

Spiritual Gems

The Mystical Qur'ān Commentary
Ascribed to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq
as contained in
Sulami's *Ḥaqāiq al-Tafsīr*
from the text of Paul Nwyia

Translated and Annotated
FARHANA MAYER

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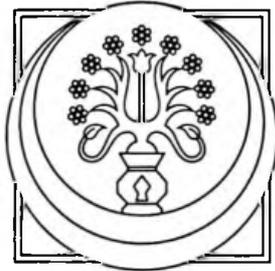


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Spiritual Gems: The Mystical Qur'ān Commentary
by Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (ascribed)

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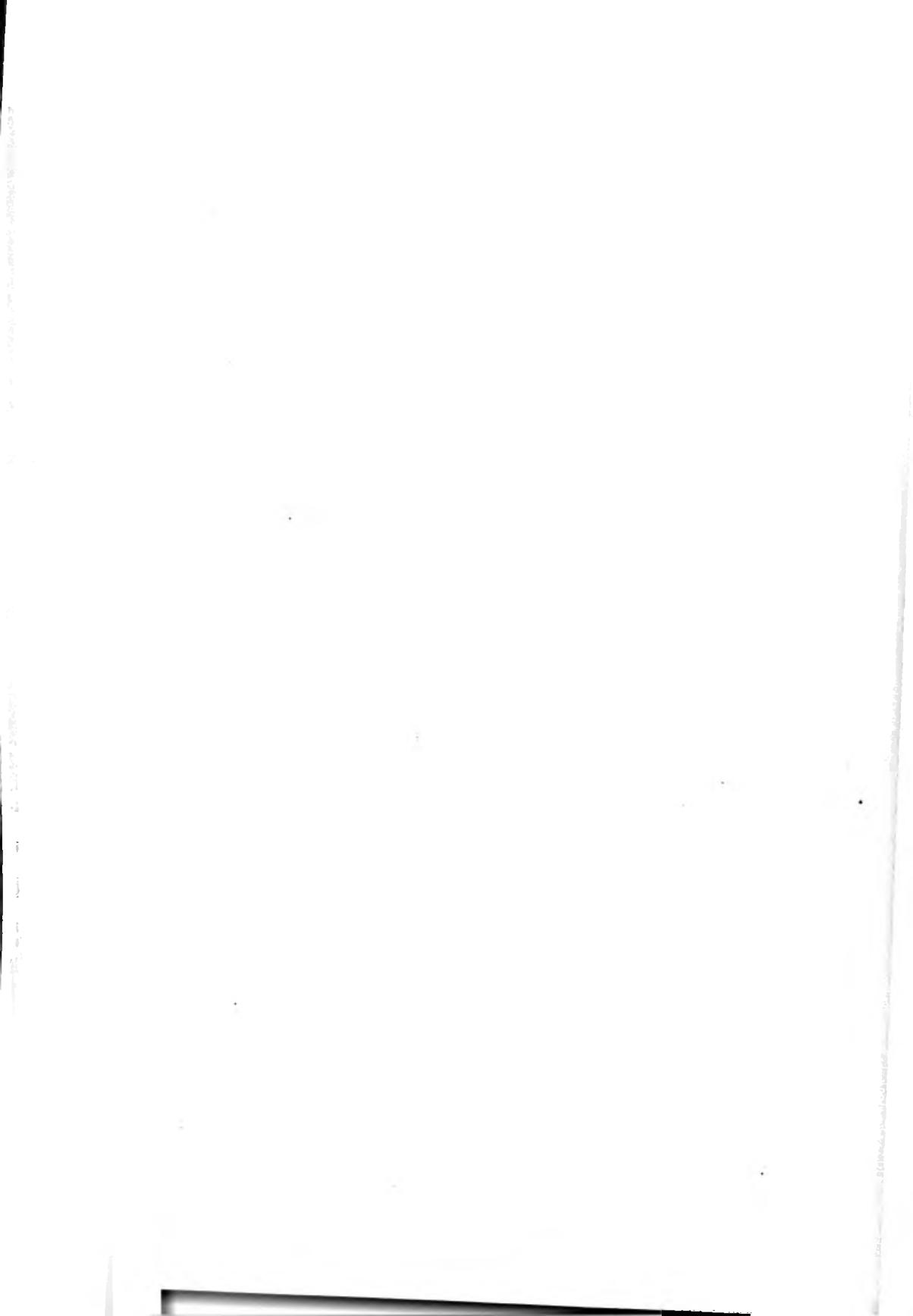




Foreword

My first introduction to the Qur'anic commentary attributed to Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq was from a brief mention of it in Annemarie Schimmel's 1975 work, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. This brief "taste" (to use a Sufi term) of Shī'i and Sufi hermeneutics whetted my appetite for more and, in fact, led me to begin my studies of the Arabic language. Like mystical commentary itself, Farhana Mayer's translation, notes, and analysis address many layers of meaning and different kinds of readers. For scholars of Islamic texts, she has provided invaluable notes on how specific Arabic terms are used and their relationship to other areas of Islamic thought. For those interested in the Qur'ān, she has given us a very readable but accurate translation of a highly influential and early mystical commentary. The accompanying analysis of its themes and methodologies skillfully illuminates the coherency of what might otherwise seem atomistic. For those who read works such as this one for their ongoing power to inspire, the subtlety and richness of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's comments are fully on display here. In short, Farhana Mayer has provided an exquisite "setting" for these beautiful gems. Her efforts are our good fortune.

Kristin Zahra Sands
Professor of Islamic Studies, Sarah Lawrence College



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا ﴿٢٤﴾

*Will they not ponder the Qur'ān or have [their] hearts
their locks upon them?*



My heartfelt thanks to Virginia Gray Henry and Neville Blakemore for their loving embrace of this work, for working with patience over long distance, under pressure, and thank you, Paul Carney and Elena Lloyd-Sidle. Particular thanks to Reza Shah Kazemi for putting forward the idea of this translation and for checking the script. My respectful and fond thanks to K. R., an inspiring lady, full of understanding support and gentle encouragement. Jamil Javaheri, I thank for his kind and generous help with computer matters. I am grateful to Toby Mayer for the support he gave and for reading most of the script—his comments were most useful. My special thanks also to Feras Hamza for his invaluable review of the translation. Needless to say, all errors and oddities are mine. I thank the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, Maha Sharba, Fiona Ward, Mustafa Shah and Omar Ali-de-Unzaga for his support.

I would also like to acknowledge my daughter, Nadia Mariam, whose birth marked the advent of this other treasure-trove in my life, and who then was accomodating and understanding as I laboured to give birth to this book.

God reward them all.

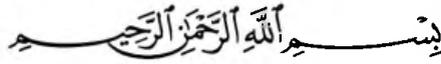
Acknowledgements

Spiritual Gems has been written as a work of engaged scholarship. As well as containing the translation, it is an exposition of the commentary. This book should be read on a spiritual register. Though it is clothed in Muslim garments, the wisdom is universal. The truths appearing here in Qur'anic and Islamic form are to be found in all traditions within their diverse forms.

This wisdom and these truths are shared with all readers, in this book and in its companion volumes. Among the readers will be some who will smile with quiet recognition; some who are overwhelmed, at least initially, but who persevere; some who will balk heavily and who should perhaps set this aside. And there will also be those who immediately taste the dew upon their lips, maybe not for the first time, and who respond to the gentle, beckoning caress, the soft, silent swirl of the holy mist of God's peace and set forth, walking with God, towards the unimaginably beautiful and peaceful, the indescribably loving and lovable.

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَبِهِ نَسْتَعِينُ





Translator's Introduction

THE IMĀM JA'FAR AL-ŞĀDIQ

Islamic history suffers from no dearth of luminaries, be they mystics, philosophers, theologians, physicians, or grammarians. A star among these is Abū 'Abd Allāh Ja'far al-Şādiq b. Muḥammad al-Bāqir b. 'Alī Zayn al-Ābidīn b. Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, the fifth generation grandson of the Prophet of Islam. He was born in Medina in the year 83/702, and although he travelled outside Medina, it was there that he lived and then died, in the year 148/765.

Ja'far al-Şādiq is a meeting point for diverse Muslims. Through his parentage Ja'far brought together in his person, the Prophet's familial line and that of the paramount Sunnī Companion, Abū Bakr, from whom his mother, Umm Farwah bint Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Şiddīq, was descended. Within the Shī'ī world, he is the last imam common to both the Ithnā 'ashariyah, or Twelvers, and the Ismā'īliyah, or Seveners (some of whom who hold him to be the fifth imam).¹ Among the Sufis he is venerated as a spiritual 'pole' (*qutb*) and is to be found in the lineages (*silsilahs*) of most Sufi orders (*ṭuruq*). The Sunnīs have a deep reverence for him, holding him next only to his forefather 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) for his combination of holiness and knowledge.²

By all accounts, Ja'far's profoundly God-aware ethics of truthfulness, justice, tolerance, and peaceability, were exemplary indeed. Reports in

1 See M. G. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 261; Ibn 'Inabah, *Umdat al-ṭālib* (Najaf: Manshūrāt al-Maṭba'ah al-Ḥaydariyah, 1961), pp. 195–96.

2 See Victor Danner, 'The Early Development of Sufism', in *Islamic Spirituality: Foundations* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1989), p. 246: 'the early Shī'ite Imams of the first century or so of Islam were also authorities in Sunnism and in Sufism.'

Muslim sources,³ not least this commentary, reveal his ontological role towards God and creature: when he faced creation he was a divine ambassador, manifesting God's constant and patient availability, transmitting the divine qualities, guiding to that wise proximity to God that comes through living in a godly manner, in harmony with the divine; when he faced God, he was an intercessor for creation.

It was at the age of thirty-four years that Ja'far succeeded his father Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 117/736), as the imam of the Shī'ah. In the midst of the unstable and violent contemporary political situation, Ja'far maintained an attitude of quietism. Rather than engage in rebellions or pursue political power, he chose to focus on developing spirituality and the various branches of knowledge, even when undergoing periods of imprisonment due to Umayyad and 'Abbāsid suspicions of the Alid imam. Distancing himself from power struggles, he concentrated his energy and formidable intellect on the religious and spiritual dimensions of the imamate, resulting in his extraordinary, extensive impact on the Islamic world.⁴

For his community directly, he was their imam, their religious and spiritual guide. Shī'i jurisprudence received its definitive form at the hands of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, who was responsible for the codification of Shī'i religious law—called the Ja'fariyya *madhhab*. The majority of Shī'i *ḥadīths* and traditions are reported on the authority of the Imām al-Ṣādiq and his father, Muḥammad al-Bāqir.⁵

Yet for non-Shī'ah too, he provided such guidance appropriately, as is evident in his preeminent position among the Sufis. He was a plenary

3 See, for example, the works of Furāt al-Kūfi, Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, Qāḍī Nu'mān al-Tamīmī, 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī.

4 See Y. Richard, *Shi'ite Islam*, trans. A. Nevill (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 36–37; M. S. Hodgson, 'Dja'far al-Ṣādiq', *EP*, pp. 374–75; al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-milal wa'l-nihal*, trans. A. K. Kazi, J. G. Flynn, *Muslim Sects and Divisions* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1984), p. 142 of *Muslim Sects*; F. Daftary, *Ismā'īlīs in Medieval Muslim Societies* (London: I.B.Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005), p. 20.

5 See S. M. Ḥ. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Shi'ite Islam*, trans. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Albany: State University of New Press, 1977), p. 204, where it is reported that 'the number of traditions preserved from the fifth and sixth Imams is more than all the *ḥadīth* that have been recorded from the Prophet and the other ten Imams combined'.

teacher and had among his students more than one early 'father' of the Islamic sciences. For instance, eminent Sunnī theologians and foundational traditionists such as Abū Ḥanifah (d. 150/767), Mālik b. Anas (d. 180/796), and Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/788) studied with al-Ṣādiq.⁶ His study circles are said to have produced some four thousand scholars in *ḥadīth* studies and other fields of learning.⁷ The alchemist Jābir b. Ḥayyān (d. 199/815)—one of the first people to be known as 'Sufi'⁸ and to whom the esoteric science of *jafr* is also ascribed—was taught by Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, as was Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā' (d. 131/748), founder of the Mu'tazilah, to name but a few.⁹ The impact of Ja'far was thus widely felt, in varying degrees, within the Muslim community and in numerous fields of Islamic learning, including law and jurisprudence (*fiqh*), *ḥadīth*, theology, alchemy, and Qur'ān interpretation (*tafsīr/ta'wīl*). Such an impact was outstanding, even among the imams who are held to receive, in succession, divinely inspired knowledge vouchsafed to the line of filial heirs of the Prophet.¹⁰

In the Shī'ī doctrine of the imam's knowledge, the imam is the 'speaking Qur'ān' (*Qur'ān nātiq*) while the Qur'ān is the 'silent imam' (*imām ṣāmī*). That is, the imam is considered the true interpreter of the Book. There are numerous comments of Qur'ānic exegesis ascribed to Ja'far. These are cited in various books of Shī'ī scholarship, including the commentaries of Muḥammad al-Ayyāshī (d. 320/932) and 'Alī al-Qummi (d. 350/961). In addition to Shī'ī works, a Sufi collection

-
- 6 See M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (Oxford: George Ronald Publishers, 1985), p. 38; Richard, *Shi'ite Islam*, pp. 36–7.
- 7 See Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-kāfi* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyah, 1968), vol. 1, p. 472.
- 8 See Danner, 'Early Development', pp. 249 and 251 where '...already in the middle of the 2nd/8th century, we hear of the word [Sufi] in conjunction with certain individuals, e.g., Ibn Ḥayyān, disciple of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and Abū Hāshim al-Kūfi al-Ṣūfi.'
- 9 Hodgson, 'Dja'far al-Ṣādiq', pp. 374–75; Arzina Lalani, 'Ja'far al-Sadiq', in *Medieval Islamic Civilisation*, ed. J. Meri (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 409–11.
- 10 Shī'ī doctrine holds that the knowledge of all past and present events and the correct interpretation of *all* monotheistic scriptures is included in the imam's *ilm*. See D. Crow's unpublished thesis: *The Teaching of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, with reference to his place in early Shi'ism*; Daftary, *Ismā'īli*, pp. 20–21.

of Ja'far's exegetical comments can be found in the compendium of Qur'anic commentary compiled by Muḥammad al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021). This Sufi collection of Ja'fari commentary is the subject of this study.

As mentioned, a central aspect of the Shī'i imam's divinely conferred knowledge (*'ilm*) is the correct interpretation of the Qur'ān. The Sufi recension of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's exegesis of the Qur'ān propounds a spiritual and mystical interpretation—the commentary is fully permeated with the profoundest wisdom. Certain comments are particularly saturated, containing a depth of, and intimacy with, spiritual and mystical experience (*dhawq*) that is breathtaking; indeed, it is transporting. The wisdom (*hikmah*) is revelatory with the pure scent of authentic '*ilm ladunī*.'¹¹ In the exegesis, we find central tenets of spiritual and mystical doctrines such as the sole reality of God; His absolute and total oneness and uniqueness (*aḥadiyyah*, *wāḥidiyyah*); the vision of God (*ru'yat Allāh*); the assembly of the witnessing (*mashhad al-mushāhadah*); effacement and continuity (*fanā'* and *baqā'*); the remembrance/invocation of God (*dhikr Allāh*); the divine secret (*sirr*) embedded in humankind; mankind's absolute neediness unto God (*iftiqār*); and the love and knowledge of God (*maḥabbat Allāh*, *ma'rifat Allāh*). These tenets are discussed more fully below, under 'Themes,' being of paramount relevance to this work.

The *tafsīr Ja'far* also contains technical terms and concepts which may or may not be regarded as possible precursory elements, in particular, in the fields of *tafsīr*, Sufism, and Islamic philosophy. These are discussed below under 'Language.'



After Ja'far, the Shī'ah divided into groups, the two main groups being the Ismā'īliyah (Seveners), who upheld the imamate of Ismā'il; and the Ithnā 'ashariyyah (Twelvers), who upheld Mūsā al-Kāzīm's imamate. Ismā'il, who predeceased his father, was the son of Ja'far's first wife, Fāṭimah, descended, according to the *Sharḥ al-akhbār* of Qāḍī Nu'mān (d. 363/974), from Ḥasan b. Ḥasan b. 'Alī. Qāḍī Nu'mān notes that Ja'far took no other wife or concubine while

11 '*Ilm ladunī* refers to 'knowledge from God/from God's Presence' (*'ilm ladun Allāh*). It is knowledge that is imparted to a soul directly from God.

Fāṭimah lived.¹² Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) notes the same in his *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-nihal* but cites Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan b. ‘Alī as her father.¹³ Mūsā al-Kāzīm’s mother was a Berber slave named Ḥamīdah, acquired by Ja‘far after Fāṭimah’s demise. Ja‘far’s description of her, ‘as purified as a gold ingot’¹⁴ and her agnomen ‘*al-muṣaffāt*’ (from the verbal root ṣ-f-w, meaning ‘the purified woman’), are reminiscent of alchemy.

The controversies regarding the heir to the imamate after Ja‘far, and relevant dynastic developments down to the present day, are treated in numerous works of political history. They are not of concern in this *tafsīr*. Rather, the focus is on Ja‘far’s universal spiritual teachings, which remain, to this day, a point of unity for diverse Muslims, a guide and a light, a ‘philosophers’ stone’. Qādī Nu‘mān reports: ‘One day Sufyān al-Thawrī came to [Ja‘far] and heard from Ja‘far a statement that pleased him, whereupon he said: “By God, O son of the Messenger of God, [that is] a gem!” And Ja‘far b. Muḥammad 𐤎, said to him: “Nay, this is better than a gem. For is a gem aught but a stone?”’¹⁵

THE COMMENTARY

Textual Source: The *Ḥaqā’iq al-Tafsīr* of Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021)

The Arabic text used for this translation of Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq’s commentary from the *Ḥaqā’iq* is Paul Nwyia’s edition, which is based on a study of three manuscripts of the *Ḥaqā’iq* and was published as ‘*Le Tafsīr Mystique attribué à Ga’far Ṣādiq, Edition critique*’ in *Melanges de l’Université Saint-Joseph*, vol. 43 (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1968).¹⁶ Note that Nwyia’s text does not include all the passages related to Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq that were recorded by Sulamī in his commentaries, rather it

12 al-Nu‘mān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār fi faḍā’il al-a’imma al-athār* (Qum: Mu’assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, n. d.), p. 309.

13 al-Shahrastānī, trans. Kazi and Flynn, *Muslim Sects*, p. 163.

14 al-Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 477

15 al-Nu‘mān, *Sharḥ*, p. 299, entry no. 1204.

16 This corpus has not been translated into English in full; Michael Sells has published some passages of Ja‘far’s comments from the *Ḥaqā’iq* in his volume *Early Islamic Mysticism* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996).

is a portion of the Ja'fari commentary in Sulami's *Ḥaqa'iq al-tafsir*.

The *Ḥaqa'iq al-tafsir* is a compendium of early Sufi comments on the Qur'an; it was compiled by Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān M. b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī. The *Ḥaqa'iq*, thought by scholars to have been completed by 370/980,¹⁷ contains a collection of interpretive comments on Qur'anic phrases by a number of early Muslim mystics such as Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 261/784–5), Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896), and Abū Bakr al-Wāsiṭī (d. 320/932) among others. It is also the source for the Sufi recension of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's Qur'an commentary, which contains 309 comments by the Imam, making him one of the most frequently quoted authorities in the compendium. Sulamī states in his introduction that he reproduced the recension of Ja'fari comments established by Ibn 'Atā' al-Adamī (d. 309/921 or 311/923–4).¹⁸ This corpus of exegetical comments ascribed to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq may, arguably, constitute the earliest extant mystical commentary on the Qur'an.

The Style of the *Tafsir*

Unlike later Qur'an commentaries that systematically address the whole of the Book, in the Sufi recension of the *tafsir Ja'far* corpus only select Qur'anic verses, words, or phrases are discussed. This selectivity is typical of mystical commentaries universally and reflects the multifaceted nature of heavenly communication, whereby a phrase or word that is immediately pertinent to one thing, perhaps of general import, is at the same time intelligibly and legitimately applied to other matters, perhaps of personal import, at a later time, in isolation from the historical relevance of the initial matter and from any textual context. This type of interpretation is ultimately rooted in the living, personal relationship of a soul with heaven, with words or phrases acting as indications or allusions to matters that the soul and heaven know of (if it is a personal understanding) or as references to what heaven wishes to disclose to the soul.

The comments in the *tafsir* often include the actual Qur'anic words that they pertain to. Or the comment may follow the Qur'anic phrase

17 See Gerhard Böwering, *The Minor Qur'an Commentary of Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn as-Sulamī (d. 412/1021)* (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1997), p. 18.

18 As Paul Nwyia notes in his study of the Sulamī recension.

as the second half of a sentence follows the first, e.g., 3:150. A third way in which the comments are presented is through an interpretive paraphrase of the Qur'anic words, so that the comment is spoken 'in the voice of God'; for example in 4:64, 4:80, 22:34, 27:21.

Typically, a Qur'anic verse or phrase is cited, followed by a comment that is introduced by 'qāla Ja'far' [Ja'far said] or 'qāla Ja'far b. Muḥammad' [Ja'far b. Muḥammad said] or 'qāla Ja'far al-Ṣādiq' [Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said]. More than one comment on a phrase or word may be recorded, in which case the second and following comments may be introduced simply by 'wa qāla' [and he said] or 'wa qāla ayḍan' [and he also said] or 'wa qāla Ja'far' [and Ja'far said]. This method of citing or providing as many possible interpretations of the text is part and parcel of the hermeneutical ethic. This principle seeks to explore the meanings of the text from different angles. Exoteric and esoteric commentators alike do this, especially the compilers. However, unlike his exoteric counterpart, Ṭabarī, Sulamī does not provide his own opinion or preferred interpretation.

In the selection of the Qur'anic phrases hardly any minatory (*wa'id*) verses are chosen for comment. The instances of severity are few, for example, at 27:21, 38:78, 82:13–14, 104:6–7. Yet even with such instances, the preponderance in the commentary is on the positive, as at 104:6–7, where the verse is from a *sūrah* that deals solely with the fate of slanderers and materialistic, acquisitive people, yet the commentary discusses the fires of love and gnosis more than the fire of hell.¹⁹

THE TRANSLATION

Approach

This work presents a translation of this *tafsīr* ascribed to the Imām al-Ṣādiq as it stands and, approaching the text from within, attempts to understand and explore the fuller implications and meanings of the comments and the Qur'anic phrases to which they pertain. As discussed below, an investigation of whether or not the text is correctly attributed

19 This 'positivity' goes hand in hand with an adamant rigour in the spiritual dimension, for example concerning the purity of *dhikr* (at 51:55), total detachment from all other than God (at 3:35, 102, 138, 159; 6:79; 6:153) etc.

to the Imam is not within the purview of this study. Consequently, I only offer an introductory discussion of the historicity of the comments; without drawing attention to this question in the annotation to the translation. Notes are supplied to help understand the comments or to offer possible alternative renderings of the Arabic, or to convey the broader connotations of a single Arabic word. It is hoped that the course struck through the translation is one that will be of interest and use to scholars and lay people, Muslims and non-Muslims. However, it is in the nature of the subject that a familiarity with the text of the Qur'an itself is a must. The reader should be able to read the translation as it stands on its own, but they may well wish to have a copy of the Qur'an at hand for reference.

