‘[Apart from the deeds which are recorded], is there anything else that is left?’ They will reply: ‘As far as we know and what we recorded, there is nothing that has been left out or left unrecorded.’ Allāh will say [to the person]: ‘I have a good deed of yours which even you are not aware of [at present, although you were aware of it when you were doing it because you did it by intent], and I will reward you for it. The deed is silent dhikr.’” This was related by Suyūṭī.

Commentary: The Validity of Mental Dhikr
The spiritual masters sometimes teach verbal remembrance and sometimes remembrance with the heart. Those who are concerned with the outward aspects of Islam are under the illusion that as long as the letters are not uttered by the tongue, such remembrance is not considered valid remembrance. This hadith clearly states the validity and consideration of such dhikr because, in order for an utterance to be valid, it is necessary for the angel scribes to hear it. Since their hearing is negated [in this hadith], the verbal utterance is also negated. However, a verbal utterance is unanimously considered to be a prerequisite in certain injunctions, for example, in recitation of the Qur’ān, in ṣalāh, in the marriage contract, in divorce, and in many other situations.

As for the objection that although the angelic scribes may not hear, they nonetheless have knowledge of deeds of the heart and therefore most certainly recorded this. Consequently it is mentioned in other hadiths that good intentions are recorded by these angels. The answer to this objection is that while it would appear they have knowledge of most deeds of the heart, there are exceptions. Unless, however, there is certainty regarding the particular exceptions, the deeds will be considered to be included with the majority. And Allāh knows best.

ḤADĪTH 311

466 Suyūṭī has recorded this in al-Budūr as-Sāfīrah and so has Abū Ya‘lā, as in Majma’ az-Zawā’id: 10:81
Abū Ṭufayl related that when a man passed by some people and greeted them, they replied to his greeting. When he passed beyond them, one of them said [to the others]: “By Allāh, I detest this person for the sake of Allāh.” Those present in the assembly objected, saying: "You said an evil thing. By Allāh, we will inform him. O such and such person, get up and go inform him." Their messenger caught up with the man and informed him of what the man had said. The passerby turned and went immediately to the Messenger of Allāh exclaiming: "O Messenger of Allāh! I passed by an assembly of Muslims in which a certain person was sitting. I greeted them and they replied to my greeting. When I had passed them by, one of them came running to inform me that such and such person amongst them had said: ‘By Allāh, I detest this person for the sake of Allāh.’ So, please call him and ask him why he detests me so?” The Messenger of Allāh called for the person and asked him in regard to what had tran-
spired with the passerby. The person acknowledged everything by saying: “O Messenger of Allâh! I did make this statement.” He asked: “Why do you detest him?” The person replied: “I am his neighbour and I know all about him. By Allâh, I never saw him performing any prayer, ṣalâh, except for the compulsory prayers which everyone, good and bad, offers.” The passerby replied: “O Messenger of Allâh! Ask him if he ever saw me delaying in performing these prayers, not performing a proper ablution for them, or not performing the bowing and prostrating postures correctly for these prayers?” The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ asked him about all this and he replied: “No.” The person then said: “By Allâh, I never saw him fasting except in this month [of Ramâdân] in which everyone, good and bad, keeps fast.” The passerby replied: “O Messenger of Allâh! Ask him if he ever saw me commit errors in the fasts or if I was otherwise neglectful about them?” The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ asked him about this and he replied: “No.” Then the person said: “By Allâh, I have never seen him give anything to a beggar, nor have I ever seen him spending his wealth in the cause of Allâh except for this zakâh which everyone, good and bad, gives.” The passerby replied: “O Messenger of Allâh! Ask him if I ever concealed this zakâh [from the zakâh collector or did not publicly give all my zakâh]?” The person said: “No.” The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said to the person [who made all these allegations]: “Go now. I do not know for sure, but he is probably better than you.” This was related by Aḥmad.