Notes on Style

Variants between the Qur'anic citations in the text of Nwya's edition and the standard Ḥafṣ reading of the *muṣḥaf* are found and noted at: 3:110, 8:53, 4:128, 12:31, 38:25, 40:51, 43:71, and 52:48. The variants, which might be no more than mistakes in copying, are minor and do not vitally affect the meaning; the translation follows Nwya's edition, always noting the wording of the standard *muṣḥaf* in the notes.

If Arabic words or technical terms are given in transliteration in the body text of the translation, they are in round brackets () and italicised. Round brackets () are also used for a slight difference of wording, but not meaning, between the English and Arabic texts, e.g., '(God's) words' for 'His words'. Again this liberty is taken to facilitate the flow of the English text. Hard brackets [] are used for my additions, given for easier understanding of the English text. Taking the cue from Arabic, capitalisation has been kept to a minimum in the English translation. This should not be misunderstood as a lack of respect. Transliterated divine names are not italicised, but do appear in capitals. Where the word 'Truth' has an initial capital letter, it renders the divine name al-Ḥaqq.

The comments are often expressed through interpretive paraphrase such that a comment may consist simply of a paraphrase of the Qur'anic words, e.g., 26:80. In phrases such as *man āmana*, *man 'arafa*, *man ḥāmada*, the Arabic perfect tense is rendered in the English continuous as it is felt that this conveys the meaning more accurately despite

the tense shift.

While seeking to stay close to the literal text, the translation at the same time seeks to convey the subtler flavour of this highly mystical text, a flavour that is sometimes implicit. This, together with the need for the English text to read smoothly, has meant that, in places, the translation reads more loosely than a rigidly literal rendering would. In such cases, the literal translation is given in the notes. Moreover, absolute consistency in the rendering of terms has not been applied, although the translation of a single term is restricted to a limited selection of options. Thus, for example, *ma'rifah* appears mostly as 'gnosis' or 'spiritual knowledge', and a few times as 'realisatory knowledge'; likewise *sirr* is rendered as 'inmost self' or 'inmost secret'; and *nafs* is rendered as 'lower soul' or 'ego', but at other times as 'soul' or 'self'. This flexibility allows for the exigencies of context and textual emphasis, and enables the English text to flow more smoothly. The terms are discussed in the notes.

Due to the polysemous nature of Arabic words, on occasion two English words are needed to render a single Arabic word, e.g., 'pure, exclusive' for '*khâliṣan*' (in '*abdan khâliṣan*' at 3:35). This is in order to convey more fully the meaning and implication of the single Arabic word.

In the Introduction, comments are cited from the text, bringing them together according to thematic continuity. This should not be dismissed as the imposition of an arbitrary arrangement. The arrangement of the Arabic text, following the order of the Qur'ân, is most likely the work of the compiler and not the original author, as discussed below.

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

Ascription

Students of history question the ascription of this corpus of Qur'anic commentary to the Imam. The question of authorship and the composition of the text still needs to be researched and studied to the satisfaction of academia; it relates to a number of matters. First, the different extant recensions and manuscripts of the corpus must be systematically and comparatively studied in order to establish what might be

termed 'the original body'.²⁰ Such a process would assist in identifying and dating any 'accretions' to the original corpus. In addition, there is the question of dating the original corpus and ascertaining, as far as possible, whether or not it could be said to stem from one person. Finally, there is the question of who the author/s might have been.

These matters do not fall within the purview of the present work, which aims to produce an annotated translation of the Sulamī recension. This research contributes to the discussion of the *substance* of hermeneutical thought as documented in this corpus and offers insights that result from an interaction with the content of the work.

Prominent among these insights, I note that, on the whole, the thematic content of the Sulamī text itself displays a coherence and consistency of thought, moral attitude, and spiritual perspective (e.g., the concepts of the soul and the heart; of *walāyah* and *nubūwah*; the *laṭā'if* and the *ḥaqā'iq*); this supports the view that much of the corpus may well have emanated as a unity. The threads of thematic cohesion can be noted in comments that are not found side by side, but pertain to non-consecutive verses of the Qur'ān. The colours of the different thematic threads surface here and there in the text as laid out by Sulamī, who followed the Qur'ānic order of the verses. It may well be, however, that in oral teaching or in the earlier sources from which the Ibn 'Atā' recension was compiled, the verses were presented differently, according to a thematic order rather than the scriptural order; bringing together the different pertinent verses of the Book when expounding a specific subject was not uncommon. However, when compiling a book with the specific intention of presenting a documentation of mystical *tafsīr* (Sulamī's stated intention in compiling the *Ḥaqā'iq*), the Qur'ānic order of verses would be followed. It would be up to the reader to note the colours and link up the relevant verses according to theme—and so come full circle.

Language

The issue of dating a text is closely related to the terms and vocabulary used in the text. The language may be taken as an indicator of the text's

20 It is hoped that a comparative study with the Imam's exegetical corpus as preserved in Shī'ī circles will be forthcoming in the near future.

historical period; or the ascribed date of the text may be understood as indicating the period to which the language belongs.

There are a number of terms used in the text which became part of the technical terminology of different Islamic disciplines. Some of these terms appeared as early heralds of later fully-fledged terms, the seeds of future terms and doctrines. For example, the more antiquated word *mā'īyah* (for quiddity/quintessence) occurs in the *tafsīr*, at 1:1 and 53:37. Without fixing the date of the text, this indicates that, broadly speaking, it predates al-Farābī's time (late ninth/early tenth century), by which time the later philosophical term *māhiyah* was well-established for quiddity.²¹ Another indicator of the early nature of the text lies in a certain fluidity of terminology when referring to concepts which in later history acquired specific and rather more rigid referents; for instance the concept of 'qualities' or 'attributes' is indicated by any of the following terms: *awṣāf*, *ṣifāt*, *mā'ānī*, and *na't*, all of which are used in the text to refer to the qualities of God and man. Later theologians and philosophers settled on the words *ṣifah/ṣifāt* as the reference to attributes and qualities in the given sense.

In the *tafsīr* the negative connotations of passionate love (*'ishq*), with regard to Zulaykhā's love of Joseph, also bespeaks an early period because in later Sufism, when *'ishq* became part and parcel of Sufi common vocabulary, it is used positively with reference to the deep love of God.

The word *walāyah* (sanctity, divine friendship) presents an interesting case. On the basis that it involves a far broader application than the Shī'ī use of the term, some readers might be tempted to take the discussion of *walāyah* in the text as presenting an exclusively Sufi view of sanctity, which would set the dating to a later period. However, though *walāyah* was, and remains, for the Shī'ah, particularly related to the imams, nevertheless, there is more than one type of *walāyah* even in Shī'ism. There is the *walāyah* that is located restrictively in the

21 *Mā'īyah*, from the root *m-w-h*, literally means 'sap, juice'. Here, at 1:1 and 53:37, it is used to mean 'quiddity, quintessence': 'the God of creation, His quiddity far transcends being attained to (*ilāhu'l-khalqī munazzahun 'an kulli darakin mā'īyatuhu*)' (1:1); 'the quintessence of sincerity (*mā'īyatu'l-ṣidqī*)' (53:37). It is possible that the use of this word is simply a scribal error for *māhiyah*, but it is easy to see how *mā'īyah* might be used, at a time before technical terms were fixed, to mean quiddity/quintessence.

imāmah, and there is another, more universal, type called *al-walāyah al-muktasibah*, 'acquirable' sanctity. The former is the birthright of the imams, while the latter is open to the rest of humanity. Thus, for example, at 12:100 we read, with regard to the phrase *verily my Lord is kind unto whom He wills*—'unto His slaves to whom care and friendship (*walāyah*) from Him have already been granted.' And at 55:11, with regard to the variously endowed palm tree mentioned in the Qur'ānic phrase, we read: 'Everyone harvests from it a type in keeping with the scope of his effort and (according to) the manifestations of mystical knowledge and the effects of divine friendship (*walāyah*) that are unveiled for them.' Thus the use of *walāyah* in our text could well be indicative of its Shī'ī and even Ja'farī origin; while the universal application of the term does not preclude a Shī'ī interpretation of it.

The use of *al-Ḥaqq* as *the* reference to God is definitely Sufi—but it is also known that Ja'far al-Ṣādiq bequeathed this usage to the Sufis.²²

However, other terms used in the *tafsīr* are well-established Sufi technical vocabulary, e.g., *haybah* (awe), *uns* (intimacy), *khawf* (fear), *rajā'* (hope), *ma'rifah* (gnosis or spiritual/mystical knowledge), *maḥabbah* (love), *maqām* (station), *tajallī* (theophany), *sirr* (secret/inmost self), *ḥayrah* (bewilderment), *baqā'* (subsistence) *mushāhadah* (witnessing), *maḥall* (locus), the use of the verb *faniya* (to be effaced), and the more philosophical term *ḥadath* (incepted thing). Furthermore, comments like those on the stellar mansions (25:61), the twelve springs of the Children of Israel (7:160), and the light verse (24:35) have the quality of being lists of mystical states and stations: the *aḥwāl* (states) and *maqāmāt* (stations) of the Sufis. These could seem to indicate the state not of seed but of flower or even of back-pollination from those flowers. In other words, the use of these terms in our text may be taken as an indication of the later date of the relevant comments. Thus, historians may argue that some of the comments are clearly back dated from a later period because they display ideas associated with that later period; but other scholars may be inclined to think that such comments are not a case of back-pollination from later flowers but are the actual seeds of those flowers, being the early usage of terms which later became well established within Sufi technical vocabulary.

22 See L. Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* (Paris: Vrin, 1954), p. 203.

The distinction between the universal mercy of *al-Raḥmān* and the more specific mercy of *al-Raḥīm* provides another interesting point as regards dating. At 1:1, on the *basmalah*, we read: 'Allāh is the God of everything, the Gracious (*al-Raḥmān*) to all of His creation, the Merciful (*al-Raḥīm*) to believers in particular (*al-Raḥmān li-jamī'i khalqihī, al-Raḥīm bi-l-mu'minīna khāṣṣatan*).'¹ This is a concept which, though Qur'ānic in origin, was made famous by Ibn 'Arabī. Thus, the presence of this concept in this *tafsīr* could indicate any period of time for the relevant comments, ranging from before Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's time right through to Ibn 'Arabī's time.

I believe it is almost impossible to ascertain beyond academic doubt the period/s to which this text and its different parts may be datable. From the academic point of view, the best that can be done is to compare all the extant texts attributed to the author and, working on the assumption that some of these ascriptions are authentic, work towards identifying or not, a common corpus.

Needless to say, it is important to know the lineage of a text, especially when its origin is pertinent in establishing its legal legitimacy and authority, particularly with regard to matters pertaining to the *sharī'ah*, and also for students of history. Nevertheless, for a text such as ours, which is above all a spiritual and mystical scriptural exegesis, it is in the *content* that the actual value resides for students of the Qur'ān and Qur'ān commentary, in other words, for those who wish to understand better the text and its explanations *per se*, and the oceans behind the ink of the letters. Moreover, spiritual and mystical realities are not bound to the historical and denominational categories in which they manifest in particular form. With this in mind some of the prominent themes of this text are discussed later in this introduction.

Shī'ism and Sufism

As noted above, another historical question that this text highlights is the relationship between Sufism and Shī'ism; this is shown in the possible connections between the Sufi recension of the *tafsīr Ja'far* and the Shī'ī corpus of the Imam's exegetical teachings. Do both branches stem from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq? Did the Imam present two distinct types of

Qur'ān commentary, one for the early 'proto-Sufis'²³ who learnt from him, and one for the Shī'ah? This subject will require a whole study itself, including a thorough comparative analysis of both exegetical bodies and their chains of transmission,²⁴ and this falls beyond the confines of this work. Here a brief presentation of the discussion to date, including some insights afforded by this study, shall have to suffice.

First, it should be noted that early Shī'i *tafsīr* takes the form of reported sayings (*akhbār*; sing. *khābar*) from the imams. These *akhbār* are understood to transmit knowledge that the imams inherited from the Prophet himself. As noted above, the fifth and sixth imams have a predominant role in *ḥadīth*-transmission.

Concerning the comments attributed to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq by the Sufis, Louis Massignon offered the following tradition of transmission for the Imam's exegetical comments contained in Sulamī's *Ḥaqā'iq*. In the century after the Imam's death, individual interpretive *aḥādīth* attributed to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq were circulated in the Sufi circles of Kūfah and Baghdad. In the following century (fourth century AH), these *aḥādīth* constituted a '*musnad min ṭarīqi ahli'l-bayt*';²⁵ which indicates an independent collection, by the Sufis, of Ja'fari exegetical comments—but this is not to say that the comments did not originate in Shī'i circles.

Paul Nwyia has compared Sulamī's Sufi recension in the *Ḥaqā'iq* with Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nu'mānī's (d. 360/971) Shī'i recension of the *tafsīr Ja'far*. Nu'mānī was a student of Kulaynī (d. 329/940), one of the primary sources for the Shī'i transmission of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's exegetical comments. Nwyia is of the opinion that in addition to identical doctrinal elements between the two recensions 'we are in the presence of the same work, having the same inspiration, the same style and the same spiritual content. Moreover, in places we find sentences

23 In the sense of those who were among the earliest to be called Sufis—for the Sufis, as cited in Hujwiri's *Kashf al-mahjūb* from al-Fushanjī, said that at the beginning of Islam, Sufism was a reality without a name.

24 This is brought up by Nwyia, in the introduction to his edition of the Sulamī recension '... it would be necessary to establish the proof of the mutual independence of the two traditions. For if the *ḥadīths* which gave rise to the sixth imam's commentary on the Qur'ān were preserved within Shī'i milieux independently of Sunni Sufi circles, the contrary is by no means self-evident.' See Nwyia, p. 182.

25 See Massignon, *Essai sur les origines*, pp. 201–13.

which are literally the same, containing, however, important variants which indicate two different sources of transmission.²⁶ Nwyia went as far as to state that the Sufis may well have acquired their recension from a Shī'i source—in other words, that the Sulamī recension was derived from the Nu'mānī recension.²⁷

Gerhard Böwering, who notes that 'one fourth of the [Ja'farī] material is cited consistently by Sulamī under a specific Shī'i *isnād* of Manṣūr b. 'Abd Allāh—Abū l-Qāsim al-Iskandarī—Abū Ja'far al-Malaṭī who links up with the chain of the Shī'ite imams ascending from 'Alī al-Riḍā' (d. 203/818) through Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799) to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq,²⁸ nevertheless disputes Nwyia's claim arguing that even within Shī'i sources the exegetical comments ascribed to al-Ṣādiq are not uniform, Nu'mānī's *tafsīr Ja'far* being quite distinct from the Ja'farī exegesis cited by 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. 350/961) and Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd al-'Ayyāshī (d. 320/932).²⁹

My own limited reading of Qummī's and 'Ayyāshī's commentaries, and for that matter, Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman's (d. before 346/957) *tafsīr*, does indeed reveal a Ja'farī corpus of a different tenor from that of Sulamī's recension, and this confirms the distinction noted by Böwering.

Given the breadth of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's influence, it may be that both traditions—the posited Sulamī-Nu'mānī recension and the Qummī-'Ayyāshī-Yaman corpus—do stem from him as independent bodies or that both stem as selections from a single Ja'farī corpus. In the latter case, it might be that the different transmitters of the single

26 This is the Bankipore ms 1460. See Nwyia's introduction to his edition of the Sufi recension: 'Le *Tafsīr Mystique*, attribué à Ga'far Ṣādiq,' in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 43 (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1968), vol. 43.

27 In his discussion of the *tafsīr Ja'far* in *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique* (Beirut: Librairie Orientale, 1970), pp. 158–59, in addition to the Bankipore ms, Nwyia mentions another ms—Istanbul, Nafiz Pasa ms 65—which coincides in places with the Sulamī recension but has explicit Shī'i comments too. Furthermore, there is an ms of the Sulamī recension of the *tafsīr Ja'far*—Yeni Cami ms 43—which also has a Shī'i *tafsīr*.

28 See Gerhard Böwering, 'The Qur'an commentary of al-Sulamī,' in *Islamic Studies presented to Charles J. Adams* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), p. 53.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 53–4.

corpus from Ja'far either left out or modified the aspects that they found problematic in that corpus. Thus, to pick up on *walāyah*, the Sufis would have concentrated on the universal aspect of sanctity in their recension. Böwering feels that 'one may be on firm ground by arguing that the items included in the *Ḥaqā'iq* on Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's authority may be understood as reflecting 3rd/9th and 4th/10th century Sufi terms and ideas that echo certain fundamental notions of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq yet are stripped of any specifically Shī'ite colouring'.³⁰

In the possible case of the two traditions stemming independently from the Imam, it is conceivable that Ja'far taught what was suitable to those for whom it was suited. He served as a spiritual master not just for those who were 'of the Shī'ah' but also for those outside this sphere. As noted earlier in this introduction, the Imām al-Ṣādiq had several types of disciples and students. It may be that sometimes he presented the same basic information to more than one circle but with modifications tailored to the audience. Or he may have presented quite different teachings to different groups. This should not be misunderstood; a great teacher of profound depth and breadth of knowledge may present information selectively and appropriately to the large diversity of souls that come to learn from him. In such cases, it should hardly be surprising that, at times, there was something of an overlap, or difference, in what was given to different circles of students.

Within the body text (*matn*) of the Sufi recension, there is one instance in which the Shī'ī-Sufi attitudes seem to come together in a revealing manner. The comment on 57:10 mentions 'the greatest sincere one, God's pleasure be upon him' (*al-ṣiddīq al-akbar, riḍwānu'llāhi 'alayhi*). Now although the title *al-ṣiddīq al-akbar* is used by the Shī'ah, but not the Sunnīs, for 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the blessing *riḍwānu'llāhi 'alayhi* is a Sunnī eulogy for all four caliphs; the Shī'ī eulogy for the Imām 'Alī is '*alayhi al-salām*. This implies that the comment was cited by a non-Shī'ī Sufi, but came from a Shī'ī source—serving to support the idea of a link between the Sulamī-Nu'mānī recensions.

However, a detailed and direct comparative study between the two texts is needed to substantiate this possible connection between the Sulamī and Nu'mānī recensions. Likewise, the Nu'mānī recension must

30 Ibid., p. 55.

be studied and compared with the 'Ayyāshī-Qummī-Yaman traditions.'

Shī'ī and Sunnī Tones in the Commentary

Confining ourselves to the text of the Sufi recension, it is noteworthy that while the vast majority of the 309 comments within our text are of a universal spirituality (bearing in mind earlier notes on *al-walāyah al-muktasibah*), there are only two instances that reveal explicitly Sunnī attitudes, whereas there are several instances of comments containing strong, if not explicit, Shī'ī implications. In the comments on Q. 24:35, the Sunnī stance vis-à-vis the first caliphs seems explicitly condoned twice. At 24:35 the commentary states: 'He has illumined the paths unto God with the light of Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī ﷺ—it is for this reason that the Prophet ﷺ said: My companions are like the stars—whomever of them you choose to follow, you shall be rightly-guided.' Further on, concerning this same verse, it is stated: 'He illumined the earth through Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī ﷺ.'

Such an evident Sunnī perspective might be taken by some as evidence that this whole text, or parts of it, was the work of later Sufis; or it may be seen as a non-Ja'farī interpolation into a predominantly Ja'farī corpus. If taken as actually coming from the Imam, it may be understood as dissimulation (*taqīyah*) or as evidence of intra-Muslim tolerance: that though the way of 'Alī and his progeny is the best for the Shī'ah, the other Islamic paths are also 'rightly-guided'.

At the same time there are a number of comments which may be interpreted as presenting aspects of Shī'ī doctrine. To give a few examples, in the comment on 1:1 we read: 'the secret of prophethood which the Prophet confided to the elite of his community'; the 'elite' can be taken as an allusion to the Shī'ī imams, the progeny of 'Alī who would have received the secret of prophecy; while by the Sufis it would be understood with more general reference. The Shī'ī doctrine that only the imam understands the Qur'ān correctly is clearly implied in

31 The most likely scenario may be that the Sufi recension does contain a corpus of broader applicability stemming from Ja'far. The original corpus of the Sufi stemma would be that which Massignon described as circulating among the Sufis of Kūfah and Baghdad, and would most likely not have contained any explicitly Shī'ī comments but only those of a more universal reference.

the comment on 3:138: 'only he perceives it [the Qur'ān] clearly who is supported by Him with the light of certainty and purity of inmost self'; yet this may be taken, as it must have been by the Sufis, as of general reference, that is, anyone whom God chooses may be supported with the light of certainty and purity of inmost self. At 2:128, the *ahl baytī* are mentioned, with obvious Shī'ī connotations: 'Ja'far said . . . protect me and my household (literally 'the people of my house') . . .' The comment on 3:31 is of an anti-*ghulūw* nature, which is in keeping with what is known of Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's attitude concerning such matters.³² Likewise, 12:76 could be understood in Shī'ī terms, namely as a reference to the imams.

Then there are the more explicit references. On 22:26, the comment interprets *al-rukka'i'l-sujūd* as reference to 'the foremost imams, who return to the beginning from the utmost end'. At 41:44 it is stated in the comment that 'the Qur'ān is a healing for him who is in the shade of impeccability (*iṣmah*) while it is inscrutable for him who is in the darkness of being abandoned'. In this there are references to two Shī'ī doctrines: (1) the infallibility or impeccability of the imams—their *iṣmah*; and (2) the true understanding of the Qur'ān which only the imams have as part of their divinely conferred *ilm* (as mentioned earlier in this Introduction).

To conclude this discussion, if the text is read through a Shī'ī lens there are numerous allusions susceptible of an imamological interpretation. If the text is read with a Sufi lens, the very same comments may be understood with broader reference. Moreover, ultimately, on the spiritual register, the two readings of the *tafsīr* as a whole, can coincide, because, setting aside political and jurisprudential affiliations, how much of a difference is there between the two routes to sanctity? And sanctity is the meeting point. As mentioned earlier, in Shī'ism there is a specific *walāyah* that is reserved for the imams, but there is also the universal sanctity in which the common man participates to the extent that he is effaced in the imam. The imam

32 See Momen, *An Introduction to Shī'ī Islām*, pp. 65–68; Hodgson, 'Dja'far al-Ṣādiq', p. 375: 'Dja'far made a point of keeping them [i.e., Shī'ī ideas] within bounds'; A. A. Sachedina, 'The Significance of Kāshī's *Rijāl*', in *Logos Islamikos* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), especially pp. 196–97.

is both macrocosmic and microcosmic. The microcosmic imam is the inner continuity of the prophetic reality just as the macrocosmic imam is the continuity of the Prophet in the world. Effacement in the inner imam is realised through an ontological actualisation of the prophetic reality. Likewise, in Sufism, sanctity is realised through an ontological effacement in the inner *nabī*, the microcosmic extension of the prophetic reality.