Commentary: The Practice of Sufficing with the Essentials of Islam

From among the physical acts of worship, the person who suffices himself with performing no more than what is obligatory and who occupies himself the rest of the time with remembrance [of Allâh] and contemplation is referred to as a qalandar in the terminology of Sufism. This ḥadîth confirms this because sufficing with the essentials is mentioned here in the text, and the Companions’ remaining in constant remembrance [of Allâh] and contemplation is inferred from the verse: “Men whom neither commerce nor buying diverts from the remembrance of Allâh.” The Companions ﷺ are at the head of the list of such men. As the passerby was a Companion ﷺ, he is included in this group. As an aside, there is a Sufi order which is known as the Malâmâtiyya (those who seek rebuke). Members of this order are very particular about concealing their extra deeds of devotion. Their methodology is established from ḥadîth [48]. All of this is explained there.

467 Musnad Aḥmad: 5:455
Hadith 312

In the musnad of Daylami from Anas that the Messenger of Allah said: "Severity is found only in the righteous and obedient servants of My community, ummah." In another version of the hadith, with the same chain of narrators, the words used are: "None is as worthy of a short temper as a person who has memorised the Qur'an, owing to the honour he accords the Qur'an in his heart." 468

Commentary: Short Temper

Some spiritual masters have a very delicate temperament and it is this subtlety that causes them to become annoyed by improprieties. This annoyance of theirs may be discerned on their face or by their speech. At times, this change in their temperament reaches the level of anger. Consequently, some narrow-minded people accuse them of ill-mannerliness. Ill-mannerliness is that which transgresses the limit of the Shari'a. A short temper, in itself, is not impious, as illustrated by this hadith. There are certain authentic traditions wherein it is related that the Messenger of Allah was even angered by ill-timed questions. One should therefore not hasten in raising objections of this nature against the spiritual masters.

Hadith 313

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud related: "The Messenger of Allah said to me: 'You have the permission to raise the curtain and listen to my secrets until I prohibit you from doing this.'" This was related by Ibn Majah. 469

468 Kashf al-Khifā' 1:423
469 Ibn Majah has reported this in the Virtues of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud.
Hadith 314

Al-Husayn ibn 'Ali related: “I asked my father about what the Messenger of Allah used to do when he entered his house. He replied: ‘When he went to his house, he would divide his time in three: one part for Allah [e.g. engaging in optional acts of worship], one part for his family [speaking and conversing with them], and one part for himself [personal relaxation]. He would then divide his personal time between necessary work and work for the benefit of the people. [In other words, some time for his own work and some time for the people]. This portion [which he set aside for the people] was spent by conveying to his close associates [who would then convey this] to the masses. He would not withhold anything from them. As for the portion which he set aside for the ummah [outside his house], it was his habit to give preference to the people of virtue.’” This was related by Tirmidhi.

Hadith 315

Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ari related: “I was with the Messenger of Allah in
one of the orchards of Madīna when a man came and asked for the door to be opened. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: ‘Go open the door and give him the glad tidings of Paradise.’ I opened the door and saw Abū Bakr ﷺ. I conveyed to him the glad tidings mentioned by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and he praised Allāh [over these glad tidings].” The Ḥadīth also mentions the arrival of ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān. This was related by Bukhārī and Muslim.

The Practice of Scheduling, Visits During Times of Solitude and Attendants at the Door

It is generally the practice of the spiritual masters to have their time scheduled so that they may enjoy certain periods of time in solitude. During these times, they do not meet the general public. At times they even appoint an attendant to remain outside and to prevent the rush of visitors. At other times, they give their special associates permission to come to them. Some people have raised a number of objections to these practices. They harbour misgivings of selfishness, favouritism and other feelings against the pious personalities. Some people see the attendant going in to the master and so they creep in behind him, attempting to use the permission which is granted to the attendant as license for their own entry. The above Ḥadīths clearly provide answers to these objections. Ḥadīth [314] establishes scheduling, having a time set aside for solitude and privacy, and giving permission to close associates only. Ḥadīth [313] is proof that if the attendant is given permission to enter, others do not necessarily enjoy the same permission. Ḥadīth [315] clearly proves the appointment of someone to sit at the door. However, it is not good to refuse permission to meet if a person has a severe and immediate need. Apart from these Ḥadīths, the Qur’ānic verse: “If you are asked to go away, then go away”472 permits this, i.e. it is also permissible to refuse to meet someone at a certain time. Similarly, the Ḥadīth: “Treat people in accordance with their standing” proves the permissibility of giving preference to one’s special associates over the masses. All of these objections are based on ignorance.