LEVELS AND METHODS OF INTERPRETATION

In the opening citation of the *tafsīr*, the following is related from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq: 'The Book of God has four things: literal expression (*'ibārah*), allusion (*ishārah*), subtleties (*laṭā'if*), and the deepest realities (*ḥaqā'iq*). The literal expression is for the commonalty (*'awāmm*), the allusion is for the elite (*khawāṣṣ*), the subtleties are for the friends (of God) (*awliyā'*), and the deepest realities are for the prophets (*anbiyā'*).' Allusion (*ishārah*), subtlety (*laṭīfah*), and reality (*ḥaqīqah*) define the different levels of interpretive comments contained in the *tafsīr* Ja'far, and place the reading of this commentary on the spiritual register.

Allusion (*ishārah*)

Ishārah can refer to more than one style of allusive interpretation.

Principle of Correspondence (*taṭbīq*)

First, *taṭbīq* is the principle of correspondence whereby macrocosmic entities are interpreted with reference to man as a microcosm; it is a system that involves analogues. Thus external or physical things like mountains, rivers, and stars are explained as corresponding to inner spiritual elements within the human being. For instance, at 14:35, where Abraham prays to God to make the valley of Mecca safe, saying *make this land safe*, 'land' is taken as a reference to the hearts of sages, 'make them sanctuaries of Your secret and safe from being cut off from You'; at 2:158, the hills of Ṣafā and Marwah are interpreted as symbols of the spirit and the soul respectively; at 27:61 the earth is understood as 'the hearts of His friends', the rivers are 'increase from His beneficence' and the mountains are 'trusting reliance upon God', the two seas are the

heart and the soul, and the barrier between them consists of God-given success and the intellect.

Thus, through the principle of micro-macrocosmic correspondence (*taṭbīq*), symbolic allusion acts as a key to the less explicitly stated spiritual dimension of certain Qur'ānic words and phrases which *prima facie* pertain to external entities that are interiorised and understood as elements of the spiritual landscape.³³ This technique was used systematically by later Sufis such as 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 736/1336), whose *tafsīr* is an example of the highly refined and systematic use of *taṭbīq*.

Interpretation (*ta'wīl*)

Second, *ta'wīl* is the literal aspect that is used as a springboard for disclosing a deeper meaning of a word. In such cases, the very letters of the relevant words are used for an interpretation on the basis of their associated meanings; that is to say, the interpreter 'goes back' (*awwala*—from which we get the word *ta'wīl*, meaning interpretation) to the verbal root of the word and links it to other meanings derived from the root letters. It is a form of paronomasia, 'a play on words' whereby the commentator arrives at broader interpretations based on the associated verbal meanings.

The most prominent example of this is the interpretation of Ṣafā as the spirit (*rūḥ*), and Marwah as the heroic soul (*nafs*) in the comment on the Qur'ānic phrase, *Verily, Ṣafā and Marwah are among the rites of God* (2:158): 'Ṣafā is the spirit (*rūḥ*) because of its being pure of the dirt of oppositions (to God), and Marwah is the soul (*nafs*) because of its use of the heroic virtues in the performance of service(s) (for) its Master.' The word Ṣafā is related to the word for purity—*ṣafā'*, both being derived from the verbal root *ṣ-f-w*, meaning 'to be pure'; and the word Marwah, containing the letters *m-r-w* is related to *murūwah* (heroic virtues; chivalry also contains those three letters although *murūwah* is derived from the verbal root, *m-r-*, meaning 'to be healthy, manly'). Thus, while both Ṣafā and Marwah mean 'rock' or 'stone' they are here interpreted on the basis of their broader meanings drawn from

33 That is, such elements are substantially different to the physical counterparts yet are literal aspects of the subtle landscape.

letter associations, to reveal a compelling image of the spiritual life: with the *rūh* being a pure continuity of the flow of the divine spirit; and the soul being heroic in striving to ensure that the pure radiance of the spirit's light shining upon it may continue to extend through the soul.

Knowledge of the Occult (*jafr*)

The third form of *ishārah* in the *tafsīr* is *jafr*. The *jafr* in this commentary pertains to the esoteric significances of letters (*'ilm al-ḥurūf*). This involves taking the individual letters of a given word and interpreting them as indicators of whole concepts. *Jafr* as a science of esoteric knowledge is said to have originated with 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who was taught it by the Prophet himself; it was thereafter passed to the imams as the heirs and successors of 'Alī and the Prophet. Knowledge of the esoteric properties of the letters of the alphabet and of the divine names is part of *jafr* and is used in the spiritual and mystical interpretation of the Qur'ān. The general Shī'ī view is that this dimension of *jafr* passed from imam to imam; however, according to some sources, it is said to have passed from 'Alī through his uncle Zayd b. 'Alī to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.³⁴

Jafr occurs the least of the three types of *ishārah*, coming mainly at the beginning, on the divine names in the *Fātiḥah*, on the detached letters at the start of *sūrahs* 3 and 68, and at the end on the Names 'al-Ṣamad' and 'al-Aḥad' and the pronoun 'huwa' in *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ*. This *jafr* is profound and potent, yet it is very straightforward, quite unlike later highly refined expressions of *'ilm al-ḥurūf*, for example the totally systematic application to the Ismā'īlī hierarchy of the letters of the alphabet, down to the dots, as contained in the *tafsīr* by Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman (d. before 346/957). *Jafr* is the most obscure aspect of *ishārah* in our text.

To give an example of *jafr*: concerning the word *bism* from the phrase , meaning: *In the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful*, different interpretations of the three letters of the word are given. The comment on 1:1 says: '[The word] *bism* has three letters: *bā'*, *sīn*, and *mīm*. The *bā'* is the gate (*bāb*) of prophethood, the *sīn* is the secret (*sirr*) of prophethood that the Prophet confided to the elite of his community, and the *mīm* is the kingdom (*mamlakah*) of faith

34 See Hodgson, 'Dja'far al-Ṣādiq', *EF*².

that embraces the white and the black.³⁵ Immediately following this, a different interpretation is offered, namely that the *bā'* pertains to the divine brilliance (*bahā'*), the *sīn* to God's resplendence (*sanā'*) and the *mīm* to His glory (*majd*). Clearly the interpretations pertain to different levels; however, the foundations on which these interpretations are erected lie in the *ghayb*, for they are not immediately evident.

On a different note, it is not without significance that in the first comment cited above, the secret of prophethood (*sirr al-nubūwah*) is confided to the *khawāṣṣ*, to whom the aspect of *ishārah* was specifically related in the opening quote from the Imām al-Ṣādiq. This indicates that *ishārah* is related also to *ḥaqīqah*, which pertains to *nubūwwah*. This connection is borne out at a profound level, in the concepts of the heart and soul contained in the *tafsīr*.

Subtlety (*laṭīfah*) and Reality (*ḥaqīqah*)

The link between *ishārah* and *ḥaqīqah* passes through *laṭīfah*, the interpretive level of subtlety. *Laṭīfah* pertains to the interface of sanctified soul and ensouled spirit, while *ḥaqīqah* pertains to the heart (*qalb*), and more specifically to the holy content of the heart, as we shall see in the next section in the discussion on *walāyah* and the concept of the *qalb*. In the portrait of the human microcosm that this *tafsīr* depicts, the heart is that element within the human being that is the locus which receives the direct inflow from heaven, namely the *nabī* that receives the holy and radiant *rūḥ*,³⁶ while the sanctified soul is the theophanic soul of the *walī* whose Marwah has, with God's help and by His grace, uprooted from the soul all base and 'wretched'³⁷ qualities so that the light of the spirit may radiate through it unobstructed.

With *laṭīfah* and *ḥaqīqah* we enter the realm of subtle facts (*laṭā'if* and *ḥaqā'iq*), leaving the symbolic realm behind.³⁸ For *laṭīfah* and

35 There are different possible explanations of the meaning of this comment, among them, that it may be a reference to 'Alī as the gate to the city of knowledge referred to in the prophetic saying: 'I am the city of knowledge and 'Alī is its gate.'

36 See notes on 76:21 for the complete microcosmic portrait.

37 The word 'wretched' is used in the *tafsīr* to describe the lower soul's own qualities at 19:93.

38 It can be said that we are in the realm of *al-ḥaqā'iq al-laṭīfah*. The rendition

ḥaqīqah are not about symbolism; they are to be taken literally—but not understood in a dense material manner. Rather, the literality of subtleties and deepest realities is situated in the subtle realms of which divine light, and not dense physical matter, is the substance.

These *latā'if* and *ḥaqā'iq* are exemplified in the comments that pertain to the soul, the spiritual heart and the matter of qualities—all of which constitute prominent themes and shall be discussed at length under that heading. At this juncture only three examples shall be cited.

Commenting on *that you may bring forth mankind from the darknesses into light* (14:1), Ja'far offers the following as one of the interpretations of this phrase: '[that you may bring them forth] from the darknesses of the [lower] soul into the lights of the heart'.

In the commentary on the Qur'ānic phrase (27:61): *and He (God) placed between the two seas a barrier*, we read: '[He placed a barrier] between the heart and the lower soul lest the lower soul should overwhelm the heart with its darknesses and thus oppress it. So (God) placed God-given success (*tawfiq*) and the intellect ('*aql*) as the barrier between the two.'

Then, in the comment on the Qur'ānic phrase: *and the likeness of a harmful word is as a harmful tree* (14:26), when explaining the harmful tree referred to, the lower soul (*nafs*) is named as the soil of the harmful tree. The harmful tree is explained as an allusion to the carnal appetites.³⁹

Thus it is clear that whether it is an application of macrocosmic references to the subtle dimension of the microcosm that man constitutes (*taṭbiq*), or the very letters of Qur'ānic words and phrases that are used as springboards into the subtle and deepest realms (*ta'wil* and *jafr*), the role of allusion (*ishārah*) in the *tafsīr* Ja'far is to open doors to the *latā'if* and *ḥaqā'iq* for a disclosure of the inner, specifically

'fact' is deliberately used here for *ḥaqīqah*, in order to try to convey something of the broader meaning of the Arabic word, which would have been in the minds of the early readers/listeners: truths are factual realities.

39 Needless to say, the harmful tree of the carnal appetites is not the only harmful tree that sprouts forth from the soil of the lower soul, for the lower soul, the soul that commands wrong (*al-nafs al-ammārah bi'l-sū*), contains the vices that would destroy the heart and the higher aspects of the soul.

spiritual and mystical content of the Book and to show how man himself is full of the signs of God. *Ishārah* thus acts as a gateway to the innermost reaches of holy text and holy man.

PROMINENT THEMES IN THE COMMENTARY

As mentioned above, the concepts of the soul and the heart and the status of the human being are among the foremost themes in the *tafsīr Ja'far*. These are interwoven with the tiered structure of the correlation between *walī*, *nabī*, and *malak* that is presented in the commentary. Connecting these—sanctified soul, the heart and its holy content, saint, prophet, angel, and the interpretive levels of *ishārah*, *latīfah*, and *ḥaqīqah*—is the matter of qualities which runs through the important themes as a tent pole holds up a tent. At the apex of the pole, lying beyond the tent, comes the point where, as we are told in the comment on 112:3: 'Majestic is our Lord (beyond) that delusive imaginations, intelligences, or sciences should perceive Him. Rather He is as He described Himself and the modality of His description is not intellectually perceivable. Glory to Him (beyond) that understandings or intelligences should attain unto His modality! *everything is perishing save for His Face* (28:88)';⁴⁰ and in the comment on 57:3, 'Ja'far said: He is the one who makes first the first and makes last the last, who manifests the manifest and conceals the hidden. Then these concepts fall away and there remains [only] He.'

The tent pole of qualities has two key pegs: *mawāfaqah bi'llāh* (harmony and consistency with God) and its antithesis, *mukhālafatu'llāh* (opposition or contrast to God). These two terms are applied, as appropriate, to the states of the soul and the spirit, demarcating the absence or presence of light.⁴¹

40 *Wajh*, also means 'essence' and 'identity'. Both essence and face pertain to the identity of a person. A person is identified by their face; likewise their true identity, their deepest reality, is revealed in their essence. With regard to the Qur'ānic verse, it means that everything apart from God's own identity perishes. This is pertinent to the discussion of qualities.

41 As this discussion unfolds, bear in mind the comments on 35:32, namely: 'The lower soul is wrongful; the heart is moderate, and the spirit is foremost.' 'Who looks with his soul to the world is wrongful; who looks with his heart to the hereafter is moderate; who looks with his spirit to

Soul (*nafs*) and Spirit (*rūḥ*)

To begin with the soul, the Qur'ānic anatomy of the soul presents three types of *nafs*: 1. *al-nafs al-ammārah bi'l-sū'* (12:53), i.e., the soul that incites to wrongdoing, which is the realm of darkness and sin; this aspect of the *nafs* is rendered by the phrase 'lower soul' in the translation. 2. *al-nafs al-lawwāmah* (75:2), i.e., the soul that censures and rebukes itself; this is the 'heroic soul'—symbolised by Marwah—that sees the darkneses within itself and strives to combat them; and 3. *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah* (89:27), i.e., the soul at peace, the soul appeased—this is the theophanic soul that is peacefully conjoined and at one with its pure self and its individuated, differentiated holy spirit.

The interpretation of Ṣafā, already cited above, as the spirit (*rūḥ*)⁴² because of its purity and freedom from the dirt of oppositions (to God) (*daran al-mukhālafāt*), and of Marwah as the soul because it uses the heroic virtues in performing services for its Lord (cited above as an example of both *taṭbīq* and *ta'wīl*), introduces the term *daran al-mukhālafah*. This term is explained, and its antithesis introduced, in the comment on the phrase from 53:44: *and that it is He who deadens and enlivens*, where we read, 'He deadens souls through opposition (*mukhālafah*) (to Him) and He enlivens hearts with the lights of harmony (*muwāfaqah*) (with Him).' Thus harmony with God (*muwāfaqah bi'llāh*) is life; contrast or opposition to God is spiritual death—which, in this case, is not non-existence, but a deformed, darkened inner state of being. *Muwāfaqah bi'llāh* is enlivenment in that through this consistency with God, the lights of the divine qualities

the Truth is foremost.'

- 42 Ultimately there is only one spirit: the Spirit of God. The realm of the undifferentiated Spirit of God lies beyond the realm of being. Within the undifferentiated Spirit of God, God forms/shapes individuations. These individuated spirits are as etchings demarkated within the substance of the one divine Spirit. They are individual consciousnesses; they are the archetypes of differentiated beings. Differentiation takes place when God places an individuated spirit into a soul within the realm of being. The realm beyond being is undifferentiated existence, uncontaminated spirit (see at 76:21). However, beyond beyond-being, there is the unindividuated core of the divine essence: the *kunh*, totally and purely unindividuated and One, absolute and infinite divine oneness (the *tafrīd al-tawḥīd* in 18:46); the *huwīyah* (see at 57:3).

are allowed to permeate the soul and continue to extend through the creature; while *mukhālafah* is *daran* (dirt) that darkens the soul of the creature and thereby impedes the extension of the divine light [the divine being and qualities; the radiation of the divine spirit] in the locus of the soul.

The equation that lights are equal to qualities is made in the commentary on the *āyat al-nūr*, where thirty-seven qualities are listed for the different lights. First we are given qualities that pertain either to God in His relationship with the soul (protection, generosity, compassion, grace to name some of them) or to states of soul that open the soul to the divine influx (fear, hope, shame, surrender). But the last fourteen qualities pertain to God in Himself (His majesty, eternity, singularity, totality (*kullīyah*) and His Self-identity/ipseity (*huwīyah*). In other words, the initial qualities pertain to *muwāfaqah* inasmuch as those states of the soul are harmonious with divine qualities and allow passage to the latter; and the second list speaks of non-relational divine qualities. The summation that is given in the *tafsīr* states that the lights are all from the lights of al-Ḥaqq which God has mentioned in His words *God is the light of the heavens and the earth* (24:35). Al-Ḥaqq is the divine name that is used consistently throughout the *tafsīr* as the reference to God; even more so than the *ism al-mufrad*, Allāh; and here there is a clear equation between al-Ḥaqq and Allāh.⁴³ So with God the Truth, with al-Ḥaqq, come the lights divine. This shall be encountered again later at the deepest level of the heart.

Returning to the pivotal terms, with regard to the heroic soul, in the comment at 42:9, the *murūwah* of Marwah is defined for we are told how it is that the soul serves God. Regarding the phrase *wa huwa yuhyi'l-mawtā*; and *He enlivens the dead*, we read: 'He (God) enlivens the souls (*nufūs*) of the believers through service to Him (*khidmatihī*) and He deadens the souls of the hypocrites through opposition to Him (*mukhālafatihī*).' So, as we saw above, God enlivens hearts with lights; while the soul is enlivened through *khidmah*. *Khidmah* here is given as the opposite of *mukhālafah*, in other words *khidmah* is *muwāfaqah*: consistency with and conformity to the divine. So the service (*khidmah*)

43 As mentioned earlier, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's use of al-Ḥaqq in this way as practically a synonym for the *ism al-mufrad*, and the prominence of the divine name al-Ḥaqq are part of his legacy to Sufism.

of the soul lies in harmonising itself with the divine spirit; in other words the *murūwah* of Marwah lies in striving to become like Ṣafā: by eliminating, from the soul, the dirt of contrast to God.⁴⁴

This process of eliminating dirt, of cleansing the soul, is directly related to the birth of the sanctified soul of the saint, the friend of God (*waliyu'llāh*). Thus the symbolic interpretation of Ṣafā and Marwah feeds directly into the subtle level of the *laṭā'if* of the Book. That the interpretive level of *laṭīfah* pertains to sanctity (*walāyah*) is made clear at the very beginning of the *tafsīr* in the initial quote from the Imam, the quote that relates the subtleties (*laṭā'if*) of the Book to the friends of God (the *awliyā'*).⁴⁵

Subtlety (*laṭīfah*) and Friendship (*walāyah*)

Walāyah then, is the station of friendship with God. This entails the norm or convention of the *awliyā'*, which, we are told in the comment on 4:59, is to uphold/fulfil the pledge and to be patient in times of suffering and distress. With regard to upholding/fulfilling the pledge, at 3:76 on the phrase *rather the one who fulfils his pledge and is God-aware; for verily God loves the God-aware*,⁴⁶ we read that Ja'far said: 'The fulfilment of the pledge is being with (God) by excising that which is other than Him.' This excision of what is other than Him is the elimination of the *daran al-mukhālafah*; it is the work accomplished

44 So, for example, the heroic soul strives to allow the divine qualities of mercy, peace, love, patience, forgiveness, tolerance, wisdom, beauty, and compassion to manifest in the soul, even in the face of the opposite. The heroic soul, Marwah, to use the symbolism of the *tafsīr*, strives to overcome the greed, selfishness, and self-centredness within it so that the divine generosity and altruism may prevail; it strives to uproot the ugliness and darkness within it lest that cast a dust-shadow over the radiant beauty of the individuated spirit, of Ṣafā. In this striving to harmonise itself with the spirit lies the heroism of the soul.

45 The terms *wali/waliyu'llāh* and *walāyah*, which literally mean 'friend (of God)' and 'friendship (with God)', are used as an equivalent for 'saint' and 'sainthood' respectively, although there is a case to be made for using 'friend' rather than 'saint', since the term 'friend' is susceptible of a broader application.

46 At 3:102, Ja'far defines *taqwā* (God-awareness) as follows: '(*Taqwā*) is that you see nothing in your heart other than Him'.

at the stage of Marwah. The resultant soul, the soul in which there is nothing that is other than Him, is in perfect harmony with Him. This soul is the theophanic soul, *al-nafs al-muṭmaʿinnah*, the soul at peace with and in God. This is the state of the highest soul which is a clear conduit for the divine lights (qualities). And that is the state of the friend of God.

As is made clear in the citations immediately below, it is to be noted that the *source* of the divine friendship is always God: it is *God* who is always the Friend (al-Walī), it is *God* who elevates the believers to the rank of friendship, just as it is *God* who took Abraham for friend (*khalīl*). When God befriends a soul, *He* makes it into a friend of His, a *waliyu'llāh*. It is God who sanctifies a soul by befriending it. Friendship with God requires of the soul 'only' that it be receptive and allow God free passage in and through it. This is the reason for the *murūwah* and the spiritual battles.

God's hand is always extended, open in friendship, for He says: *God is the Friend of those who believe* (2:257). On the phrase *and God is the Friend of the believers* in 3:68, Ja'far says: '*and God is the Friend of the believers* in elevating them to reach the station of "the friend" (*al-khalīl*) ﴿﴾ because proximity to (God) is a rank of love.' 'The friend' (*al-khalīl*) and 'the friend of God' (*khalīlu'llāh*) are epithets of the Prophet Abraham, based on the Qur'ānic phrase *and God took Abraham as a friend* (4:125).

Thus through their meaning, the epithets for Abraham are connected in the commentary with the other term for 'friend,' namely, *walī*. The Prophet Abraham, friend of God, thus serves as the interface between *walāyah* and *nubūwah*, between *latīfah* and *ḥaqīqah*; in other words, between *walī* and *nabī*. From what follows below, it will be seen that the *tafsīr* presents the following correlation—the *nabī* is perfect *walī*.

It is said of Abraham in the Qur'ān that he 'rendered fully'. The Qur'ānic phrase is: *And Abraham who rendered fully* (53:37).⁴⁷ On this, Ja'far comments: 'the quintessence of sincerity is (faithful) fulfilment

47 The Qur'ānic verse is a comprehensive statement. Elsewhere in the Qur'ān it is stated that people do not esteem Him as it is His right to be esteemed (39:67); and the believers are exhorted to be aware of God as is His due (3:102). Full rendition to God is no less than total sanctity.

in every state and in every deed.⁴⁸ *Waffā*, being the second form of the verbal root *w-f-y*, means to render fully a due or a right; to pay fully what is owed. This is why Abraham is no less than the high and intimate Friend of God, *khalilu'llāh*, because to give God His due right is to be a faithful friend of God, a perfect saint, who in every state and action faithfully fulfils what is due to God. Reading this in the light of the above discussion of the fulfilment of the pledge, the Abrahamic fulfilment would be to allow God's qualities to shine through him in every state and deed.

However, the saints or friends of God are faithful friends of His not because *they* are friends to Him, for it is impossible for a creature to render fully to God His due, but because *He* is a friend to them. Only God can render fully to Himself His due. Sanctity is divine friendship—from God to God through the form of the saint-friend;⁴⁹ just as the divine speech is from God to God through the form of the creaturely locus, as seen in the last part of the comment on 20:12, where God tells another prophet, Moses: 'None bears My oration other than Me, nor answers Me except Me—I am the speaker and the one spoken to, while you are in the middle, a corporeal form in whom lies the locus of the oration.'