ḤADĪTH 316

Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ related: “Engaging in dhikr in a loud voice when the con-

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471 Bukhārī: 6116, Muslim: 2403, Tirmidhi: 3710
472 Al-Qur’ān, 24:28
gregation had completed the compulsory ʿṣalāḥ was prevalent in the era of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.” This was reported by Bukhārī.⁴⁷３

Commentary: The Practice of Reciting Ḏikr Aloud
Some people object to the Chishtiyyah Sufi order by saying that the practice of vocalised ḏikr is unsubstantiated. This practice is clearly mentioned in this ḥadīth. However, it is related from Imam Shafiʿī that the meaning of this ḥadīth is not that this sort of ḏikr should always be practised after the ʿṣalāḥ.

**ḤADĪTH 317**

 Urdu: عنَّ أَسْتَهَاءَ يَنْبِيْنَ َرَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَ عَنْهَا فَيْ حَدِيبٍ الدْجَالِ قَالَتْ: قَالَتْ: يا رَسُولَ اللَّهُ وَ اَللهِ إِنَّا لْعَنَّجْنَ عَجْيَبْتَنا فَأَلْحَيْنَهُمْ بِحُكْمَةٍ فَتَحْجَرَتْ بِلَامَوْمِينَ يَا مَيْتِيَّةٌ؟ قَالَ: يُحْرِيْنَهُمَا مَا يُحْرِيُّ أَهْلَ السَّيَاءَ مِنَ السَّيَٰبِحَ وَالْبَلَدِ يَوْمَئِذٍ.

Asmāʾ bint Yazīd ʿAi related in the ḥadīth of the Dajjal [in which the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ spoke about his tribulation and the famine which will be experienced during his time]. I said: “O Messenger of Allāh! By Allāh, at times we make the dough and have not yet made the bread when we already feel hungry [and thereby become restless]. What will happen to the believers on that day [when their adversaries will be experiencing such severe famine]?” He ʿAi replied: “The glorification and extolling the greatness of Allāh which suffices the inhabitants of the heavens [the angels] will suffice them [in place of food].” This was related by Aḥmad.⁴⁷⁴

Commentary: Remaining Without One’s Usual Sustenance
It is related with regard to certain spiritual masters that they did not eat food for lengthy periods during their times of solitude. Those who are only concerned with the outward aspects of Islam reject such practices. It is clearly demonstrated, however, by the ḥadīth above that there are times when mere remembrance and glorification [of Allāh] can take the place of food.

**ḤADĪTH 318**

 عَنْ عَمْرَانِ بْنِ حُصَيْنِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "مَنْ ⁴⁷３ Bukhārī: 841 ⁴⁷⁴ Musnad Aḥmad: 6:456
‘Imrān ibn Ḥūṣayn  rs related that the Messenger of Allāh  ṣa said: “Whoever hears of the Dajjāl should keep as far away from him as possible. By Allāh, even a person who considers himself a true believer will go to the Dajjāl [for no other reason than to look at what he is doing or to debate with him] and end up beset by doubts, until he starts following him.” This was related by Abū Dāwūd.475

**Commentary: Remaining Aloof from Tribulation**

The spiritual masters teach that if there is a pretender to spiritual accomplishment through *tasawwuf*, no one other than a master should even consider meeting with the person for the purpose of debating with him or otherwise refuting his claims. Such a pretender’s words and actions might easily lead a person to confusion and tribulation. This teaching is expressed explicitly in this Ḥadīth. The “big” Dajjāl and the “small” Dajjāl are equal in this regard.

**ḤADĪTH 319**

An-Nawwās ibn Sam‘ān  ṣa related with regard to the Dajjāl: We asked: “O Messenger of Allāh! How long will he remain on Earth?” He  ṣa replied: “Forty days. One day like a year, one day like a month, one day like a week, and the rest of the days will be like your normal days.” This was related by Muslim.476
Asmâ’ bint Yazid ibn as-Sakan related that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “Dajjâl will remain on earth for forty years. A year will be like the month, a month will be like a week, a week will be like a day, and a day will be like wood burning in a fire.” This is related in Sharh as-Sunnah.