Through the theophanic sanctified soul of the *walī* and the perfect sanctity (*walāyah*) of the *nabī*, the above citation takes us beyond the connective interface between *laṭīfah* and *ḥaqqīqah*, and brings us to the interface between prophet (*nabī*) and angel (*malak*). This latter interface is entirely on the level of the *ḥaqqā'iq*. The *tafsīr* may be said to present this interface most strongly in the passages on the Prophet Moses who, like his forefather, constitutes an example of how the *nabī*

48 This comment provides the equation of *wafā'* (the being faithful to a promise or trust) with *ṣidq* (sincerity, faithfulness, trustworthiness). Moreover, the implication, the dynamic of which is familiar from other comments, is that sincerity (towards God) is, quintessentially, faithfulness to Him and such faithfulness (the full rendering of what is due) is friendship with Him and this friendship is sanctity, sanctity is holiness and all holiness belongs to God the Holy, al-Quddūs and to Him alone.

49 See Q. 18:44, *thus it is, friendship/sanctity belongs to God the Truth; He is best in recompense and best in final consequence.*

is a perfect *walī* through allowing the divine qualities that abide in the spiritual heart to extend through the soul.

Reality (*ḥaqīqah*) and Prophethood (*nubūwah*)

If, through the sanctified soul, the level of *latīfah* pertains to sanctity, the level of *ḥaqīqah* pertains to the inner *sanctum sanctorum*, the spiritual heart, as we shall now see in the concept of the heart (*qalb*) presented in this commentary.

At 14:32 it is stated explicitly that '(God) has made the heart of the believer of service to His love and His knowledge. God's share of the slaves is their hearts and nothing else, because the heart is the receptacle of (God's) gaze and the repository of His trust and of the knowledge of His secrets.' This is why it was said above that in the *tafsīr* the heart is the element within the human being that is the locus which receives the direct influx from heaven.

To look at some details in the following comments concerning the heart, at 6:59 we read 'through hearts (God) unlocks guidance'—thus divine guidance is opened to a person through their spiritual heart.

At 6:79 Ja'far says of God '[He who] is totally and perfectly able to protect my heart from blameworthy thoughts and harmful whisperings which are not suited to al-Ḥaqq (the Truth, the Real)'—from which we understand that the human heart contains the divine truth and reality. Moreover, it is to be remembered that the divine name al-Ḥaqq is used consistently throughout the *tafsīr* as *the* reference to God. This implies that the heart is a receptacle for the divine presence. The heart is the inner 'holy of holies.'

At 9:111 the heart is referred to as being the conduit of love whereby God enlivens people with the means for attachment to Himself—which means that divine love flows to a person through their spiritual heart and thus provides them with the means of becoming attached to God, in which attachment lies their enlivenment, i.e., divine love begets attachment to God which equals life.

Thus, divine guidance (*hidāyah*), divine truth and the divine presence (al-Ḥaqq), divine love (*maḥabbah*) and life all flow to the human being through the subtle or spiritual heart. The heart thus receives and conducts the divine qualities. It seems incontrovertible that the divine qualities—which is tantamount to saying the divine lights, which is

tantamount to saying the divine spirit—are the trust which is deposited in the heart as stated in the *tafsīr*, and that the gaze of God both conveys these qualities to the heart and nurtures them to fruition.

This trust—which is the *ḥaqīqah* of *insān*; the deepest reality of the human being, the holy content of the heart—consists then of a theophany (*tajalli*) of the divine qualities: God's mercy, love, beauty, wisdom, compassion, courteousness, His loving kindness, His truth, to name some. This theophany in turn, may then shine through the soul, to the extent that the soul is free of the *darān al-mukhālafāt* or the darkness of sins and ungodliness. For to the degree that the soul is in harmony with the divine, to that extent it is sanctified and to that extent the soul participates in and is a prolongation of the theophanic state of the heart, which in turn is a prolongation of the divine *ḥaqīqah* within the heart.

It is related from Ja'far that he said, commenting on the phrase *there is none in the heavens nor the earth but comes unto the Gracious as a slave*: (19:93) 'There is none but comes to the Gracious as a slave, either poor and wretched through his own qualities (*awṣāf*) or noble through (and) corroborating the qualities (*awṣāf*) of al-Ḥaqq.'

This is illustrated graphically in the comments on Moses at the burning bush where, through the profoundest *ta'wīl*, we are shown that the praiseworthy qualities in man are, in their *ḥaqā'iq*, literally divine. We read at 7:142–3 on the phrase: *And when Moses came unto Our appointed tryst and his Lord spoke to him*: 'God . . . spoke to him through his inner disposition and his slavehood (*'ubūdiyyah*)—and Moses disappeared from his soul and was effaced from his qualities; then his Lord spoke to him through the deepest realities of his (praiseworthy) good qualities; and Moses heard, from his Lord, the description of Moses. '*Ubūdiyyah*, slavehood, means possessing nothing of your own; here it means that everything in the slave (*'abd*) is from the Lord (*Rabb*). With the qualities that pertain to the creature out of the way, God spoke in that creature through the roots (the deepest realities) of the praiseworthy qualities in the creature. That these are God's own qualities is made clear in the comment on 20:11–12, *then when he came to it (the fire) he was called 'O Moses! Verily I am I your Lord . . . so put off your two sandals*.' where we read that at the point of effacement Moses said to God:

'Moses has no standing with You nor has he the courage to speak unless You allow him to subsist through Your eternal subsistence and (unless) You qualify him with Your character so that You are wholly the orator and the one addressed.' Then He said: 'None bears My oration other than Me, nor answers Me except Me—I am the speaker and the one spoken to, while you are in the middle, a corporeal form⁵⁰ in whom lies the locus of the oration (*maḥallu'l-khiṭāb*). Nothing can sustain the divine except the divine. To bear the divine speech, Moses had to be qualified with the divine character.

The *nabī* then, the one who receives the divine speech, is the one qualified with the divine character. As in the case of Moses, and Abraham too, all non-divine qualities have been effaced from the souls of the *anbiyā'* to make room for the divine replacement (*'iwad*); and even as the souls of the *awliyā'* have had excised from them all that is other than God; neither *nabī* nor *walī* contains any *daran* that obscures the gold of the *ḥaqīqah* within them. Here then is the ontological continuity between the *walī* and the *nabī*, between *laṭīfah* and *ḥaqīqah*—for both saint and prophet may be described as theophanic souls: ontological messages of God—like angels.

This equation with angels is made explicit in the comment at 28:29, '[Moses] saw a fire—an indication of the [divine] lights, for he saw light in the form of the fire. When he drew near to it, the lights of holiness pervaded him and the robes of intimacy encompassed him. Then he (Moses) was addressed with the subtlest oration and the most beautiful response was called for from him. *Through that he became a noble angel brought close to God*.' With the passage of the divine speech through him, Moses became a noble angelic being, i.e., a pure soul manifesting a perfect continuity of the divine spirit—like *Ṣafā*.

And so a circle is completed here, rejoining *Ṣafā* and *Marwah*, the allusive (*ishārī*) interpretation of which was the *madkhal*, the point of entry, into the other two categories of interpretation found in the commentary. This time, however, the approach to *Ṣafā* and *Marwah* is from within, through the *ḥaqīqah* for which they are the gateway. The examples from the text show how the deep current of the concepts of the soul and heart flow rapidly in the river of allusion (*ishārah*),

50 Or bodily form: *shabḥun*. See E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (Cambridge, UK: Islamic Texts Society, 1984), at *sh-b-ḥ*.

through the waters of subtlety (*laṭīfah*), and end up in the ocean of the deepest realities, the *ḥaqāʾiq*: the essences of things, their reality or true nature. It has also been seen that qualities provide the continuing link between *ishārah*, *laṭīfah*, and *ḥaqīqah*, not just in the text but in the sacred human being who is made 'in the best image,'⁵¹ who is a friend of God in his soul, and is a messenger and message of God in his deepest reality.

We shall show them Our signs, upon the horizons and in themselves (41:53).

Prophet (*nabī*) and Angel (*malak*)

Returning to the discussion of the hierarchical relationship between saint, prophet, and angel as documented in this *tafsīr*, the account of Abraham presents the continuity between *walī* and *nabī* and shows how the *nabī* is the perfect *walī*. The account of Moses also shows that the *nabī* is the perfect *walī*, but goes a step further to reveal that that perfect *nabī* is *malak* (angel). This correlation is also presented in the commentary on the Joseph verses. On the phrase from 12:19, *here is a slave boy, and they concealed him for merchandise*, the commentary states:

'Ja'far said: God, most high, had a secret in Joseph. He hid the situation'⁵² of His secret from them, for had He disclosed to them the reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of what He had deposited in (Joseph), they would have died. Do you not see how they said "Here is a slave boy"? Had they known the traces of the [divine] power in him they would have said "Here is a prophet and a truthful one." Indeed, when part of the matter was disclosed to the women they said: *this is no human, this is naught but a noble angel.*' (12:31)

On the phrase, *then when they saw him and they extolled him*, from 12:31, 'Ja'far said: The awe of prophethood [that fell] upon them overlaid the situation of their desire for him, then they extolled him.' In other words, when the women (unlike the merchants who drew Joseph out of the well) perceived Joseph's prophetic status, their love for his

51 To use the words of the *tafsīr* on 95:4, *We have surely created mankind in the best form.* Ja'far said: 'In the best image.' That is to say: in the image of God.

52 Or 'rank', 'position', 'location', all of which are the meanings of *mawḍiʿ*.

external beauty was transformed into reverence for the manifestation of the divine beauty that they recognised in him.

Furthermore, Joseph receives the collective blessings of his blessed forefathers: 'Ja'far said [at 12:76]: "Thus We manifested in Joseph the collective blessings of his sincere/truthful forefathers inasmuch as We protected him ('*aṣimnāhu*) through (the divine contrivance) in the time of affliction.'" The use of the verb '*a-ṣ-m*, implies the protection of his innocence, his '*iṣmah*.⁵³

For the next step, which is an ascent from within the completed circle of *ishārah*, *laṭīfah*, and *ḥaqīqah*, we return to Abraham's account. As noted in the earlier discussion of 'Abraham who rendered fully' (*Ibrāhīma'lladhī waffā*), Abraham is presented as the perfect saint through being the faithful friend of God. The depth of the high rank of Abraham, prophet and faithful friend of God, is made graphically clear in the comment on the phrase *the honoured guests of Abraham* in 51:24. Concerning this phrase, Ja'far commented that the visiting angels were '*honoured* inasmuch as they were given hospitality by the noblest of creatures, the most manifest of them in chivalry, the most distinguished of them in soul, the most exalted of them in fervour, [namely] the friend (*al-Khalīl*) [of God] ﷺ'. In other words, the angelic visitors of Abraham are understood as being 'his honoured guests' not just because they were honourable in themselves or because he showed them much respect and honour but because *he* was the one receiving them. It was an honour to the three holy archangels Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel to be received by the Prophet Abraham, Faithful Friend of God.

The Moses and Joseph verses, where the perfect *nabi* is seen to be

53 The term '*iṣmah*, innocence, is akin to chastity on the spiritual register. They both denote a pure receptivity towards God. This is what is meant by the Qur'ānic phrase *ḥūr*, 'chaste-eyed'. The word *ḥūr* is the plural of both *aḥwar* (masculine) and *ḥawrā'* (feminine). The chastity of the eye signifies the absence of anything that presents a contrast to the lights of the divine qualities/Spirit. The word '*ayn* means eye, spring, and essence or core. The word *wajh* (as noted elsewhere) means both face and essential identity. The eye is the essential aspect of a face: the '*ayn* is the essential aspect of the *wajh*. In the spiritual realm, the eyes of the angels literally manifest the divine light/s, in other words the divine quality/ies, that are flowing through their essences at that moment.

an angel, provide the interface between *nubūwah* and *malakīyah*. Now, with Abraham, the *tafsīr* takes us to the higher end of the interface between prophet and angel—where the perfect prophet and saint is higher than the archangels. Abraham's high detachment is manifest at 14:35 in the comment on the phrase *and preserve me and my sons from worshipping idols*, which provides the following paraphrase: 'Ja'far said: 'Do not take me back to my witnessing the friendship [that I have with You], nor take my offspring back to witnessing the prophethood.' In other words, Abraham regarded the awareness of sanctity or prophethood as 'idols' to the extent that they distract from God-awareness; i.e., when the awareness of the elevated status is an intrusion of ego-consciousness.

However, there is another element to Abraham's exalted station—namely, that Abraham, who was prepared to sacrifice his much beloved son, manifests partially, and by analogy, that divine aspect which sent the divine Word to be sacrificed to save the world.

At this juncture, the reader should perhaps recall that the *tafsīr*'s discussion of the *anbiyā'* is at the level of the deepest realities, the *ḥaqā'iq*. In addition, as we move on to the comments on the Prophet Muḥammad, the reader is advised to keep in mind the literal meaning of his name: 'praised', and to bear in mind the application of these comments to the microcosm at the level of the *ḥaqā'iq*. Furthermore, the reader should be aware that the *tafsīr* contains a dynamic interplay between the macrocosmic and microcosmic roles of a prophet, which manifests in the roles of the prophets vis-à-vis each other.

The comments on the Prophet Muḥammad are also situated on the higher interface of the prophetic rank that is superior to the archangels. Thus at *sūrah* 17 we read: 'It is said that a man came to Ja'far b. Muḥammad and said: Describe for me the ascent (*mī'rāj*). He replied: How should I describe for you a station which even Gabriel, with all the magnitude of his rank, was not able [nor permitted] to enter.' And at 53:8 'Ja'far said: . . . Do you not see that God, most high, veiled Gabriel from (the Prophet's) nearness [to God] and from his Lord's nearness to him (the Prophet).' At 3:31, on the phrase *say, if you love God, then follow me*, Ja'far said: 'The inmost selves (*asrār*) of the truthful have been bound to following Muḥammad ﷺ, in order that they know that although their states are exalted and their ranks are elevated, they are

unable to exceed him or [even] touch him.'

It is also related from Ja'far b. Muḥammad (at 53:2), that he said: 'He [the Prophet] has not strayed from His nearness for even the twinkling of an eye.' At 53:18, on the phrase *truly he saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord*, we read, 'Ja'far said: He witnessed such indications of love as are too great to be related.'

The perfection of the Prophet and his exalted station is further explained at 48:2 in the comment on *and to complete His blessing upon you* 'Ja'far said, Part of the perfection of the blessing upon His Prophet ﷺ is that He made him His beloved; . . . and [that] He made him ascend unto the place of closest proximity and protected him in the ascent (*mī'rāj*), such that (*his gaze*) *did not waver, nor did it overstep the bounds* (53:17) . . . and [that] He made him an intercessor [with God] whose intercession is accepted; and He made him the lord of the progeny of Adam; and [that] He has joined his remembrance with His remembrance, and his satisfaction with His satisfaction; and [that] He has made him one of the two pillars of monotheism. This and the like thereof are among the perfection of the blessing upon the Prophet ﷺ and, through him and his rank, upon his community.'

Echoes of Abraham's intimate friendship with God are found at 53:11, on *the heart belied not what it saw*, in the commentary on the Prophet's *mī'rāj*. 'Ja'far said: No one knows what he saw, except He who showed and he who saw. The Beloved came close to the beloved, a confidant for him (*najīyan lahu*), an intimate friend with him (*anisan bihī*). God, most high, has said: *We raise [by] degrees whom We will'* (6:83).

The ontological continuity between perfect 'abd and Rabb is stated clearly at 9:128. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said, God knows the weakness of His creatures in obeying Him and He informs them of that so that they know that they cannot attain purity (*ṣafw*)⁵⁴ through [their] service of Him. So He has established between Himself and them a creature of their own kind in form. Thus He says: *there has come unto you a messenger from among yourselves for whom what they have (of distress) is hard to bear.* (9:128) Thus [said Ja'far], He clothed him from His quality of pity and mercy and sent him forth unto creation as a faithful ambassador (*safir ṣādiq*). And He made obedience to him obedience to

54 *Ṣafw* is from ṣ-f-w like Ṣafā and Muṣṭafā.

Him and conformity to him conformity to Him⁵⁵ for He says: *whoever obeys the messenger, verily he has obeyed God* (4:80).⁵⁶ This continuity is implied also in the comment at 94:4, on the phrase *and (have not) We raised high your mention* where we read that whenever the Prophet is mentioned as messenger, God is mentioned as Lord.

Thus the *nabī* who is higher than the archangels is God's *ṣafīrun ṣādiqun ilā'l-khalq*, the faithful ambassador of God unto creation. It is amply clear from the above comment that the ambassadorship is ontological; it pertains to the Prophet being clothed with the divine qualities—even as Moses was qualified by the divine character in order to receive and transmit the divine speech to creation.

The Faithful Ambassador of God

As faithful ambassador of God (*ṣafīru'llāh al-ṣādiq*),⁵⁷ the Prophet Muḥammad conveys God's qualities to the world. On the phrase *as for the blessing of your Lord, speak [of it]*, from 93:11, Ja'far said: 'Inform creation of that with which I have blessed them through you and your position.' The presence of the praised Prophet in the world imparts the divine qualities to the rest of creation.

The divine ambassador is also the way to approach the One who sent him. On 4:64, Ja'far said, 'Whoever aims not for Us according to your way and customs and guidance (O Muḥammad), has gone astray and is misguided.' Elsewhere, we read: 'There is no way to the love of God except in following His beloved; nor is access to the Beloved sought with anything better than pledging allegiance to (His) beloved.'⁵⁸ The way to Him is through the 'praised' personification and beloved

55 Corresponding to Marwah's realised, theophanic conformity to Ṣafā.

56 See also 48:17, 33:71, 4:13, 3:32.

57 In addition to 'faithful', *ṣādiq* also means 'truthful, sincere'. *Ṣidq* and its associated words are, in this book, usually rendered as 'sincerity', etc. However, in the phrase *ṣafīru'llāh al-ṣādiq*, 'faithful' is the rendition that best conveys the significance of the ambassador of God who fulfils his function of being existentially loyal to God, of conveying God's lights/qualities in and to the world.

58 This is a comment on 3:31, but it is located within the comment at 4:125. Clearly for the Muslim commentators, their Prophet is the best way to God, just as for the Christians it is Christ, and for the Hindus it is the *ishta-devta*.

manifestation of the divine qualities in the earthly realm.

And again on the phrase *this day I have perfected for you your religion*, (5:3) we read, 'Ja'far b. Muḥammad said, *This day* is a reference to the day that Muḥammad the Messenger of God ﷺ was sent, and the day of his prophetic message.' Religion and faith are perfected when the perfect *saḥīr* of the divine qualities, the praised one, the ontological message of God, arrives in the world, be it the microcosm or the macrocosm.

Then at 4:125 (*and God took Abraham as friend*), it is related 'from Ja'far b. Muḥammad, [that] he said: (God) proclaimed the title of friendship for Abraham, for the friend is obvious in meaning. But He kept hidden the title of love for Muḥammad ﷺ because of the perfection of his state.' Abraham, elsewhere the prophet who bestows honour upon the archangels through his presence, here represents the *walī* while the Prophet Muḥammad represents the *nabī ḥabīb*, and is called, further on in the comment, *ṣaḥīyihī*, 'His pure, bosom friend.'⁵⁹

Thus the *tafsīr* states the superiority of the Prophet Muḥammad over the archangels and all other creatures. And again the question arises: since the other prophets and the archangels are pure, loving conduits of the divine spirit and qualities—in what lies this superiority? The answer is given in the commentary on the *āyat al-nūr* (24:35) which, as mentioned above, interprets the lights as qualities and lists qualities both human and divine. The commentary says, 'Each one of these lights has its people; it has its state and its locus. All (the lights) are from the lights of the Truth, which God, most high, has mentioned in His words: *God is the light of the heavens and the earth*. Each one of His slaves has a drinking place at one of these lights; and it might be that (a slave) has an apportioned lot from two lights or three. These lights are never perfected⁶⁰ except for *al-muṣṭafā*, the Chosen One,⁶¹ ﷺ—for he stands

59 *Ṣaḥīy* means both 'bosom friend' and 'pure'—hence the double rendition above; it has also the connotation of being a specially chosen one (see Lane at *ṣaḥīy* and *ṣāḥīn*). This comment shows the flux between the roles of the prophets as contained in the *tafsīr*.

60 The Arabic verb *tamma* means 'to complete, perfect, to finish, to accomplish'. Thus the phrase '*lan tatimm li. . .*' could have been translated as: 'These lights are never accomplished (or attained) except by the Chosen One' because they are *given* to the chosen one by God.

61 Or, 'the Elect One'. *Iṣṭifā'iyah* (pre-election) pertains to the chosen elect.

with God, through the condition of having perfected⁶² slavehood and love. For He is Light, and he from his Lord is in possession of light.⁶³

The superiority of the Prophet Muḥammad then lies in the *comprehensive* perfection of his loving 'ubūdiyyah, his slavehood, his receptivity towards his Lord. Where there is perfect and comprehensive loving 'ubūdiyyah there the lights of the Lordship (*rubūbiyah*) may extend unimpeded, unadulterated. The comprehensive, perfect, loving 'abd is *safiru'llāh al-ṣādiq*, the *nabī* that is higher than the archangels.

At 7:143 the commentary reads, 'Moses disappeared from his soul and was effaced from his qualities; then his Lord spoke to him through the deepest realities of his praiseworthy qualities and Moses heard, from his Lord, the description of Moses. Muḥammad ﷺ heard, from his Lord, the description of his Lord, for he was the most praised of the praiseworthy, in the sight of his Lord. Hence, the station of Muḥammad ﷺ was the lote tree at the utmost limit while the station of Moses was the mountain. Since God spoke to Moses on the mountain, He effaced its quality and never shall there appear thereon any vegetation or human settlement.'

The comment on 7:143 emphasises the point that Moses in himself is nothing, his quality is nothing—that is why he heard from his Lord that Moses is naught but a form in whom the locus of the divine speech is located—and that is why the mountain of Moses is bare. The mountain is cognate with Moses' soul—it had to be rendered bare, stripped of all its own qualities so that the divine speech could descend upon it, as discussed above. Moses here represents the soul empty for God; while Muḥammad, the most praised of the praiseworthy, represents the heart replete with only divine qualities, for only what is God's is most praiseworthy.⁶⁴

Muṣṭafā, Ṣafā, *iṣṭifā'iyah*, *ṣafiy* are all from the same verbal root: ṣ-f-w.

62 *Taṣḥīh* is the verbal noun from the second form of the root ṣ-h-h, meaning to render healthy, sound, free from any imperfection or defect. See Lane. Cf. Qur'ān 26:89 'Only he who comes to God with a sound heart (*qalbin salīmin*).'

63 The choice of words here recalls the Qur'ānic phrase: *and so he is in possession of a light from his Lord* (39:22). 'Alā has 'in possession of' as one of its usages. See Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1980), at 'a-l-y.