Commentary: The Expansion and Contraction of Time

One of the ways to reconcile the contradictions in the above two hadiths is to say that for some people the passage of time will be tedious while for others it will be quick. In actual fact, however, this entire period will have a specific duration. So, by means of the explanation above, the expansion and contraction of time mentioned in the two hadiths may be understood. As regards the first hadith, it is stated in other versions of the same narration that the prayers of one year will be obligatory on the day which will be equal to one year. It may therefore be understood that the day will in reality also be of one year's duration. The reply to this is that it is possible that that one particular day will be of one year’s duration and that the above explanation will apply to the rest of the days [i.e. to some the days will seem long while to others they will seem short]. Nevertheless, these hadiths express possibility. The following hadith explicitly mentions the expansion of time.

Hadîth 321

Abû Sa‘îd al-Khudrî related that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ was asked about the length of the day which will be equal to 50,000 years [i.e. about the day of Resurrection]. He ﷺ said: “I swear in the name of the One Who holds my life in His hands! It will be so light on the believers that it will be lighter than even the compulsory ġalâh which they used to offer in the world.” This was related by Bayhaqî.

477 Musnad Ahmad: 6:454. Al-Baghawi has recorded this in his Sharh as-Sunnah: 4159.
478 Musnad Ahmad: 3:75. Al-Bayhaqî has recorded it in al-Bâ’th wa an-Nushâr.
Commentary: The Contraction of Time
This ḥadīth makes obvious reference to this. There is no difference in the possibility of the contraction and expansion of time. Expansion can also take place in this way.

**ḤADĪTH 322**

Ibn ‘Abbās Ḥ related that the Messenger of Allāh Ḥ said: “If a person hears the call to prayer and has no excuse for not responding to the call, [i.e. from attending the congregation], then the prayers he performs [on his own] will not be accepted.” The Companions Ḥ asked: “What is a [valid] excuse?” He Ḥ replied: “Fear or illness.” This is reported by Ābu Dāwūd.⁴⁷⁹

Commentary: The Importance of Congregational Prayer
These days, most “superficial” Sufis do not bother themselves with prayer in a congregation. In the light of this ḥadīth, it would appear that their prayers on their own are not accepted. Obviously, if a person’s prayers are not accepted, how can that person be thought worthy of being a spiritual master?!

**ḤADĪTH 323**

Al-Mughirah ibn Shu’bāḥ Ḥ related that he accompanied the Messenger of Allāh Ḥ on the expedition to Tabūk. He said: “The Messenger of Allāh Ḥ went out into the field before the dawn prayer in order to relieve

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⁴⁷⁹ Ābu Dāwūd: 551, Ibn Mājah: 793, Dāraquṭnī: 1542
himself. I carried a utensil of water and accompanied him. When he
returned, I poured water for him [so that he may perform his ablution]
on his hands. He washed his hands, his face, his arms, and then passed
wet hands over the front part of his head [this narration also states that he
passed his wet hands over the area that is covered by the turban, i.e. over
his entire head]. I then bent down to remove his leather socks.” This was
related by Muslim.480

The Practice of Accepting Help from an Attendant for Performing Ablution

Spiritual masters occasionally take the assistance of their attendants for per­
forming ablution. Some short-sighted people consider this to be a sign of pride.
Such an assumption amounts to harbouring evil thoughts [about the spiritual
master]. This hadith establishes the permissibility of this practice without any
reprehensibility.

Hadith 324

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رضي الله عنه قال: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلَّى الله عليه وسلم: (إِنَّ الْوَضْوءَ عَلَى
من نَآمٍ مُضْطَعْجٌ فَإِنَّهُ إِذا اضْطَعَجَ اسْتَرْجَحَ مَفَاصلَهُ.) (رواية الترمذي وأبو داود)

Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه related that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Ablution is
obligatory on the person who lies down and falls asleep because when he
lies down, his joints become loose [and there is the possibility of his pass­
ing wind].” This was related by Tirmidhi and Abū Dāwūd.481

Commentary: Ablution Breaks When One Falls After Experiencing Ecstasy

Most Sufis are unaware of the ruling that if they become unconscious and fall
while in a state of ecstasy, wajd, or otherwise fall down and become unconscious,
it becomes obligatory on them to renew their ablution. The reason for this is that
the joints become loose in the same way they loosen when one falls asleep. The
jurists clearly state that ablution breaks when one falls unconscious.

Hadith 325

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رضي الله عنه قال: لَمْ يَكُنْ شُحُصٌ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلَّى الله عليه وسلم

480 Muslim: 274
481 Abū Dāwūd: 201, Tirmidhi: 77
Anas related that: “There was none who was more beloved to the Companions than the Messenger of Allah. Despite this, when they saw him, they did not stand up because they knew he disliked this.” This was related by Tirmidhi. 482

Commentary: Abstaining from According Respect that is Disliked
It is clear from this hadith that any act of respect, honour or service which is disliked by one’s spiritual master should be studiously avoided. These days, people are so accustomed to following popular practices that they fail to take into consideration the comfort of their spiritual masters. Oftentimes, people will simply adopt the formalities of non-Muslims, going to extremes in according respect, and insisting on attending to them as a means of attaining proximity and good fortune. Such acts include massaging his body, carrying his shoes and sitting behind him. Many ignorant Sufis mistakenly believe that one’s remembrance and prayer, dhikr wa salâh, are more likely to be accepted if performed in the direction of the spiritual master’s back. This practice is absolutely the same as idol-worship. Such evils are very much in vogue these days.

Hadith 326
Abû Huraira related that the Companions said: “O Messenger of Allah! You joke with us?!” He said: “I say nothing but the truth [in other words, my joking does not contain any falsehood nor anything impermissible such as lies or causing harm to a Muslim].” This was related by Tirmidhi. 483

Commentary: Joking does not Negate Perfection
Some people of dry temperament look down upon the humour of the spiritual masters. If the precondition which is mentioned in this hadith is fulfilled, such humour is a practice established by the Sunna. If this precondition is not ful-
filled, its prohibition is mentioned in another hadith: “Do not show off to your brother, nor joke \(^{484}\) with him.”

\[\text{Hadīth 327}\]

\[\text{عَنَّ أَبِي شُمَيْرَ السَّهْلِيَّيْنِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ فِي حِبَيْبِ طَوْبِلِ:}
\[\text{وَلَا يَجِلُّ لَهُ أَن يَنْهَى عَنْدَهُ حَتَّى يُعْرِجَهُ.} \] (Mتفق عليه)

Abū Shurayḥ al-Kābī related that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said in a lengthy hadith: “It is not lawful for a guest to remain so long with a host to the extent that he causes him hardship.” This was related by Bukhārī and Muslim.\(^{485}\)

**Commentary: Abstaining from Imposing on a Disciple’s (murid’s) Hospitality**

These days, many spiritual masters consider themselves in such control over the lives and wealth of their aspirants, murids, that they ask them for whatever they want without hesitation. Thus, they will continue living in their houses for as long as they like and continue eating delicious meals. They will take as many people as they like to that poor person’s house regardless of whether the person likes it or not, and regardless of whether or not he is inconvenienced. Such a spiritual master is included in the general ruling of the hadith above. The basis for this prohibition is the causing of discomfort to others. When a person becomes bothered by something, and this something is not his responsibility, then it is unlawful, \(\text{harām}\) to demand the same of him. Another hadith is more clear on this point: When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was invited to someone’s house, the Messenger ﷺ would always seek permission to bring along people who were not invited by name. When this was the case with regard to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, what can be said of others?!

\[\text{Hadīth 328}\]

\[\text{عَنْ ﺑْنِ ﺑُرَّةَ ﺑْنَ ﺑُخْرَى قَالَ: ﺍِبْرَاهِيمُ ﷺ ﻋَنْهُ ﻋَنْدَهُ ﻋَنِ ﺗَمْوِلُ ﻋَنْدَهُ ﻋَنْهُ ﻋَنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ ﷺ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ:}
\[\text{مَنَ ﻟِمْ: ﻋَـنْف١ ﺛَـيُطُانُ، وَيُضَرِّى شَـيْطَانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُضَرِّى ﺛَـيُطُانِ، وَيُثِبُّ ﺛَـيُطُانِ， ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى ﻋَنَّ ﺑِنَّ ﺑُخْرَى 

\(^{484}\) Here, the context of the hadith suggests that the meaning is: “Do not joke with him in a way that demeans or otherwise shows disrespect to him, or her.” YTD.