64 The hierarchical prophetic map of the macrocosm presented in the

Likewise, on *and be patient—and your patience can only be through God*, in 16:127, 'Ja'far said, God enjoined patience upon His prophets; and He appointed the highest portion (of patience) for the Prophet [Muḥammad] ﷺ, inasmuch as He commanded him to be patient through God, not through himself. In other words, He commanded him to be patient through the divine quality not through the human quality. Again, as long as the quality is through God it is 'praised', *muhammad*.

Mary, Mother of Jesus

There remains one more rank to mention, that of Mary, Mother of Jesus. Of her, the commentary states (at 3:37) on the phrase, *her Lord accepted her*, 'Ja'far said, He accepted her so much so that the prophets, despite their exalted ranks, marvel at the magnitude of her rank with God. Do you not see that Zakariyā said to her: *whence have you this? She said: It is from God*, that is, "it is from the one who accepted me."

The acceptance mentioned pertains to the prayer of Mary's own mother. When she was pregnant with Mary, she said to God: *verily, I have dedicated unto You that which is in my womb, (as) consecrated (unto You)* (3:35). The *tafsir* explains the word *muḥarraran* (consecrated) as follows: 'Free from bondage to the world and its inhabitants', and 'a pure/exclusive slave of Yours, who is not enslaved by anything among beings.' In other words, Mary was consecrated to be a pure 'abd, which is to say, with absolute receptivity towards God, signified on the physical level by her chastity.

As mother of Jesus Christ, the historical Holy Virgin bore a historical manifestation of the redemptive divine Logos. Thus she was a perfectly pure manifestation on earth and of corporeality, of the divine aspect that contains and brings forth the salvific and self-sacrificing divine Logos—that is an aspect of the actual *ḥaqīqah* of Mary's inner rank with God, the magnitude of which causes the prophets to marvel (3:37).

To conclude this discussion, a tiered, yet interfaced, ascent of *nubūwah* is presented. Abraham and Moses exemplify the *nabī* who is perfect *walī*. Moses and Joseph show that the perfect *nabī* is an

commentary is to be understood on the microcosmic level too.

angel. Abraham, a *nabī-walī*, is higher than the archangels because he partially manifests the sacrificial divine aspect. Muḥammad as prophet-ambassador (*nabī-safir*) and pure, bosom-beloved (*ṣafīy-ḥabīb*) is higher than the archangels and all creatures, through his comprehensive perfection of *‘ubūdiyyah*; and Mary, Mother of Jesus, manifests on earth, the ‘womb’ *in divinis* that contains and brings forth the salvific *nabī-kalimah* or prophet-logos.

However, on closer inspection we see that this interfaced-hierarchy is still more intimately interwoven. Mary, chaste bearer of the divine Word, is an absolute *‘abd Allāh*, a totally pure and chaste recipient of the divine; her chastity is perfect *‘ubūdiyyah*. Moses, bearer of the divine speech, is purged of anything related to himself, his bare soul is chaste unto the Lord. Both Mary and Moses, as bearers of the divine Word, are empty for God, and are qualified with the divine character, in other words, both are *‘muḥammad’* (‘praised’). Muḥammad, bearer of the divine Word, is *‘muḥammad’* and *safirullāh* through being clothed with the divine qualities. Joseph’s prophetic *ḥaḳīqah* evoked praise and thus was *‘muḥammad’*, his innocence (read *‘ubūdiyyah*) was safeguarded by God Himself; he manifested the collective blessings of his holy forefathers. Abraham, the prophet who bestows honour on the archangels through his presence, the most distinguished *walī*, the noblest of creatures, has naught but the divine qualities in his soul—his soul is *muḥammad*, it is totally free of any *daran al-mukhālafah*, totally in harmony with *Ṣafā*.⁶⁵

And we are back with the centripetal, spiraling circles of *ishārah*, *laṭīfah*, and *ḥaḳīqah* from the centre-point of which this divine display of God’s lights in *nubūwah* erupts in a powerfully whirling vortex: Mary, Muḥammad, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, all *‘muḥammad’*, perfect

65 The broad nature of prophethood is underlined in the following phrase from 46:9 and the comment on it. *I (the Prophet Muḥammad) am not a new thing among the messengers*. Concerning this verse, Ja’far said [in explanatory paraphrase of these words and speaking in the voice of the Prophet]: ‘There is nothing to do with me in my prophethood. It is purely something which I was given, not because of me but rather by grace from God when He made me suitable for His message and described me in the earlier Books of the prophets, God’s blessings upon them all.’

'*ubūdiyyah*, reascending to the *rubūbiyyah* whence they poured down.⁶⁶ Ja'far said: 'as he (Muḥammad) came down, lights radiated from him.'⁶⁷

Divine pre-election (*iṣṭifā'īyah*), Grace (*faḍl*), and Faithfulness (*ikhlāṣ*)

Having brought us to the heights of this holy vortex, the *tafsīr* has one more word. This is to indicate the extent of the reach downwards of the ascending vortex, that is to say, to show how far the dynamic pull of the vortex reaches into creation. At the apex you have the *nabī-saḥr* who is *muḥammad* and who, as the chosen one, al-Muṣṭafā, is the comprehensive and perfect recipient of the divine influx by virtue of the divine pre-election, or *iṣṭifā'īyah*, to partake of all the lights. The following citation shows the importance of that key term, *ikhlāṣ*, which means faithfulness, sincerity, truthfulness. Furthermore, the citation shows the all-encompassing nature of God's grace.

Qur'ān 35:32 reads: *Then We made those of Our slaves whom We elected, to inherit the Book; among them is he who wrongs his own soul and among them is he who is moderate and among them is he who is foremost through good deeds; that is the great grace.*

Ja'far said: God, most high, distinguished [in the Book] three categories of believers. First, He called them *mu'minīn* (*believers*) then He called them '*ibādīnā* (*Our slaves*), thus attaching them to Himself as a grace and generosity from Himself; then He said, (*whom*) *We chose*—He made them all [specially chosen] bosom friends (*aṣḥiyā'*)⁶⁸ knowing their different stations. Then, at the end of the verse, He put them all together, at the entry into paradise, for He said, *gardens of Eden which they enter* (35:33). Moreover, He commenced with those who long their souls, by way of informing us that He shall not be drawn to except purely by His generosity. For wrongfulness (*ẓulm*) has

As the commentary has at 1:1: 'He (is) the foremost in praising Himself, before His creation; and by this precedence of His praise [of Himself], [His] benefaction settled upon His creation and they then (acquired) the ability to praise Him.'

67 Comment on 53:1, with reference to the descent of the star (*najm*).

68 *Aṣḥiyā'* is the plural of *ṣaḥīf*, the title of the Prophet. In this comment, the *aṣḥiyā'* are being included in the divine pre-election (*iṣṭifā'īyah*)—they are among the ones whom God chose.

no effect on [divine] pre-election (*iṣṭifā'iyah*). Then He (mentions) next the moderate, for they are between fear and hope. Then He sets the seal with the foremost lest anyone feel safe from His plot. All of them are in paradise because of the sanctity of one word, that is, the word faithfulness (*ikhhlāṣ*).⁶⁹

The chosen elect: faithful ambassador, faithful friend, faithful believer, and unfaithful but chosen one. Clearly, the holy faithfulness which guarantees entry into paradise is *God's* faithfulness.

At first sight the comment seems counter-intuitive—why should the sinner (*zālim*) enter paradise—indeed how can they; how can darkness enter the realms of light? First, it should be understood that *zālim* may be taken as referring to someone who is, technically, a disbeliever or to an unfaithful believer. Indeed, it is not disbelief but wrongdoing that is mentioned; unfaithfulness refers to the all too common existential insincerity of the believer who generates *daran* in his soul, thereby wronging it.⁷⁰ The believing *zālimun li-nafsihi*, the one who darkens his soul by sins, who oppresses it (*aḏlama*),⁷¹ is unfaithful because though he believes in God, his acts produce darkness (*zulm*)—both within the microcosm of his soul and in the macrocosm of the external *dunyā*. Such unfaithfulness, though not technically disbelief amounts to existential *kufr* because this darkness obscures or veils the divine light. The verb *kafara*, from which come the words *kāfir* and *kāfirin*, means 'to disbelieve (in God) or to deny (God)'; it also means 'to veil or obscure or cover'. When a person behaves in a way that is not in conformity with the divine qualities, that person veils, obscures and covers up God's light—in other words that person performs an act that existentially denies God because it blocks the flow of the divine qualities

69 *Ikhhlāṣ* is more commonly translated by others as 'sincerity' or 'purity', but 'faithfulness' is one of its primary meanings.

70 As 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī stated, centuries later, in his commentary on Q. 59:7–9: 'They are the truthful, possessing well-established faith, their actions testifying to their beliefs. For the mark of inner certitude lies in its effect on the person's behaviour—so that their every movement is in conformity with the testimony of their knowledge.' In other words, 'behaviour is the gauge of our sincerity.'

71 The verbal root *z-l-m* from which *zulm* and *zālim* are derived, comprises the meanings to darken, to oppress, to tyrannise, to treat unjustly, to wrong, to sin. All these need to be kept in mind.

through that soul. Yet such a fallen one is brought into paradise.

However, the unfaithful sinner does not enter paradise in the state of *zulm*.⁷² Rather, the grace of God ensures that such a fallen chosen one is pulled up by a vortex of the holy, and is brought into a state of heavenly harmony. In short, the sinning chosen one (*muṣtafā*) undergoes purgation either on earth or in the earlier stages of the afterlife, in order to become fully *qualified* to re-enter paradise. In the commentary, no less than Adam (at 20:121–2) and especially the prophet-king David provide an example of this.

To focus on David, at 38:25, on the phrase, *and David guessed that We had tried him, so he begged forgiveness of his Lord*, 'Ja'far said: Part of that is what God, most high, mentions about His trying David and his trial and test, and what was brought forth for him in the way of immense renunciation, remorse, continual weeping, sorrow and immense fear, such that he clung close to his Lord. Thus, although the occasioning sin therein was extensive, its final outcome was immense, glorious and exalted—because through it, God gave (David) intimate closeness and the favoured state of being beloved.' Let it be noted that the repentance, *tawbah*, was 'brought forth for him', it was given to him by God to purify him; and it entailed clinging to God, which is part of 'the intimate closeness.' When grace touches the fallen *muṣtafā*, it picks him up and places him 'between the shirt and the skin.'

Then in 34:10 God states: *and indeed We gave unto David grace from Us*. 'Ja'far said: *Grace*—confidence in God and trusting reliance upon Him.' Thus this high chosen one, redeemed from his unfaithfulness, re-infused with God-awareness, relied on God and was carried by God to the place always destined for him. 'Ja'far said: The God-aware person] is he who is wary of everything other than God; and the God-aware is he who is wary of following his desires. Whoever is characterised [qualified] thus is carried by God, flanked by light, to the Presence of witnessing so that the people at the assembly might

72 God's mercy forgives all wrongs (*verily God forgives all sins*). However, this is not to say that the spiritual realm is illogical or contains illogical leaps. Quite the contrary. Logic, as we know it, exists because of God's logic. Muddy water cannot subsist in the airy heights unless the mud is shed and the water becomes vapour; in that transformation lies the magic of the divine mercy.

know his place among them.⁷³

At the other end of the scale from the rophet-king David is the common fallen *muṣṭafā*, who, in the face of his own tests and trials, fails. He too (along with all those between him and royal David), is taken up and held close to the divine breast⁷⁴ and taken through his divinely-tailored purgation.⁷⁵ Allowing for differences of degree, intensity and appropriateness (*munāsabah*), the treatment meted out by grace to God's fallen elect is the same.⁷⁶ Grace activates, or re-activates, and strengthens, the Marwah of such a person; and grace carries this Marwah through the 're-sitting' of the spiritual journey, overlooking weaknesses and faults, forgiving and redeeming time and time again, sustaining and strengthening Marwah to *khidmah* and *murūwah*; and it is grace that brings this utterly fallible heroic soul into Ṣafā's divine holiness.⁷⁷

That is the grace of God, He gives it to whom He will, and God is the possessor of tremendous grace (57:21).

Further Themes

The above is not an exhaustive treatment of the subject of prophets, angels and saints in the *tafsīr*—but it brings to light some of the deepest aspects and correlations. As the reader goes through the commentary

73 Comment on *the day We gather the God-aware*; from 19:85.

74 As cited above, God makes them all *aṣfiyā'* (pure, bosom friends).

75 Adam himself underwent this process. On the phrase: *and Adam disobeyed his Lord and thus went astray* (20:121), Ja'far said: 'He viewed paradise and its bliss with his eye and so it was proclaimed against him, until the day of judgement: *and Adam disobeyed his Lord*. Had he looked at it with his heart, a complete abandonment would have been proclaimed against him for all eternity. But then God had compassion on him and was merciful to him, (as seen) in His words: *then his Lord chose him and relented towards him and guided (him)'* (20:122).

76 Even Abraham prayed: *and when I am ill He heals me* (26:80). This is glossed in the *tafsīr* as follows: 'And when I am sickened by the sight of my deeds and my states, He heals me with the reminder of (His) grace and generosity.'

77 As stated at 27:61, God placed God-given success (*tawfiq*) and the intellect as the barrier between the lower soul with its darknesses and the heart. Grace protects Ṣafā, and grace brings Marwah successfully into union with Ṣafā.

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he or she will come across other dimensions of the spiritual life, such as the virtues—particularly *tawakkul* (trusting reliance upon God), *iftiqār* (neediness unto God), *inqiṭāʿah* (detachment), among others. He will meet with the highest explanations of the remembrance of God, *dhikru'llāh* (at 18:24; 51:55). At 51:55, the commentary provides a most rigorous standard for authentic remembrance of God: 'Whoever remembers God but then forgets His remembrance, was untouched by His remembrance.' The *tafsīr* then immediately proceeds to define 'His remembrance': 'The remembrance of God . . . is His oneness, His prior eternity, His will, His power, and His knowledge—never does any forgetfulness or unawareness befall Him for they are among human qualities. Whoever, then, remembers God, most high, remembers Him through His remembrance of Him.' There it is again: 'His remembrance of Him' is through His qualities. This is existential, or ontological, *dhikr*.

At this point, I would draw the reader's attention to the principle of 'potency in subtlety' which permeates the whole matter of the divine interaction with the human. Faced with the divine light, whether the advent of the divine qualities be through the passage of the divine speech or in the vision of God, the absolute power of the subtle light of God is inescapable and it obliterates. The lights, which are so utterly subtle, are, concomitantly, totally potent. This exemplifies, at the highest levels, the spiritual principle of 'potency in subtlety':⁷⁸ For God is the very most Subtle and He is the very most Powerful; indeed He *is* subtlety and He *is* power.

In general, the lights divine purge. 'Ja'far said: . . . when gnosis

⁷⁸ Which is found even in something like homoeopathy. An aspect of this potency is the element of indubitability. Ultimately, the Presence of the Subtlest One is the most irrefutable. This may seem paradoxical initially but it is not. Within the physical realm we have the analogy of the sun and sunlight for God and His qualities (an analogy much loved by mystics of all traditions). The creatures who abide in the muddy depths of a riverbed will not understand much other than muddy earth and dark water; the fish who swim in clearer waters will know something about light. But, for example, a bird such as an eagle, who not only flies in the air but soars above the clouds, circling higher and higher, will know the indisputable presence of light, which he cannot touch but which he sees all around him and the heat of which permeates his whole body.

enters hearts, it removes from them all demands and all desires—so that there is no place in the heart for anything other than God, most high.⁷⁹ The light is a fire that burns away all that is unlike it. 'Ja'far said: He (Moses) saw a fire—an indication of the [divine] lights, for he saw light in the form of the fire. When he drew near to it, the lights of holiness pervaded him and the robes of intimacy encompassed him.⁸⁰ The ignited fires of love and gnosis in the hearts of the monotheists and the believers, 'burn up every eagerness for (what is) other than God, and every remembrance other than His remembrance'.⁸¹

The unveiled lights eradicate all else; but inasmuch as they are divine, they are the most exquisite bliss. In the same instant that they burn away the ugly *daran al-mukhālafāt*, they replace it with their own indescribable beauty and purity. When Moses approached the burning bush, holiness permeated him, intimacy embraced him; he was effaced and replaced at once. Even so David was purged and replenished at once. The negation (*nafī*) and the affirmation (*ithbāt*) occur in one breath.⁸² As the *tafsīr* states at 8:17, when God 'has effaced them from their souls, He Himself is the replacement of their souls for them'.

Seeing God

Other preeminent mystical matters, such as man's secret inmost self (*sirr*) and the spiritual ascent (*mī'rāj*) are also included in the *tafsīr*. These are all discussed in the notes at the relevant places. Here, the subject of the vision of God will be considered. This subject is presented in the commentary through different terms: *mushāhadah*, *ru'yah*, and *nazar*. Initially, there seems to be a distinction entailed by the different terms. However, on closer inspection of the meanings, we begin to feel again the now familiar circular dynamic, as yet again we find that these terms overlap and interpenetrate. All three terms have been used in the

79 Comment on: *verily, kings, when they enter a town, destroy it (27:34).*

80 Comment on: *he perceived, on the side of the mountain, a fire (28:29).*

81 Comment on: *The kindled fire of God. Which rises up, overwhelming hearts (104:6-7).*

82 *Lā ilāha illā'llāh*. After that, the 'praised' is the messenger of God, *muḥammadun rasūl Allāh*, which, with the holy, is a permanently stable inner state, while lesser souls experience it with varying fluctuations as an ongoing organic process of spiritual growth.

text in a way that bespeaks that intriguing weave of the single thread of reality, which in places emerges on the external side (*zāhir*) of the garment of existence, in other places showing on the inner side; sometimes at a higher level, sometimes at a lower level—all at the same time.

Mushāhadah (witnessing) pertains to a beholding by being present. In other words, *mushāhadah* refers to witnessing by seeing or by experiencing or through presence. At 25:20 we are told that the inmost selves of the prophets are never disengaged from the witnessing, and on 26:62, we read 'who is [engaged] in witnessing (God) and is in [the divine] Presence, how should he be affected by that which proceeds from him or redounds to him.' These comments indicate, firstly, that *mushāhadah* is located at the level of the deepest reality, that of the inmost self, the *sirr*, which is the *ḥaqīqah*; but secondly, at the same time, there is a duality, for the creature is engaged in things that proceed from him or redound to him while the inmost self is ceaselessly witnessing, present in the divine Presence without any interruption.

Ru'yah (seeing) pertains to the unveiled vision of God with the eye. The eye to eye seeing of God (*ru'yati'llāh mu'āyanatan*) is discussed in the Mosaic verses (7:143) even more powerfully than the speech of God was. In the speech of God, a tantalising blend of duality/non-duality is retained: God told Moses that God is the speaker and the One spoken to. But the unveiled vision of God would be such an obliteration, such a complete annihilation of the creature, that Moses is not granted his request to see God 'eye to eye'. The key to understanding this is the term 'eye to eye'. The eye is the core of the face; the face is the part of the body that identifies a person; it is our identity. In Arabic the word for eye (*'ayn*) means also 'essence, core, source'. So the eye of the face is the essence, the source, the core of the identity. Thus, the term 'eye to eye' means 'deepest essence to deepest essence'. That would have entailed Moses' corporeal death, the shedding of his soul, the evaporation of his decontaminated, differentiated divine spirit into the pure, undifferentiated divine spirit, and the complete re-absorption of his individuated divine spirit into the unindividuated divine spirit, into the core essence of the divine identity, the eye (*'ayn*) of the divine face (*wajh*). The *ru'yah*, then, entails the absolute effacement of the creature and the re-absorption of the spirit into its full self beyond being, in other words, a comprehensive *fanā' fi'llāh*.

Nazar (gazing) pertains to looking at God. The gazing at God (*nazar ilā'llāh*) is described as the highest rapture in the hereafter, in the comment on *and therein is that which the souls desire and enraptures the eye* (at 43:71): 'Ja'far said: What a difference between what the souls desire and that which enraptures the eye. For all the blessings, desirable things and delights of paradise are, in comparison with the rapture of the eye, as a finger dipped in the ocean—because the desirable things of paradise have a limit and an end, for they are created. But in the ever-abiding abode the eye is enraptured only in gazing upon the Ever-abiding [Himself] 𐤆, and that has no limit, nor description, nor end'—because it pertains to the realm beyond creation, beyond being and entails a passing beyond any duality, as with the *ru'yah* and the ceaseless *mushāhadah*.

Yet the looking, or 'gazing,' at God (*nazar ilā'llāh*), seems also to have a manifestation with duality. Concerning *in the seat of sincerity* (54:55), 'Ja'far said: . . . none but the sincere ones are seated therein. It is the seat wherein God fulfils the promises [made to] His friends, in that they are permitted to look (*nazara*) at His august face.' But at 61:13, the gloss describes the seeing of God in the 'Assembly of Truth' as the *ru'yah* of God—with all that *ru'yah* denotes in the way of the annihilation of the creature. The conclusion is that the *nazar ilā'llāh* takes place at different levels with varying degrees of intensity, like *mushāhadah*.

The three commentarial terms for the vision of God are thus seen to pertain to overlapping and interpenetrating yet ascending levels—like the levels of being. Different degrees of intensity at different levels experienced either consecutively or simultaneously. An ascending spiral that increasingly narrows until it coincides with the infinite divine eye, while remaining extended right down into density. *Then He/he drew near, reaching down He/he drew nearer* (53:8). As is noted in the comment, the word *tadallā* is remarkably evocative, meaning 'to hang down, draw near, descend'—but crucially *tadallā* is understood to denote a coming down *without leaving* the highest place.

Individual Predestination (*qadar*)

Readers will also encounter an adamant predestinarian attitude. At 8:44, absolute predetermination is affirmed: 'That which He has decreed in pre-eternity, He manifests in moment after moment and

instant after instant.' On the phrase *and with Him is the Archetype of the Book* (*wa 'indahu ummu'l-kitāb*), (at 13:39), the following gloss is given: "The Book in which distress and felicity are ordained. Nothing is added to it nor is anything subtracted from it. *The Word with Me is not altered* (50:29). Deeds are signs. Then he for whom felicity (*sa'ādah*) was ordained will have felicity at the end, while he for whom distress (*shaqāwah*) was ordained will have distress at the end.'

At 53:32 on *He knows you best*, 'Ja'far said: He knows you best because He created you and ordained for you [whatever] distress and felicity [is to come to you] even before your birth in being. Yet you are agitated by that which has been settled upon you preventively, of the appointed time (of death), sustenance, felicity, and distress. Works of obedience do not procure felicity nor do deeds of opposition (to God) procure distress. Rather the preventive ordinance is what sets the seal to that which was begun.' The positive preventive ordinance would seem to correspond to *iṣṭifā'iyah*, and the negative one would then be the absence of pre-election.⁸³

The issue of why some souls are elected and some not, is not addressed by the *tafsīr*, beyond stating that God's plot is more hidden than the crawling of an ant on a black rock on a pitch-black night (at 27:50). However, we begin to get indications of what direction the commentary might take on this matter, in the emphasis on God's foreknowledge—He knows everything about every soul before they are brought into being—and in the universal interpretation of the divine patronage expressed in *rather God is your protecting patron* (3:150)—'Ja'far said: [He is] in charge of all your affairs, from the beginning unto the end.' Nonetheless, the subtle difference between God's absolute foreknowledge and predetermination is not expressed in the commentary. So this question shall be set aside for the present, perhaps to be returned to in another work.

83 From the Islamic point of view, most souls on earth do not know what happens before the scenario of the present earth is enacted 'on stage'; nor is it commonly known what will happen with a given soul after the present scenario on earth is over, though some are granted some knowledge, as God wills. The prior existence and post-corporeal states of a soul are part of the knowledge of the unseen (*'ilm al-ghayb*)—and God is the knower of the unseen, that which is absent from us, and of the seen, that which is present with us.

Intercession (*shafā'ah*)

The matter of intercession (*shafā'ah*) is brought up briefly in the comments on 108:1, 48:2, and 53:10. The commentary refers to the intercession granted to the Prophet. *Kawthar* (abundance), at 108:1, is interpreted as 'intercession for your community.' However, intercession is not restricted to the *anbiyā'*, for at 22:34 we read that the nature of the *glad tidings* in the phrase *give glad tidings to the humble* is: 'Authority in intercession.' In other words, the humble are to be given the glad tidings of receiving the authority to intercede.

A distinction is drawn between intercession *per se* and intercession that is accepted. The latter is part of the perfect blessing upon the Prophet: 'Ja'far said: Part of the perfection of the blessing upon His Prophet ﷺ is that He made him . . . an intercessor [with God] whose intercession is accepted' (at 48:2).

States (*aḥwāl*) and Stations (*maqāmāt*)

The spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) and stations (*maqāmāt*) of the Sufis are mentioned in the comment on the phrase *O you people* (4:1). 'Ja'far said: That means, be among those people who are truly human and do not be forgetful of God. For whoever has recognised that he is from that human being whose nature (God) endowed with that with which He endowed it, his fervour becomes too great [for him to] seek [only] the lower (spiritual) stations, and his rank is raised until the Truth [Himself] is his final ending: *to your Lord is the final end* (53:42). The eminence of his fervour comes through the privileges of communication and inspiration with which he has been favoured.'

Maqāmāt are specified and named in 7:160 and in 25:61 during the *ishārī* interpretation of the twelve springs of the Banī Isrā'īl and the stellar mansions (*burūj*) respectively, and in the light verse (24:35). With regard to the springs, it is related: 'From gnosis there gush forth twelve springs. All people drink from one of those springs, in a [given] rank, at a [given] station, according to their scope.' There then proceeds a listing of spiritual stations, in a way that is reminiscent of the *āyat al-nūr* comment. Just as the lights all proceed from the light of al-Ḥaqq, the springs all gush from the one spring of intimacy and aloneness with God: 'this is the very spring of gnosis'. However, the light verse listing is longer and fuller whereas the twelve stations named for the springs

and the twelve stellar mansions are much more compact lists. This might seem to indicate that the light verse comment is from a later date, when the Sufi schema of stations was more developed. Then again, it may simply be that with the springs and stellar mansions, the number was limited—but in the light verse no number is indicated, therefore the commentator was able to provide a more extensive list, especially since the concept of lights is conducive to that. As the commentary on the light verse has already been discussed above, the focus here shall be on the other two verses.

Though the qualities given in each list are not identical, there is an overlap, sometimes explicitly in the terms, sometimes implicitly in the meaning. There is no overlap in the order of placement. In the verse of the springs (7:160) the list is as follows.

1. (professing) God's unity (*tawhīd*);
2. slavehood (*'ubūdiyyah*) and joy (*surūr*) in it;
3. faithfulness (*ikhhlās*);
4. sincerity (*ṣidq*);
5. humility (*tawādu'*);
6. contentment (*ridā'*) and entrustment to God (*tafwīd*);
7. the Peace (of the Divine Presence) (*al-sakīnah*) and dignity (*waqār*);
8. liberality (*sakhā'*) and confidence in God (*thiqqah bi'llāh*);
9. certainty (*yaqīn*);
10. intellect (*'aql*);
11. love (*mahabbah*); and
12. intimacy (*uns*), aloneness (with God), (*khalwah*), and gnosis (*ma'rifah*).

In the mansions verse (25:61) the list is:

1. faith (*īmān*);
2. gnosis (*ma'rifah*);
3. intellect (*'aql*);
4. certainty (*yaqīn*);
5. submission (*islām*);⁸⁴

84 *Islām* (submission to God) is to be understood as a willing receptivity of the influx of the divine qualities, a willing submission of the soul (be it hard-won or otherwise!) to this influx.

6. goodness (*iḥsān*);⁸⁵
7. trusting reliance upon God (*tawakkul*);
8. fear (*khawf*);
9. hope (*rajāʾ*);
10. love (*mahabbah*);
11. yearning (*shawq*); and
12. rapture (*walah*).

Both lists contain an ascension. However, the dynamics of the ascent are described differently. The ascent in the springs list seems linear: 'Whoever drinks from one of these springs finds its sweetness and strives hopefully for the spring which is higher than it—from spring to spring until he attains unto the origin. When he reaches the origin he realises the Truth.' Whereas the mansions of the heart orbit within the spiritual heart, radiating their qualities and thus sustaining the health of the heart. 'The mansions of the sky are the orbits of the sun and moon . . . There are mansions in the heart too . . .' The mansions of the heart are dimensions of faith and gnosis, through which the heart ascends: 'Now the heart is a sky because through faith and gnosis it rises (*yasmū*) without limit or end. Just as the one known has no limit to Him, even so knowledge of Him has no limit to it.' Thus the spiritual heart rises endlessly in the sky of the Endless One, in a spiralling ascent through the orbiting dimensions of faith and the infinite knowledge of the Infinite One; while in the other list, the *sālik* (the 'journeyman' of the alchemists)⁸⁶ ascends an axis that springs from and feeds back into the Truth Himself, drinking from the springs until he comes to, and drowns in the Original Ocean. In both cases, yet once again the *tafsīr* has retraced ontological oneness through qualities.



Some of the prominent seams in this *tafsīr* have been discussed above at some length, while others have been touched on briefly. It is hoped that this provides a platform from which the reader shall continue to

85 *Iḥsān* also denotes sincerity of *islām* and *īmān*; cf. the saying of the Prophet '*iḥsān* is that you worship God as though you see Him. . .'

86 That this commentary contains spiritual alchemy should be self-evident by now; it is not so much a matter of turning dirt/dust (*daran*) into gold, but of eliminating the *daran* to reveal the Gold within.

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mine these strata and all the others, extracting the numerous gems contained in this collection of exegetical comments ascribed to the Imām Ja'far al-Şādiq.

NOTE ON THE ARABIC TEXT

The Arabic text of Paul Nwyia's edition has been reproduced in appendix 1 which, being based strictly on manuscripts, contains absences such as hamzas and the vocalisation of the Qur'ānic citations. In this translation, the Arabic text of the Qur'ān follows the Ḥafṣ recitation as per the Medina printing of the Qur'ān, which has been transliterated in the *tafsīr*.

At the beginning of his edition, Nwyia has the following quotation from Sulamī's introduction to the *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr*. This citation indicates that it was part of Sulamī's aim, as compiler, to arrange the comments that he collected in their codical order.

None of them occupied himself with bringing together the understanding of His oration, according to the language of the people of reality, except for some scattered verses, not in order, ascribed to Abī'l-'Abbās b. 'Aṭā' and some verses mentioned (as being) from Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Şādiq .

Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr li'l-Sulamī

Spiritual Gems





SPIRITUAL GEMS
FROM
JAʿFAR AL-ŞĀDIQ

Bismi'llāhi'l-Raḥmāni'l-Raḥīm

In the Name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful

It is related from Ja'far b. Muḥammad that he said: The Book of God has four things: literal expression (*'ibārah*), allusion (*ishārah*), subtleties (*laṭā'if*) and the deepest realities (*ḥaqā'iq*).¹ The literal expression is for the commonalty (*'awāmm*), the allusion is for the elite (*khawāṣṣ*), the subtleties are for the friends [of God] (*awliyā'*),² and the deepest realities are for the prophets (*anbiyā'*).

1 *Ḥaqā'iq*, singular *ḥaqīqah*, signifies the essence, or reality or true nature of something; it also means a factual truth. See Lane, at *ḥaqīqah* under *h-q-q*.

2 *Awliyā'* Allāh, 'the friends of God', is the Muslim term for saints.



﴿ 1 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ

al-Fātiḥah (The Opening)

1:1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

Bismi'llāhi'l-Raḥmāni'l-Raḥīm³

In the Name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful.

[Concerning the word] *bism*, Ja'far b. Muḥammad said: The [letter] *bā'* is His eternal subsistence (*baqā'uhu*); the *sīn* is for His names (*asmā'uhu*) and the *mīm* is His sovereignty (*mulkuhu*).⁴ The faith of

3 It is almost impossible to translate these divine names with single words in a way that even comes close to conveying their fuller significances. The verbal root of these two divine names, *r-h-m*, comprises the meanings of graciousness, mercy, and compassion. These meanings show, respectively, that God is gracious in Himself, merciful to those other than Him, and thirdly, fully empathetic—because compassion can only arise from empathy. This last indicates the oneness of being, because unless you share something with the other you cannot experience empathy. Empathy is ontologically impossible in the absence of a common factor. The one thing that all beings share in common is being. This is not to fall into pantheism. An analogy is the mother who totally transcends the baby in her womb: the baby is not the mother, but the mother is all around the baby and within the baby in such a profound manner that were it not the case, the baby would not exist. Moreover, while the baby is in the womb, it is totally dependent on the mother. The whole of being is to God as the unborn baby is to the mother. This analogy is well suited to these names, since the words for womb (*raḥim/riḥm*) also derive from the root letters *r-h-m*.

4 Knowledge of the occult properties of the letters of the alphabet (*'ilm al-ḥurūf*) and of the divine names is part of the science of '*jafr*'. In origin, *jafr* is said to be 'esoteric knowledge of an apocalyptic nature reserved

the believer is his recollection of His eternal subsistence, and the service of the [spiritual] seeker is his recollection of His names, while the extinction⁵ of the sage from the kingdom is through its King.

He also said: [The word] *bism* [has] three letters: *bā'*, *sīn*, and *mīm*. The *bā'* is the gate (*bāb*) of prophethood, the *sīn* is the secret (*sirr*) of prophethood which the Prophet confided⁶ to the elite of his community,⁷ and the *mīm* is the kingdom (*mamlakah*) of faith which

for the imāms . . . heirs and successors of 'Alī' (Hodgson, 'Djafr al-Ṣādiq, *El*²). 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib is said to have been taught this knowledge by the Prophet posthumously. *Jafr* then became 'assimilated to a divinatory technique accessible to the wise whatever their origin, particularly the mystics' (Hodgson, 'Djafr al-Ṣādiq, *El*²). The science of *jafr* grew to cover knowledge of what is ordained (*jafr wa jāmi'* as expressions of *qadā' wa qadar*); gematria and isopsephy (*ḥisāb al-jummal*); transposition and substitution of letters one by another (*atabash*, and other methods used in Qabbalah); and astrological knowledge (of Indian origin). Most importantly for our purposes, *jafr* is used in spiritual and mystical interpretations of the Qur'ān. This dimension of *jafr* is attributed by Ibn Sa'd to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib from whom it is said to have passed to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq through his uncle Zayd b. 'Alī. It is said that Ja'far had a book that contained this esoteric teaching. On his authority, this book was copied by Hārūn al-Ijlī, and came to be called *kitāb al-jafr* because of the skin upon which it had been written (*jafr* also means a lamb or kid). The *kitāb al-jafr* contained statements on the authority of the Imām Ja'far about the interpretation of the Holy Book and its inner meaning. It is not extant as a whole book but fragments of it are known.

- 5 *Fanā'* (extinction, annihilation, effacement) and *baqā'* (eternal subsistence), with which it is usually paired, are important terms in Islamic spirituality, referring to the eternal subsistence of God and the effacement of all else, and specifically to the effacement of the spiritual seeker, in Him. In Qur'ān 55: 26–27, the verbs from which these terms are derived are used to state that everything is always in a state of transience, perishing (*fānin*) while His Face/Identity/Self (*wajh*) is that which alone remains (*yabqā*). The influence and use of these terms in Sufism is traced back to Imām al-Ṣādiq's use of them in his *tafsīr*. See Carl Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), p. 10.
- 6 'Confided' (*asarra*, which also means 'to make happy, to gladden').
- 7 For the Shī'īs, this would be a reference to the imams as inheritors of the mantle of the Prophet; while for the Sufis this would be a reference to the imams but also to whoever attains the high rank of *fanā' fi'l-nabī* (extinction in the Prophet).

embraces the white and the black.

[It is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad that he was asked about *bismi'llāhi'l-Raḥmāni'l-Raḥīm*; in the Name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful. He said: The *bā'* is the brilliance (*bahā'*) of God; the *sīn* is His resplendence (*sanā'*), and the *mīm* is His glory (*majd*). Allāh is the God of everything, the Gracious (al-Raḥmān) to all of His creation, the Merciful (al-Raḥīm) to believers in particular.⁸

[It is further related] from Ja'far that he said, about God's word *Allāh*, that it is a perfect name, for it has four letters: the *alif*, which is the pillar of the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*),⁹ while the first *lām* is the tablet (*lawḥ*) of understanding and the second *lām* is the tablet of prophethood (*nubūwah*), and the *hā'* is the ultimate allusion.

The name Allāh is the unique, incomparable name. It is not ascribed to anything, rather all things are ascribed to it. The meaning (of the word Allāh) is the Worshipped One who is the God of creation; His quiddity¹⁰ far transcends being attained to [by any understanding] and His nature (far transcends) comprehension; He is the one hidden from sight and imagination,¹¹ the Self-veiled—by His majesty—from perception.

[It is related from] al-Riḍā' [reporting] from his father [who reported] from his grandfather, about God's words *al-Raḥmāni'l-Raḥīm*; the Gracious, the Merciful, [that] he said: It (the phrase) concerns those who aspire and those who are desired.¹² Thus the name al-Raḥmān is for the desired ones [i.e., those desired by God] because of their

8 The mercy of *al-Raḥmān* (*al-rahmah al-rahmāniyah* to use Muḥyi 'l-Dīn b. al-'Arabī's later phrase) is all-encompassing and indiscriminate, while that of *al-Raḥīm* is discriminating, singling out those who believe in God and do good which merits a reward.

9 *Tawḥīd* is variously rendered by translators, including myself, as 'the divine unity/God's unity' or 'the divine oneness/God's oneness'. Literally, it also denotes the declaration or affirmation of God's oneness and belief in it.

10 *Mā'iyah*; perhaps the precursor of the later philosophical term *māhīyah*, which was well established by Fārābī's time (late ninth/early tenth century).

11 Literally, 'He is the one hidden from eyes and imaginations'.

12 *Murīdīn* and *murādīn*: those who aspire to God and those whom God desires, respectively. *Murīd* is also a specific Sufi term referring to novices or aspirants to the spiritual life.

al-Fātiḥah (The Opening)

being immersed in the [divine] lights and truths, while al-Raḥīm is for those who aspire, because of their remaining with themselves and their occupation with making good outward matters.¹³ Al-Raḥmān, the Gracious, through His munificence¹⁴ leads ultimately to that which has no limit, for He has already bestowed His mercy in pre-eternity, and that is the extreme limit of munificence and its ultimate degree,¹⁵ at the beginning and at the end.

Al-Raḥīm, the Merciful, bestows His mercy through the *yā'* and the *mim*; it is to Him (this name) that the mercy (pertaining to) the world, good health, and sustenance is attached.

1:2

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾

al-ḥamdu li'llāhi Rabbi'l-'ālamīn

Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds.

It is cited from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, concerning (God's) words *al-ḥamdu*

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- 13 *Ẓawāhir*, here rendered 'outward matters' could be understood as a reference specifically to the literal meanings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, in which case the distinction being made here would be between those who are preoccupied with upholding the letter of the law and those who are immersed in the inward depths of the spiritual realm (which, while not being preoccupied with the law to the detriment of the spiritual dimension, does not presume a neglect of it). However, *ẓawāhir* also refers, self-evidently, to matters of the world as opposed to spiritual and religious matters.
- 14 *Karāmah* indicates munificence, favour, or mark of honour. The plural, *karāmāt*, is used specifically for miracles that are vouchsafed to saints.
- 15 The Arabic text contains a play on the word *ghāyah*, which means both 'limit' and also 'extreme limit, utmost degree, objective, goal'; and on the verb *intahā* from which the words *al-muntahī ilā* ('leads ultimately to') and *muntahāhu* ('its ultimate degree') are derived. There is a possible alternative interpretation of the second half of this sentence, namely, 'and He is the goal of the noble generosity and its utmost degree, at the beginning and at the final end', whereby the meaning would be that the Gracious leads to that which has no limit (the infinite One Himself), and He (the infinite Gracious One Himself) is the ultimate goal to which His generosity leads. This comment is in keeping with the predestinarian stance manifest throughout the *tafsīr*.

li'llāh; praise be to God, that he said: The one who praises God through His qualities, even as He has described Himself, has truly praised Him. For praise (*ḥamd*) is a *ḥā'*, a *mīm*, and a *dāl*. The *ḥā'* is from *waḥdānīyah*, [God's] onliness;¹⁶ the *mīm* is from *mulk*, [God's] sovereignty; the *dāl* is from *daymūmīyah*, [God's] permanence. Whoever knows Him through [His] onliness, sovereignty, and permanence (truly) knows Him.

Ja'far b. Muḥammad was asked about [God's] words *praise be to God, Lord of the worlds*, and he said: The meaning of (the verse) is 'thanks be to God, He being the Bestower (*al-Mun'im*) of all His graces upon His creation and [for] the goodness of His handiwork and [for] the favours (in) His trials'.

The *alif* in *al-ḥamd* is from *ālā'uhū*,¹⁷ 'His favours', He being the Only (al-Wāḥid). Through His favours He delivered the people who have realisatory knowledge¹⁸ of Him, from His displeasure and from the misfortunes of His decree.¹⁹ The *lām* is from *luṭfuhū*, 'His kindness', He being the Only (al-Wāḥid). In His kindness, He gave them to taste the sweetness of His compassion and gave them to drink the cup of His beneficence. The *ḥā'* is from *ḥamduhū*, 'His praise', He being the foremost in praising Himself, before His creation; and by this precedence of His praise [of Himself], [His] benefaction settled upon His creation and they then (acquired) the ability to praise Him. The *mīm* is from *majduhū*, 'His glory'; through the majesty of His glory He adorned them with the light of His holiness. The *dāl* is from *dīnuhū*, 'His religion', *al-islām*;²⁰ for He is Peace (al-Salām) and His religion is

16 Linguistically, *waḥdānīyah* denotes an incomparable one and onliness, an inassociable solitariness, whereas *aḥadīyah* denotes an indivisible unity.

17 The words transliterated in the nominative case in this passage occur in the genitive form in the Arabic text.

18 'Realisatory knowledge' renders the important word *ma'rifah*, which for the Muslim mystics meant a cognitive, experiential, realisatory, spiritual knowledge of God bestowed by God, not just acquired by learning.

19 In other words, from divinely decreed tribulations.

20 The word *islām*, meaning submission (to God), also means 'to commit oneself (to God)', and is from the same verbal root as the divine name al-Salām, which means Peace. This literal connection between the two words extends at a profound level to the connection in meaning. In keeping with the spiritual tenor of this *tafsīr*, what the submission to God involves in real terms for the individual person, the microcosm, is to submit the soul to the influx of divine qualities. If the soul is thought

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submission and His abode is peace and their greeting²¹ therein is 'peace to the people of submission, in the abode of peace'.

1:3

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

al-Raḥmāni'l-Raḥīm

the Gracious, the Merciful.

[It is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq [that] he said: *The Gracious*²² [is He] who provides for and bestows upon creatures in both the outer and the inner [dimensions]. The provision of the outer [dimension] is food, drink, and good health while the provision of the inner [dimension] is the intellect, gnosis,²³ and understanding and the

of as a pane of glass, this submission, this *islām*, is tantamount, in the first place, to uncovering the soul so that it is exposed to the lights of God's qualities; and further, the submission applies to receiving the divine influx as fully as the soul is able to. The person who has submitted their soul to being exposed to the divine lights (the *muslim*, in other words) is ultimately going to be at Peace and a person of Peace. The opposite of this willing exposure and receptivity, of this *islām*, is called *kufr* (infidelity).

- 21 That is to say, the greeting of/for the inhabitants of God's abode of Peace, is peace. God's abode of Peace incorporates not just the paradisaical hereafter, but also the state of peace and peaceability even within the physical and corporeal realm. These words of the commentary have been carried down through the centuries and brought to us today, when again they need to be voiced loud and clear for all to hear: God is Peace. . .
- 22 Gracious: thus the *raḥmah al-raḥīmiyah* is comprised within the *raḥmah al-raḥmāniyah*; in other words, the specific mercy of *al-Raḥīm* is part of the comprehensive mercy of *al-Raḥmān*.
- 23 In the English text, *ma'rifah* is translated, for the most part, as either 'gnosis' (knowledge of spiritual mysteries), 'realisatory knowledge' or 'spiritual knowledge'. These renditions, it is felt, convey the connotations of the word. *Ma'rifah* denotes knowledge associated with intellection, cognition, realisation, perception, experience; but it also refers to learning, lore, information, and experience. Thus the word *ma'rifah* is very close to the word '*ilm*' in meaning. In Lane, at *ma'rifah* under 'a-r-f, the distinction between the two is given: '*Ma'rifah* is the perceiving a thing by reflection, and by consideration of the effect thereof [upon the mind or sense] so that it has a more special meaning than '*ilm*, and its contrary is *inkār*.' *Inkār* means 'denial', while the opposite of '*ilm* is *jahl*, meaning 'ignorance'.

types of wonders contained in (man) such as [the faculties of] hearing, sight, smell, taste, touch, thought, and fervour.

1:7

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

ṣirāṭa'lladhīna an'amta 'alayhim

the way of those You have blessed.

[Concerning the above verse] Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq said: *The way of those You have blessed* through knowledge ('ilm) of You and understanding of You.

Ja'far said [concerning the word] *āmīn*: that is, those aiming directly towards You; You are too generous to disappoint one who aims (for You).²⁴



Hence *ma'rifah* is an affirmative knowledge, whereas 'ilm is simply knowledge that one has, irrespective of one's agreement with what one knows, or with the affirmation or denial of it.

24 The *āmīn* is said at the end of the *Fātiḥah* as at the end of a prayer. This interpretation of *āmīn* as *qāṣidīn* is based on a reading of the word with *tashdīd* of the *mīm*, i.e., *āmmīn* (from *āmma*), which is synonymous with *qāṣidīn*: 'aiming at; endeavouring to reach; directing one's course towards.' See Lane at *āmīn* and *a-m-m*.