Muhammad ibn Sirīn related: “Dreams are of three types: thoughts, fear instilled by Satan [in other words, because of his enmity towards man, Satan causes him to dream evil things in order to worry him], and glad tidings from Allah.” This was related by Bukhārī and Muslim.⁴⁸⁶

Jābir related that the Messenger of Allah said: “When any of you sees a bad dream, he should spit to his left three times, seek refuge from Satan three times, and change his sleeping position.” This was related by Muslim.⁴⁸⁷

Commentary: Abstain from Paying Excessive Attention to Dreams

Many ignorant Sufis pay too much attention to their dreams. When there is a shortage of good dreams, they consider it to be a sign of distance from Allah and therefore become disheartened and distressed. When they see good dreams, they consider it to be the height of accomplishment and grow proud. When they see an incident in a dream, they rely upon their vision implicitly. When they have a bad dream, they become caught up in its foreboding. This Ḥadīth demonstrates the error of all these ideas, and also teaches the way to avoid the negative effects of bad dreams. In short, a dream is not as great as people make it out to be. The essential concern of a person should be to ask himself: When I am awake, am I acting in a way that will bring the pleasure of Allah or His displeasure?

I like what the Persian poet had to say:

I am neither night nor night-worshipper who speaks of dreams.

Like a slave of the sun, all I can talk about is the sunshine.

ퟰHadīth 329

ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAbbās related that the Messenger of Allah said: “Be excessive in remembering Allah to the extent that the hypocrites say you are showing off.” This was related by Tabarānī.⁴⁸⁸

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⁴⁸⁶ Bukhārī: 7017, Muslim: 2265, Tirmidhī: 2270
⁴⁸⁷ Muslim: 2261
⁴⁸⁸ At-Tabarānī has recorded this in his al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr: 12786 [12:131]
Commentary: The Ostentation of the Sheikh is Better than the Sincerity of the Murid

This hadith means that one should engage in excessive remembrance. It is obvious that one cannot conceal [his dhikr] if he engages in it excessively. And when he exposes it, his antagonists will definitely accuse him of ostentation. This hadith commends such public display, and while the ignorant may consider it ostentation, it is not really ostentation. When something is commended, it is necessary for it to be good. Since good has some superiority in it, it also needs something over which it is superior [in other words, something that is inferior to it]. The inferior will be the opposite of the superior thing. In this case, the superior thing is ostentation in the special meaning it takes on in this particular context. The inferior will be the absence of ostentation. This absence of ostentation is also known as sincerity. It is therefore proved that some forms of ostentation are actually better than some forms of sincerity. It is established from external evidence that the display [of the spiritual master’s deeds] has certain specific advantages. Based on this generality, it is established that ostentation on the part of the sheikh is better than sincerity on the part of the murid. Understand this well.

Hadith 330

Abū Umāmah related that the Messenger of Allāh passed by Baqi‘ al-Gharqad [the graveyard of Madina] on an intensely hot day and sensed that people were walking behind him. When he heard their footsteps, this weighed heavily upon him. He therefore sat down until all the people had passed him by. He did this to avoid the effects of pride settling on his heart [in other words, so that he may not feel proud that people chose to walk behind him].” This was related by Ibn Mājah.489

The Elders of the Path should Constantly Worry about their Personal Reformation

I end this book on the theme of this hadith because it is appropriate for the end to contain a warning. This is done so that the warning will awaken the reader into emulating and practising the knowledge and deeds which this book con-
tains. Moreover, this is also in emulation of the Qur'an because the last verse to be revealed is this: "Fear the Day on which you will be returned to Allāh, and every soul shall be repaid in full for what it has earned, and none shall be wronged."⁴⁹⁰

I would like to say that a close study of this ḥadīth will open the eyes of any aspirant and, indeed, the eyes of any spiritual master as well. What is obvious here is the error of those who assume that they have attained some manner of spiritual perfection and therefore begin to neglect their own condition. It should be clear that when someone is raised to the status of spiritual master, they must not sit back and rest. Like the novice, they should pay particular attention to rectifying their deeds and constantly fear the reversal of their own condition. There is absolute good in this. Allāh ﷺ says: "None feel safe from Allāh’s deep devising except the people who are already lost."⁴⁹¹ A Persian poet rightly said:

Be careful where you step, even when following the caravan of mankind, for the stones in the desert will cut your feet.

Yet, do not lose hope. A wine-drinking mendicant may without warning suddenly arrive at his destination.

O Allāh! Help us to remain steadfast with acceptance and kindness, in this world as on the day of Resurrection. Peace and blessings on the finest of His creation, Muhammad, and on his family and Companions.

⁴⁹⁰ Al-Qur'ān, 2:281
⁴⁹¹ Al-Qur'ān, 7:99
Conclusion

All praise is due to Allah ﷻ that this book, *A Sufi Study of Hadith, Haqiqat at-Tariqah*, which comprises hadiths dealing with the subject of *tasawwuf* is now concluded. The subject of this volume is a vast one. However, since the purpose of this book was to convey to the reader the depth of the subject, and this amount should suffice as an example, I have written only this much; though I did write on a few subjects of relevance in a brief supplement to this book entitled: *an-Nukat ad-Daqiqah*.

All praise is due to Allah at the beginning, in the end, internally and externally. Peace in Abundance to His Messenger, Muhammad ﷺ, his family and Companions ﷺ. This work was completed at the beginning of Rabī’ al-Awwal 1327 AH (March, 1909).492

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492 The work of translating this book into English, which began at the behest of my teacher, Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsūf Binnorī in 1975, was finally completed in November of 2009. wa’l-Ḥamdu lillāh Ḥamdan Kathiran. YTD.
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A S U F I  S T U D Y  o f  H A D I T H
Haqiqat al-Tariqa min as-Sunna al-Aniqah
Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi

A S U F I  S T U D Y  o f  H A D I T H (Originally titled Haqiqat al-Tariqa min as-Sunna al-Aniqah) is a unique work of commentary on a selection of over three hundred authentic hadith. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi, one of the subcontinent’s greatest spiritual leaders and an author of unequalled prolificity, translates, interprets, and then comments on each hadith from the perspective of tasawwuf, whether to explain a fine point of theology, or to discourse on morality, etiquette, behaviour, or the customary practices of Sufis. In the pages of this volume, one encounters a side of Islam that is little known and less understood. For all seekers of the truth, and especially those keen to further their understanding of the teachings of the Prophet, upon him be peace on tasawwuf-related subjects, Maulana Thanawi’s work is truly invaluable.

Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi rahmatullahi alayh excelled in every branch of Islamic learning and was one of the Islamic world’s most outstanding religious figures of recent times. Perhaps his most significant and enduring legacy is a renewed awareness, understanding and acceptance of authentic tasawwuf among the masses. Indeed, he is still remembered as Hakim-al-Ummah (Physician of the Ummah) due to his expertise in diagnosing spiritual ailments and dispensing the most efficacious cures.

In this book Mawlana Thanwi discusses numerous subtle and complex themes of tasawwuf derived from the ahadith of our beloved Messenger sallallahu alayhi wasallam. His erudite commentary demonstrates time and again how the principles of tasawwuf have their origins in the primary sources of Islam. Mawlana Thanwi’s approach, like that of his illustrious mashai’ikh, stresses the complete harmony between Shariah and tariqah and their interrelatedness.

Alhamdulillah, Mawlana Yusuf DeLorenzo’s translation now gives English speaking Muslims access to this valuable work. Studying this book under the guidance of a qualified shaykh will increase the interested reader’s understanding and appreciation of the treasury of hadith as well as the science of tasawwuf, and prove beneficial for the traveller on the path leading to Allah.

SHAYKH MUHAMMAD SALEEM DHORAT

This volume revives the tradition of the earliest Sufis, who related hadiths from the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) in such core works as Qushayri’s Risala, Makki’s Qut al-Qulub, and Abu Nu’aym’s Hilya al-Awliya. Imam Junayd has said, “The spiritual path is blocked shut, except to those who seek out the traces of the Chosen Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace); ‘Say, This is my path: I summon to Allah upon entire insight, I and whoever wholeheartedly follows me’ [Qur’an 12:108].” Thanawi’s work is a treasury of valuable hadiths for anyone on the true path, and a guide to many of the traditions (adab) of Sufism in the South Asia of his day. The powerful and vigorous translation of Yusuf DeLorenzo brings to life in English a great many realities of the way of spiritual realities.

SHAYKH NUH HAMMAM KELLER

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