﴿ 2 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ

al-Baqarah (The Cow)

2:32

سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا

subhānaka, lā ʿilma lanā

glory to You we have no knowledge.

Jaʿfar said: When they boasted of their deeds, their praise [of God] and their dedication, He struck them all with ignorance until they said *we have no knowledge*.²⁵

2:125

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ

wa idh jaʿalnā'l-bayta mathābatan li'l-nās

and when We appointed the House as a place to which people return time after time.

[It is related] from Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad [that] he said: In this place, the House is Muḥammad ﷺ, so whoever believes (*amana*) in him and affirms his message enters the domains of safety (*amn*) and protection (*amān*).

25 In the immediate Qurʾānic context, these words are spoken by the angels. In the comment they are applied universally.

2:125

مَقَامَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

maqāmi Ibrāhīm

the station of Abraham.

The station²⁶ of the *qiblah*. (God) has made your heart the station of gnosis and your tongue the station of the testimony and your body the station of obedience. Whoever safeguards them is indeed one whose prayer is definitely answered.

2:128

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ

Rabbanā wa'jalnā muslimīna laka

Our Lord, and make us submissive to You.

Said Ja'far: *Make us submissive to You*, that is, protect me and my household²⁷ so that we surrender ourselves and our hearts to You and do not choose save that which You have chosen for us.

He also said: Make us (people) who stand with You for You.

2:158

إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ

inna'l-ṣafā wa'l-marwata min sha'ā'iri'llāh

*verily, Ṣafā and Marwah are among the signs of God.*²⁸

[It is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad (that) he said: Ṣafā is the spirit

26 *Maqām*—in Sufi technical terminology it refers to an enduring spiritual station. Alternative translations of the word are 'place', or 'standing'. The *qiblah* is, of course, the direction which Muslims face during the canonical prayers, namely, the direction of the Holy Ka'bah.

27 *Ahl baytī*, literally, 'the members of my house'. This phrase has clear Shī'i overtones, being a reference to the line of the Prophet's familial descendents. The method of repeating the basic formulation of the Qur'ān text but with different elucidatory words—as in the second sentence of this comment—became commonplace among later commentators.

28 In his translation of the Qur'ān, Muhammad Asad has '... are symbols set

al-Baqarah (The Cow)

because of its being pure (*ṣafā*) of the dirt of opposition (to God); and Marwah is the soul because of its use of the heroic virtues (*murūwah*) in the performance of service(s) (for) its Master.²⁹

He [also] said: *Ṣafā* is the purity of gnosis; and Marwah is the heroic valor of the sage (*‘ārif*).

2:201

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً

Rabbanā ātinā fī'l-dunyā ḥasanatan

Our Lord, grant us good in the world.

Ja'far said [explaining the word *ḥasanah*, good]: [It is] the companionship of those who are righteous.

up by God,' with the more literal '... God's symbols' in a note. Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1984).

29 Another instance of paronomasia. Literally, both *Ṣafā* and Marwah mean 'stone' or 'rock' but *Ṣafā* derives from the verbal root *ṣ-f-w* meaning 'to be pure,' while Marwah is derived from the verbal root *m-r-* meaning 'to be healthy, manly.' Thus these are interpreted on the broader basis of their associated verbal meanings to reveal a compelling image of the spiritual life: with the spirit being a pure continuity of the divine because it is in perfect harmony with God containing nothing that constitutes a contrast or opposition to the divine; and the soul being heroic in striving to serve God. The concept of *murūwah*—chivalry, valor, manliness—gained great currency among later Sufis, being espoused especially by Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), who founded the *futūwah* guilds. The definition of *Ṣafā* given here (being free of the *ḍaran al-mukhālafah*; the dirt of opposition to God) contains one of the pivotal terms for the concept of qualitative continuum as contained in the *tafsīr*, namely, *mukhālafah*, opposition/contrast. The other, antithetical pivotal term is *muwāfaqah*, meaning harmony, consistency/conformity as in *muwāfaqah bi'llāh*.

2:210

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِّنَ الْغَمَامِ

hal yanzurūna illā an ya'tiyahumu'llāhu fi ḡulalī min al-ghamām

do they await aught save that God come to them in the shadows of the clouds.

Ja'far said: *Do they await aught save* God's drawing near to them through the purity³⁰ (of their being divinely preserved from sin and error) and through God-given success (in goodness)—and so the veils of forgetfulness³¹ are drawn back from them and thus they witness His beneficence and kindness; nay, rather, they witness the Beneficent, the Kind [Himself].

وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ

wa quḍiya'l-amr

and the matter is concluded.

Ja'far said: *And the matter is concluded:* and the truth of the matter and its hidden (aspects) are unveiled.

30 In Shī'ism, the term *'iṣmah* (impeccability, infallibility, purity) denotes the imams' purity and infallibility through their being divinely preserved from sin and error.

31 In Sufism, *ghaflah* (forgetfulness or negligence) is the opposite of *dhikr* (the remembrance or recollection of God, especially through the invocation of His name(s) and existentially through harmony with His qualities), as is emphasised throughout this *tafsir*. This comment provides a concise summary of the spiritual journey, tracing the following steps. 1) The drawing back of the veils of forgetfulness, which corresponds on the ontological level with removing the dirt of opposition (*daran al-mukhālafah*) from the soul, in other words, excising the non-divine qualities. 2) Witnessing the divine quality, which corresponds to the soul being in harmony with the divine qualities. 3) Witnessing the One to whom the qualities belong and from whom they emanate, which corresponds to seeing God.

2:212

زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

zuyyina li'lladhīna kafarū'l-ḥayātu'l-dunyā

to those who deny the truth, the worldly life has been made to appear attractive.

Ja'far said: To those who refuse to trust and rely upon their Lord,³² the adornments of the life of this world are made to appear attractive so much so that they hoard them and take pride in them.

وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا

wa yaskharūna mina'lladhīna āmanū

and they ridicule those who believe.

That is, (they ridicule) those who have trustingly relied on God in all their affairs, and cast behind them their own management of their affairs, and have turned away from (that)—they are the poor (unto God),³³ the steadfast, the fully-satisfied (with God).

32 *Tawakkul* (trusting reliance on God) is a key concept in the teaching of Imām Ja'far. In addition to the rest of this comment and the next and their notes, see also the comments on 3:159, where *tawakkul* is an inner state of being 'solely for the Truth'; at 9:40, where *tawakkul* is one of the *junūd* (forces) with which God strengthens His messenger; at 13:27, where objective impersonality, the non-interference of the ego, is related to *tawakkul*; at 18:30 concerning the vast openness of *tawakkul* contrasted to the narrow confines of action that is dependent on oneself; at 25:61, where *tawakkul* is one of the stellar mansions; at 27:61, where *tawakkul* is the mountains mentioned in the verse and at 34:10, where grace is explained as consisting of *tawakkul* together with confidence in God.

33 *Fuqarā'*, the poor unto God, is the term by which Sufis refer to themselves. It is based upon Qur'ān 35:15. *Ṣabbār* in addition to 'steadfast', also means 'the very patient, the enduring, those who patiently await the right time for things'; see Qur'ān 14:5, 31:31, 34:19, 42:33. Noticeably, in the Qur'ān, *ṣabbār* always occurs in conjunction with the word *shakūr*, the grateful. *Rāḍūn* (the one fully-satisfied with God), is the plural of *rāḍī*, and again has Qur'ānic references: 5:119, 9:100, 58:22, and 98:8. Such satisfaction is linked in these verse with *al-fawz al-'azīm* (the tremendous victory); *iḥsān*

2:222

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾

inna'llāha yuḥibbu'l-tawwābina wa yuḥibbu'l-mutaṭahhirīn

*verily, God loves those who turn [unto Him] in repentance and
He loves those who are purified*

Ja'far said: He loves those who repent of their own wishful demands.
and *those who are purified* of their own desires.³⁴

2:284

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

Li'llāhi mā fi'l-samāwāti wa mā fi'l-ard

*To God belongs that which is in the heavens
and that which is in the earth*

Ja'far said: (The heavens and the earth) cut off the one who is preoccupied with them, from God ﷻ; whereas God gives (the heavens and the earth) as possessions to the one who devotes himself to God and relinquishes them.

وَإِنْ تَبَدُّوْا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ

wa in tubdū mā fi anfusikum

and if you declare openly what is within yourselves

Ja'far said: [This refers to] surrender unto God (*islām*).

(goodness); *ḥizb Allāh* (the party of God); and *khashyat al-Rabb* (the fear of the Lord).

34 That is, those who are no longer wilful, nor holding to their own wishes against the divine will, unless the two coincide. Such obedience is again a form of *tawakkul* in that the individual will is effaced in the divine will, through trustful reliance on God in the knowledge that what He wills is good, correct and right, the most appropriate, etc.

al-Baqarah (The Cow)

أَوْ تَكْفُرُوهُ

2:284

aw tukhfūhu

or you conceal it.

[This refers to] faith (*imān*).



﴿ 3 ﴾

سُورَةُ آلِ عِمْرَانَ

Āl-‘Imrān (The Family of ‘Imrān)

3:1

آلِم

Alif. Lām. Mīm.

Ja‘far said: The detached letters in the Qur‘ān are allusions to the [divine] onliness, singularity,³⁵ and permanence, and to the [Self-] existence of the Truth³⁶ in Himself,³⁷ having no need of anything other than Himself.

35 *Fardānīyah* comprises the concepts of being matchless, unique, and solitary.

36 Al-Ḥaqq (the Truth, the Real) is by far the divine name most frequently mentioned in this commentary, where it is used throughout as a synonym of Allāh—hence in this translation, ‘the Truth’, with captial T, should be understood as a rendition of the divine name al-Ḥaqq and is to be taken as referring to God the Truth. Its primary importance in Sufism is part of the imam’s legacy to this field. See Massignon, *Essai sur les origenes*, p. 203.

37 *Qiyām al-Ḥaqq bi-nafsihi*, ‘the existence of the Truth in Himself’ (God’s Self-existence). This ontological comment reveals an early enunciation on the nature of God, a matter much considered by philosophers and theologians. In later *tafsīr* works such as that of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), God’s unique absolute Self-existence, i.e., that He is the sole self-existent (*qā’im bi-dhātihi*) and needs nothing outside Himself for His existence, is discussed at some length in the commentary on the divine name al-Qayyūm, as is His being the cause of the existence of everything else. See F. Hamza, S. Rizvi, and F. Mayer (eds.), *An Anthology of Qur’anic Commentaries*, vol. 1: *On the Nature of the Divine* (London: Oxford University Press and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2008), pp. 181–7.

3:5 إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ

inna’llāha lā yakhfā ‘alayhi shay’un

verily, nothing is hidden from God.

Concerning His [above] words, Ja‘far said: None except God is so thoroughly acquainted with you, such that he sees into your heart; [anyone other than He] would loathe you [if they knew you so well].

3:18 شَهِدَ اللَّهُ

shahida’llāhu

God bears witness.

Concerning His [above] words, Ja‘far said: God bears witness through His onliness, His oneness, and His absolute self-sufficiency; *the angels and those endowed with knowledge* (3:18) bear witness to Him by (believing in and) affirming³⁸ that which He Himself testified for Himself.

Ja‘far was asked what the essential reality of this testimony is and he said: It is built upon four pillars, the first of which is observation of (what is) commanded, the second is avoidance of the prohibited, the third is temperance (*qanā‘ah*), and the fourth is contentment (*riḍā*).

3:19 إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

inna’l-dīna ‘inda’llāhi’l-islām

verily, religion in the sight of God is surrender (unto Him).

Ja‘far said: (*Islām*) is such that the one who possesses it is preserved from the whisperings of the devil, anxieties, and misgivings of the soul, and (from) the chastisement of the hereafter.

38 *Taṣḍīq* comprises the meanings of believing something, giving credence to it, as well as affirming it.

3:28

وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ

wa yuḥadhdhirukumu'llāhu nafsahu

and God warns you Himself.

Ja'far said: *God warns you Himself*³⁹ that you provide evidence for your soul through righteousness,⁴⁰ because he who has precedence in merit⁴¹ [shall find that] it is manifest at his end.

3:31

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي

qul in kuntum tuḥibbūna'llāha fa'ttabi'ūnī

say, if you love God, then follow me.

Ja'far said, concerning His words (above): The inmost selves of the truthful have been bound⁴² to following Muḥammad ﷺ, in order that they know that although their states are exalted and their ranks are elevated, they are unable to exceed him or [even] touch him.

39 This Qur'ānic phrase may be understood in more than one way. In addition to the rendition above, it could mean 'God warns you of Himself' or 'God warns you of His chastisement' for some commentators take *nafs* to mean 'chastisement'. See Lane at *nafs* under *n-f-s*.

40 In addition to 'righteousness', *ṣalāh* refers to 'goodness, probity, correctness and godliness'. See Wehr at *ṣ-l-ḥ*.

41 The term *sābiqah* is used in early Islamic epistles to signify 'precedence in merit', acquired by the earliest converts to Islam at the time of the Prophet. For the Shī'ah, 'Ali's *sābiqah* is part of the basis of his entitlement to the succession. (My thanks to Feras Hamza for drawing my attention to this.)

42 *Quyyida*; the use of the past perfect here, combined with the fact that it refers to the *asrār*, indicates that the 'binding' took place *fi'l-azal*.

3:35

إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا

innī nadhartu laka mā fi baṭnī muḥarraran

*verily, I have dedicated to You that which is in my womb,
(as) consecrated (to You).*

Ja‘far said [concerning *consecrated (to God)*]:⁴³ Free from bondage to the world and its inhabitants.

He [also] said [again about] *consecrated*: A pure, exclusive slave of Yours, who is not enslaved by anything among beings.

3:37

فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا . . . أَنَّى لَكَ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ

fa-taqabbalahā Rabbuhā . . . annā laki hādhā qālat huwa min
‘indi’llāhi

*her Lord accepted her . . . whence have you this? She said: It is
from God*

Ja‘far said: He accepted her so much that the prophets, despite their exalted ranks, marvel at the magnitude of her rank with God. Do you not see that Zakariyā said to her: *whence have you this? She said: It is from God*, that is, ‘it is from the one who accepted me.’

3:39

وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا

wa sayyidan wa ḥaṣūran

and a lord, a chaste one.

Ja‘far said: A *lord* distinct from creation in quality, state, and nature.

43 *Muḥarraran* is from the second verbal form ḥ-rr-r which, in addition to meaning ‘to consecrate to God’ also has the spiritually closely related meaning of ‘setting free, emancipating, liberating.’

3:61 فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ

fa-man ḥājjaka fihi min ba'di mā jā'aka mina'l-'ilm

then who disputes with you concerning it after this knowledge has come to you.

Ja'far said: This is an allusion concerning the disclosure of imposters to those who know the deepest realities, so that (the imposters) may be exposed in their pretensions when the effects of the lights of realisation and the falsity of the darkneses of untruthful pretensions are made manifest.

3:68 إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ

inna awlā'l-nāsi bi-Ibrāhīma la'lladhīna'ttaba'ūhu wa hādha'l-nabiyu

verily the people with the best claim to Abraham are those who followed him and this Prophet

Ja'far said: *Those who followed him* in their laws and ways of life. *And this Prophet* because of the proximity of Abraham's state to that of the Prophet, may God's blessings be upon the [two of] them, more than to other prophets, and because of the proximity in their laws [which are closer to each other] than to other laws.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

wa'lladhīna āmanū

and those who believe

Because of the proximity of their state to that of Abraham.

وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

wa’llāhu waliyu’l-mu’minīn

and God is the Friend of the believers.

(And God is the Friend of the believers) in elevating them to reach the station of ‘the friend’,⁴⁴ ﷻ because proximity to Him is a rank of love, (as seen) in His words: *He loves them, and they love Him* (5:54).

3:76 بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ ۖ وَاتَّقَىٰ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

balā man awfā bi-‘ahdihi wa’ttaqā fa-inna’llāha
yuḥibbu’l-muttaqīn

rather, the one who fulfils his pledge and is God-aware;
for verily God loves the God-aware.⁴⁵

Ja’far said: [This is a reference to] him who fulfils the pledge that fell to him in the first covenant⁴⁶ and who is *God-aware* and purifies that

44 *Al-khalil*, ‘the friend’ and *khalilu’llāh*, ‘the friend of God’, are epithets of the prophet Abraham ﷻ.

45 Throughout this translation, the words *muttaqī*, *muttaqīn*, *taqwā*, etc. have been rendered as ‘the God-aware (person)’, ‘the God-aware ones’, ‘God-awareness’ respectively. The line of thought behind these uncommon renditions is as follows: *taqwā* literally means ‘to fear God’; to fear God is to be wary of Him in the sense of being aware of Him. It is felt that the terms God-aware/God-awareness convey these implied connotations of the Arabic words.

46 Pledge (‘*ahd*’); covenant (‘*mithāq*’). The ‘first covenant’ refers to the event described in 7:172: God brings forth the seed of the Children of Adam and asks them ‘*Am I not your Lord*’ to which they reply ‘*Yea, verily. We testify [to that]*’. The pledge, then, is to acknowledge and affirm God’s Lordship (‘*rubūbiyah*’) over mankind and, consequently, mankind’s slavehood (‘*ubūdiyyah*’) vis-à-vis Him. The degrees of this acknowledgement and affirmation distinguish the levels of ‘*ubūdiyyah*’. The Qur’ānic phrase in question makes it clear that fulfilling the pledge means being aware of God, of His absolute lordship over everything. The comment underlines this: the upholder of the pledge is named ‘lover’; the lover is the beloved of God; the beloved of God is the God-aware one; the God-aware one is he

pledge and that covenant from its being polluted with falsehood. The fulfilment of the pledge is being with Him by excising that which is other than Him. That is why the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘The truest word that an Arab spoke was the saying of Labīd, “Verily, everything except God is false”. He who fulfills the pledge is named ‘lover’ and *God loves the God-aware*.

3:79

كُونُوا رَبَّيِّنَينَ

kūnū rabbānīyīn

be godly.

Ja‘far said [glossing *godly*]: Those who listen with the hearing of the heart and who see with eyes of the unseen [i.e., with spiritual vision].⁴⁷

3:92

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ

lan tanālū’l-birra ḥattā tunfiqū mimma tuḥibbūna

you shall not attain (to true) beneficence until you spend of that which you love.

Ja‘far said: Through expending his life the slave [of God] arrives at his Beloved’s beneficence and his Lord’s proximity. Ja‘far [also] said: They shall not attain unto the Truth until they detach themselves from what is other than Him.

who sees that everything other than God ‘is naught’; to see that everything other than God ‘is naught’, is the acknowledgement and affirmation of God’s absolute Lordship. See also the immediately preceding note for our rendition of *taqwā* as ‘God-awareness’.

47 Elsewhere in the commentary, the heart is explained as ‘a hearing, understanding, seeing heart. Thus whenever it hears the oration of God, most high, without any intermediary in that which is between it and the Truth, it understands what He bestowed upon it . . . in pre-eternity.’ This ‘oration of God most high without any intermediary’ is God’s direct communication to the heart. To facilitate the English text in this sentence, the Arabic plurals *qulūb* (hearts) and *ghuyūb* (unseen) were rendered in the singular.

3:97

وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا⁴⁸

man dakhalahu kāna āminan

and whoever enters it is safe.

Concerning (these) words of God, Ja‘far said: He into whose heart faith has entered is safe from disbelief.

3:101

وَمَنْ يَعْصِمِ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

wa man ya‘tašim bi’llāhi fa-qad hudiya ilā širāṭin mustaqīm

and whoever holds fast to God has indeed been guided to a harmonious way.⁴⁸

Concerning this verse, Ja‘far said: Whoever knows Him is, through Him, independent of all mankind.

3:102

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ ؕ

(Yā ayyuhā’lladhīna āmanū) ‘ttaqū’llāha ḥaqqā tuqātihi

(O you who believe) be God-aware with the awareness due to Him.

Ja‘far said: God-awareness is that you see⁴⁹ nothing in your heart other than Him.

48 *Mustaqīm*, usually rendered as ‘straight’, has also the less commonly appreciated meanings of harmonious, honest, proportionate, and sound. Given the emphasis in this *tafsīr* on harmony with God, the word ‘harmonious’ is the obvious choice as the translation of *mustaqīm*.

49 *Ra‘a* (to see) also means ‘to discern’; in other words, to discern and understand that there is nothing other than God in one’s heart. In the spiritual realm, the ‘seeing’ is literal but it is subtle, not in the dense physical manner; so one literally sees with spiritual eyes that there is only God in one’s spiritual heart. This seeing of God in the heart may be in the form of the letters of the divine name, in other words, the living inscription of the *ḥaqqīqah* in the spiritual heart—the *living ḥaqqīqah-inscription*; or it

3:110

تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

ta‘murūna⁵⁰ bi‘l-ma‘rūf

they counsel that which is good.

Ja‘far said: *They counsel that which is good: the good is in harmony with the Book and the custom (of the Prophet ﷺ).*

3:138

هَٰذَا بَيَّانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

hādhā bayānun li‘l-nās wa hudan wa maw‘īẓatun li‘l-muttaqīn

this is a clear declaration for mankind and a guidance and spiritual counsel for the God-aware.

Ja‘far said: The Declaration⁵¹ has been made manifest to mankind, but only he perceives it clearly who is supported by Him with the light of certainty and purity of inmost self.⁵² Do you not see Him say: *and a guidance and spiritual counsel for the God-aware.* Indeed, to be guided by the guidance of the Declaration and to be counselled by it is for those

might be the divine lights that are seen—the letters in any case consist of divine light; or it may be the divine face that is seen. . . The infinite God may manifest Himself as He chooses to His creatures.

50 Nwyia’s edition has *ya‘murūna* (*they counsel*) instead of *ta‘murūna* (*you counsel*).

51 *Al-bayān*, here rendered as the ‘Declaration’ is one of the names by which the Qur’an is referred to.

52 There are clear resonances here of the Shī‘ī doctrine that only the imams understand the Qur’an correctly because only they are granted the requisite light of certainty and purity of inmost self by God. For their part, the Sufis did not confine the bestowal of such perception, certainty and purity to the imams alone but held that it extends to include others too, from among the Prophet’s spiritual progeny. *Sirr*, rendered in this text as ‘inmost self’ or ‘inmost secret’, literally means secret, heart, inmost kernal. In the *tafsīr*, it refers to the deepest reality, the *ḥaqīqah*, of the human being, the divine secret placed in the deepest reaches of the spiritual heart. For later Sufi definitions, see ‘Abd al-Razzāq Qāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Šūfiyah*, trans. Nabil Safwat as *A Glossary of Sufi Technical Terms* (London: Octagon Press Ltd., 1991), pp. 60–61.

Āl-‘Imrān (The Family of ‘Imrān)

who are God-aware—those who guard (themselves) against everything other than Him.

3:150

بَلِ اللَّهِ مَوْلَانَكُمْ ط

bali’llāhu mawlākum

rather God is your protecting patron.

Ja‘far said: [He is] in charge of all your affairs, from the beginning to the end.

3:159

فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ؕ

fa-idhā ‘azamta fa-tawakkal ‘alā’llāh

so when you have decided [upon something] then trustfully rely on God.

Ja‘far said: He (God) has ordered rectitude of the outward in relation to creation, and the exclusive isolation of one’s inner (aspect) for the Truth. Do you not see Him say *so when you have decided* . . .

3:191

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ

(A)’lladhīna yadhkurūna’llāha qiyāman wa qu‘ūdan wa ‘alā junūbihim

those who remember God standing and sitting and upon their sides.

Ja‘far said: They *remember God standing* in the witnessings of the Lordship; *and sitting* in the performance of service; *and upon their sides* in the seeing⁵³ (that comes from) being near (to God).

53 The word *ru’yah* means to see or perceive, either with the physical eye or in the mind; whereas, the word *ru’yā* refers more to a vision in the sense of apparition or mental vision. See Lane at *r-’-ā*. For *mushāhadāt* (sing. *mushāhadah*), see following note.

3:200 أَصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

(i)ṣbirū wa ṣābirū wa rābiṭū wa’ttaqū’llāha la’allakum tufliḥūn

restrain yourselves and persevere stoutly and station yourselves; and be aware of God that you may succeed.

Ja‘far said: *Restrain yourselves* from disobedience (to God), *persevere* in acts of obedience (to Him), *and station* (your) spirits in the witnessing;⁵⁴ *and be aware of God*, that is, avoid being presumptuous⁵⁵ with the truth, *that you may succeed*, that you attain the way stations of the people of sincerity, for that is the locus of success.



54 *Mushāhadah* (witnessing), is the verbal noun of the third form of the verbal root *sh-h-d* (to see with one’s own eyes, to view, watch, observe, witness). It is a term of significance in the *tafsīr*. In this comment, the witnessing is of the divine Lordship by the human slave. Elsewhere, on 25:20, the comment states that the inmost selves of the prophets are in the divine grasp, and do not disengage from the *mushāhadah*. In later mystical usage, *mushāhadah* comes to mean, at the highest level, witnessing God in the mystery of annihilation of all else including the creature-witness themselves: God alone witnesses Himself. Cf. Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, pp. 98, 130–1.

55 The term *inbisāṭ* (presumption) covers the ideas of frivolity, flippancy, arrogance, forwardness. See Lane at *b-s-ṭ*.

﴿ 4 ﴾

سُورَةُ النِّسَاءِ

al-Nisā' (Women)

4:1

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ

Yā ayyuhā'l-nās

O you people.

Concerning His [above] words, Ja'far said: That means, be among those people who are (truly) human and do not be forgetful of God. For whoever has recognised that he is from that human being whose nature (God) endowed with that with which He endowed it, his fervour becomes too great [for him] to seek [only] the lower (spiritual) stations, and his rank is raised until the Truth [Himself] is his final ending. *And that to your Lord is the final end* (53:42). The eminence of his fervour comes through the privileges of communication and inspiration with which he has been favoured.⁵⁶

4:9

فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٩﴾

fal-yattaqū'llāha wal-yaqūlū qawlan sadīdan

then let them be aware of God and let them speak correctly.

Ja'far said: Truthfulness and God-awareness increase sustenance and expand livelihood.

56 Note that the eminent fervour mentioned is a consequence of the heavenly disclosures, among which is the recognition of the true human status, as expounded throughout this *tafsīr*. On the ontological level, to forget God is to obscure the radiance of His qualities in one's soul and not to be a message of God is to be less than a true human.

4:59

أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

aṭī'ū'llāha wa aṭī'ū'l-rasūla wa ūlī'l-amri minkum

obey God and obey the Messenger and those of you with authority.

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said: Three norms are unavoidable for the believing slave of God: the norm of God, the norm of the prophets and the norm of the friends (of God). The norm of God is to conceal the secret; God has said: *He is the knower of the unseen and He does not reveal His [knowledge of the] unseen to anyone* (72:26). The norm [or convention] of the Messenger ﷺ is gentle courtesy (towards) creation. And the norm [or convention] of the friends is the fulfilment the pledge and (to have) patience in times of suffering and distress.

4:64

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ

wa law annahum idh ḡalamū anfusahum jā'ūkā

would that they, when they wronged their souls, came to you (O Muḡammad).

Ja'far said: Whoever aims not for Us according to your way and customs and guidance (O Muḡammad), has gone astray and is misguided.

4:80

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ

man yuṭī'i'l-rasūla fa-qad aṭā'a'llāha

whoever obeys the Messenger, verily he has obeyed God.

Ja'far b. Muḡammad said [in paraphrase]: 'Whoever acknowledges you in (your) messengership and prophethood, has acknowledged Me in (My) Lordship and Divinity.'

(wa)'ttakhadha'llāhu Ibrāhīma khalīlan

and God took Abraham as a friend.

Concerning His [above] words, [it is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad, [that] he said: (God) proclaimed the title of friendship for Abraham, for the friend is obvious in meaning. But He kept hidden the title of love for Muḥammad ﷺ because of the perfection of his state. For the lover does not like to disclose the status of His beloved. Rather, He likes to conceal and veil it lest anyone other than He becomes acquainted with it or intrudes upon that which is between the two of them. He said to His Prophet and pure, bosom friend, Muḥammad ﷺ when He manifested to him the state of love: *Say, if you love God, then follow me* (3:31). That is to say, there is no way to the love of God except in following His beloved; nor is access to the Beloved⁵⁷ sought with anything better than pledging allegiance to (His) beloved⁵⁸ and seeking his contentment.



57 *Ḥabīb* is used predominantly to refer to the beloved; however, it may also be used for 'lover', in which case the rendition at this point could be 'Lover'. My interpretation of the different referents of *ḥabīb* is indicated by the case of the initial letter.

58 Reading *ḥabibihi* for *ḥabibah*.

﴿ 5 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْمَائِدَةِ

al-Mā'idah (The Table-Spread)

5:1

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا

Yā ayyuhā'lladhīna āmanū

O you who believe.

Concerning His [above] words, Ja'far b. Muḥammad said: Therein are four characteristics: a vocative; a metonymy; an allusion; and an attestation. The [word] *yā* is the vocative, and *ayyu* is the particularisation of the vocative; the *hā* is the metonymy; the [word] *alladhīna* is the allusion; and [the word] *āmanū* is the attestation.

5:1

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿٥٠﴾

inna'llāha yaḥkumu mā yurīd

verily God ordains what He intends.

Ja'far said: (God) ordains what He intends (to ordain) and then brings to pass His intention and His will.⁵⁹ Then he who is content with His

59 'Intention' renders *irādah*, while 'will' renders *mashī'ah*. Both Arabic terms are linguistically interchangeable. It is interesting to note that the word *ḥukm* (here translated as 'ordinance') is understood as the divine ruling/decreed, and that it is associated, in keeping with the words of this Qur'ānic verse, with the divine intention. In later commentaries, the terms *qadā'* and *qadar* are used for divine determination with, respectively, the former for ordinances of a general nature and fate, and the latter for particular divine decrees and individual destiny. Later commentators associate divine ordinances variously with the divine will, knowledge, or power. See Hamza, Rizvi, and Mayer, *On the Nature of the Divine*, ch. 5.

﴿ 6 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ

al-An'ām (Cattle)

6:59

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ

wa 'indahu mafātiḥu'l-ghayb

and with Him are the keys of the unseen.

About [these] words of His, Ja'far said: Through hearts He unlocks guidance; through concern, care; through tongues, narratives; and through limbs, conduct and an indication.⁶¹

6:79

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ

innī wajahtu wajhiya

verily I have turned my face

Ja'far said: That means: I have surrendered my heart to Him who created it and I have dedicated myself to Him excluding every preoccupation and distraction.

61 That is, when God causes faith to enter the heart; also, it is through understanding with the heart, seat of the subtle intellect, that the ultimate guidance for people is unlocked by God. 'Through concern, care' may be understood in two ways: first, that people learn to be careful through being concerned about matters and the consequences of thought, word and deed; second, that it is in the face of their concerns, personal and universal, that people begin to appreciate the divine protective care. 'An indication'—i.e., of the inner state.

لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ

li'lladhī faṭara'l-samāwāti wa'l-ard

toward Him who has created the heavens and the earth.

Ja'far said: [Toward Him] who raised the firmament without any pillars and manifested therein the marvels of His handiwork, [He who] is totally and perfectly able to protect my heart from blameworthy thoughts and harmful whisperings which are not suited to the Truth.

6:122

أَوْ مَنْ كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ

a-wa man kāna maytan fa-aḥyaynāhu

is he who was lifeless and whom We then enlivened

Concerning [these] words of His, Ja'far said: *Lifeless* without Us and whom We enlivened through Us and made a leader by whose light those estranged (from God)⁶² are rightly-guided and the one astray returns to Him.

كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ

kaman mathaluhu fi ḡulumāt

as one the likeness of whom is in [layers of] darkness.⁶³

'Like one who has been abandoned to his passion and desire and is not

62 *Ajānib* also means 'strangers'.

63 This Qur'ānic phrase contains a very important, implicit, subtle identification, namely, the reference to the spiritual correspondence of a person. In *man mathaluhu fi ḡulumāti*, *the likeness of whom is in [layers] of darkness*, the *mathal*/likeness refers to the spiritual body of the person. This likeness is not metaphorical but actual in the spiritual realm; what is inward in the physical realm is outwardly visible in the spiritual realm, the substance of which is subtle, divine light. Consequently, to the extent that a person's soul obscures light with the dirt of its contrary acts, to that extent their spiritual body is dark. The spiritual body of such a person,

(in any way) supported by the fragrances of closeness to God and the intimacy of the [divine] Presence.'

Ja'far [also] said, concerning His words *Is he who was lifeless: (Lifeless) through dependence upon acts of obedience; and whom We then enlivened: to whom We then granted the light of humble supplication and remorse.*⁶⁴

6:153

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا

wa anna hādihā širāṭī mustaqīman

and that this is My way, harmonious.

Ja'far b. Muḥammad said: (It is) a way from the heart to God through turning away from that which is other than Him.

the correspondence of their soul, is in literal darkness in the spiritual realm. The plurality of darkneses referred to in the Qur'ānic phrase refers to the product of different sins (hatred, for example, produces a very deep darkness and doubt is like thick mud which is why the *tafsir* says when doubt fills a heart it veils the person from perceiving. The soul-body, which is to say the spiritual body (which is visibly manifest in the spiritual realm) is the *simultaneous correspondence* of the state of soul of a person in the physical realm. The two occupy their places in the different realms at one and the same time. In other words, the spiritual realm contains not only posthumous and non-incarnate souls but also the soul-bodies/spiritual bodies that correspond to incarnated souls on earth in the present. The subtle body in the spiritual realm manifests visibly the hidden inner state of soul of a person on earth. The transition described in 6:122, from lifelessness to enlivenment, corresponds to the transition from opacity of soul to transparency.

64 In other words, acts of obedience are sterile unless enlivened with humility (humble supplication) and with neediness (remorse). Neediness, in general, means seeing that everything is totally dependent upon Him always, while remorse includes an awareness that all good belongs to God and that what is not good belongs to us.

﴿ 7 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْأَعْرَافِ

al-A'rāf (The Heights)

7:31

خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ

khudhū zinatakum 'inda kulli masjidin

don your adornment at every place of worship.

Ja'far said: Keep the members of your body away from contact with anything after God has made them an instrument wherewith the religious obligations (that He has ordained) are fulfilled.⁶⁵

7:120

وَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةَ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

wa ulqiya'l-saḥaratu sājidīna

and the magicians fell down in prostration.

Ja'far said: They found the breath of the winds of pre-existent (divine) care with them and hastened to prostrate themselves [before God] in gratitude. And, *They said, we have believed in the Lord of the worlds* (7:121).

7:142

﴿١٤٢﴾ وَوَعَدْنَا مُوسَى ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً

wa wā'adnā Mūsā thalāthīna laylatan

and We appointed for Moses thirty nights.

65 From the point of view of the *sharī'ah*, this ritual purity is the adornment mentioned in the Qur'ānic verse. The avoidance recommended in the comment would pertain to what might 'break' the state of ritual purity.

Ja'far said: His promise was of thirty nights and he kept⁶⁶ the tryst of his Lord. (When) the appointed time for his coming [to meet God] reached [its end], then He drew him forth beyond his term and his norm, and He honoured Moses by speaking to him; and His glory became evident to him [in a manner] beyond human norms, such that he heard what he heard from his Lord, not through himself or his knowledge, and in (a) time other than that which he had given to his people⁶⁷—showing that the 'descents of the Divinity'⁶⁸ are beyond (physical) human norms.

7:143

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ

wa lammā jā'a Mūsā li-mīqātinā wa kallamahu Rabbuhu

and when Moses came to Our appointed tryst and his Lord spoke to him.

Ja'far said: The *appointed tryst* is seeking to see (God).

Ja'far said [also]: He heard a speech extrinsic⁶⁹ to his human state.⁷⁰ He [God] made the speech rest upon him⁷¹ and spoke to him through

66 In his edition of the Arabic text, Paul Nwyia prefers to use the phrase *fa-l-yawma* (the day) instead of *fa-iltazama* (he adhered to; he kept). He notes *iltazama* in his apparatus, as the word used in this place in one of the manuscripts which he consulted. As *iltazama* makes more obvious sense in the context, we have chosen it for the English text.

67 That is, in the last ten nights which God added to the appointed thirty, according to this verse of the Qur'an.

68 *Manāzil al-rubūbiyah* may also be translated more literally as 'the halting places of the Lordship/Divinity'.

69 *Khārijan 'an* means 'extrinsic to, beyond a thing, outside it, separate from'; while *khārijan min* would mean 'emanating from, coming forth from'. See Lane at *khārij*.

70 *Bashariyatihi*: his humanity. Given what follows, it would seem that *bashariyah* here refers to the physical, corporeal condition of the human state on earth, and to the qualities that pertain to this incarnate state.

71 *Aḍāfa ilā*—for this fourth form of the verbal root *ḍ-y-f*, Lane cites the meaning 'to make incline towards, to rest or lean upon.' This is in keeping with the significance of the preceding sentence—the speech that Moses heard was extrinsic to his physical state; it descended upon his inner self. With the descent of the divine speech, Moses's soul was purged of all that was not in harmony with the divine. God spoke to Moses through the

Moses' inner disposition⁷² and his slavehood⁷³ and Moses disappeared from his soul and was effaced⁷⁴ from his qualities; then his Lord spoke to him through the deepest realities of his praiseworthy qualities⁷⁵ and Moses heard, from his Lord, the description of Moses. Muḥammad heard, from his Lord, the description of his Lord, for he was the most praised of the praiseworthy, in the sight of his Lord. Hence, the station of Muḥammad ﷺ was the lote tree at the utmost limit while the station of Moses was the mountain.⁷⁶ Since God spoke to Moses

perfect *'ubūdiyyah* of his inner self—i.e., the self that had nothing of its own, but only that which came from its Lord (*Rabb*).

72 *Nafsīyatihi*, which also implies his inner state of soul.

73 It should be noted that, although on one level the human state is nothing but slavehood because the human creature is *'abd Allāh*, the slave of God (it is in this sense that the word 'slave' is used in other parts of the translation to render the word *'abd*), here a distinction is made between the 'human state' and the 'inner self and slavehood'. 'Slavehood' (*'ubūdiyyah*), in this sense, is pure receptivity towards God's Lordship, pure emptiness in the face of it; hence its association with Moses's inner self rather than with the outer 'human state'. The multiple function of the word *'abd* is to be found in the Qur'an itself where it is used at times to designate mankind in general and at other times to distinguish God's special slaves, such as the prophets (18:1; 19:1; 54:9), certain categories of excellent right-doing believers (e.g., *'ibād al-Raḥmān*, 25:63; *'ibād Allāh*, 76:6) and those who have special status with Him (*'abdan min 'ibādīnā*; 18:65).

74 Moses's human qualities were effaced. With the non-divine totally extinguished, the divine speaks.

75 Two different words are used here for qualities. First, the Arabic word is *ṣifāt*—which in later theology is used almost exclusively for the qualities or attributes of God; it is the plural of the word *ṣifah* (quality), which occurs near the end of the sentence of our text. Second, the Arabic word for qualities is *ma'ānī*, which, in addition to meaning and significance, has the meaning of good qualities. See Lane at *ma'ānī*. Through the profoundest *ta'wīl* (returning to the source or root) the good (praised) qualities are shown to stem from the divine qualities themselves.

76 This is one of the comments that displays the microcosmic significances of the prophets. In this comment, Moses represents the *'abd*, the soul that is empty for God; while the Prophet Muḥammad represents the *rasūl*, the heart that is replete with the divine qualities. The two stages are in fact simultaneous; Moses became a perfect *'abd* when the divine speech came upon his heart and passed through him; and with the coming of the message (*risālah*) he became messenger (*rasūl*). Likewise, in the commentary on 24:35 we are told of the Prophet: 'he stands with God,

on the mountain, He effaced its quality and never shall there appear thereon any vegetation or human settlement.

قَالَ رَبِّ ارِنِّي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ تَرَنِي وَلَكِنِ أَنْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ

qāla Rabbī arinī anẓur ilayka. qāla lan tarānī wa'lākin anẓur ilā'l-jabal

he said: my Lord, show [Yourself to] me that I may gaze upon You. But gaze at the mountain.

Ja'far said: He was unreserved with his Lord concerning the meaning of the sight he saw, for he saw the subtle image of His speech upon his heart, and through that he was emboldened towards his Lord [about seeing Him]. Then (God) said to him: *you shall not see Me*, that is to say: 'you are unable to see Me for you are a transient (creature) and how should the transient have access to the eternally subsistent?'⁷⁷ *but gaze at the mountain*; Ja'far said: The knowledge of beholding (God) (imminently) alighted upon the mountain and it was reduced to dust and scattered. The mountain ceased to be at the [very] mention of beholding its Lord, and Moses fainted at seeing the flattened mountain. Then how could he have [sustained] seeing his Lord with his eyes, eye to eye?⁷⁸ The slave's beholding of God [entails that] the slave is effaced; and the Lord's seeing of the slave [entails] the eternal subsistence of the slave in/through his Lord.⁷⁹

through the condition of having perfected slavehood (*'ubūdiyyah*) and love.

- 77 How should the corporeal have access to the Subtlest One? And how should the non-divine have access to the divine? How should that which is other than God have access to God? *Fānin* (transient) and *bāqin* (eternally abiding) become key Sufi terms.
- 78 Things spiritual are perceivable only through spiritual vision and not through physical vision.
- 79 In other words, the unveiled, direct gaze of God effaces all that is in contrast to Him—so to look at God unveiled, one must be effaced in Him; just as the descent of the divine speech annihilated Moses, except inasmuch as he was naught but pure receptivity to God. At the same time, the gaze of God conveys the divine light—and in/through that divine light, the purified slave subsists as a harmonious continuum.

(Ja'far) [also] said: Three [things] are impossible for the slaves unto their Lord: the divine Self-disclosure, means for attachment and gnosis. For no eye sees Him, no heart attains to Him, no intelligence knows Him—because the basis for gnosis lies in being apart; the basis for connection lies in distance; and the basis for witnessing lies in separation.⁸⁰

Concerning His words: *you shall not see Me but gaze at the mountain*, Ja'far said: (God) occupied (Moses) with the mountain, then manifested Himself. Were it not for his being occupied with the mountain, Moses would have died, losing consciousness never to recover.

سُبْحَانَكَ تَبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾

subhānaka tubtu ilayka wa-ānā awwalu al-mu'minīn

glorified are You! I turn to You repentant and I am foremost among the believers.

Concerning His words: *glorified are You! I turn to You repentant*, Ja'far said: (Moses) affirmed his Lord's transcendence,⁸¹ and acknowledged his total incapacity to Him, and acquitted himself of his intelligence. *I turn to You repentant* [may be glossed] 'I return to You, [turning away] from my ego, nor am I inclined to my knowledge—for [true] knowledge is that which You have taught me and [true] intelligence is that which You have honoured me with.' *And I am foremost among the believers*: 'Verily You are not to be seen in this world.'⁸²

80 This comment refers to the total disparity between the creature and the Divinity. No created thing can attain to Him. Even within the incarnate person it is only the divine elements, the divine qualities and graces that accomplish the work. He is to be approached and known only through Himself—His qualities and graces; He is approached and known only by what is His own.

81 Students of theology should note that the verb here is *nazzaha* from which comes the term *tanzih*, which became coterminus with de-anthropomorphism.

82 In other words, God is not to be seen unveiled in this world, which is

7:157

وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ

wa yaḍa'ū 'anhum iṣrahum wa'l-aghālā

and (he) removes from them their burden and the shackles.

Ja'far said [explaining the words *burden* and *shackles*]: The heavy weight of setting up associates with God, the shame of oppositions [to God] and the fetter of heedlessness.

7:160

فَأَنْبَجَسَتْ مِنْهُ أَثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا

fa'nbasat minhu'thnatā 'ashrata 'aynan

and from it gushed forth twelve springs.

Concerning this verse [it is reported] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad [that] he said: From gnosis there gush forth twelve springs. All people drink from one of those springs, in a [given] rank, at a [given] station, according to their scope.

The first of these springs is that of professing God's unity. The second is the spring of slavehood and joy in it. The third is the spring of faithfulness. The fourth is the spring of sincerity. The fifth is the spring of humility. The sixth is the spring of contentment and entrustment [of all things to God]. The seventh is the spring of the Peace (of God's Presence)⁸³ and dignity. The eighth is the spring of liberality and confidence in God. The ninth is the spring of certainty. The tenth is the spring of the intellect. The eleventh is the spring of love. The twelfth is the spring of intimacy and solitude [with God]; this is the very spring of gnosis itself and from it gush forth these [other] springs. Whoever drinks from one of these springs finds its sweetness and strives hopefully for the spring which is higher than it—from spring to spring until he attains the origin. When he reaches the origin he realises the Truth.

the lowest realm (*al-dunyā*), the realm of dense physical matter. The transcendent God is not to be seen by physical eyes.

83 *Sakīnah* is a potent word that primarily means, in Islamic mysticism, the peace of the Presence of God.

wa huwa yatawallā'l-ṣāliḥīn

and He is in charge of those who do good.

Ja'far was asked about the wisdom in [the above] words of God, given that we know that God is in charge of [and governs all] the worlds. Ja'far said: Governance has two aspects. [There is] the governance to do with establishing and origination, and there is the governance to do with care and protection for the establishment of the Truth.⁸⁴



84 The word *iqāmah* (establishing; establishment) used in defining both aspects of *tawliyah* (governance) means 'to set up' in the sense of founding and starting something; it also means 'to put something right'. As in the second usage in the text above, *iqāmah* also means 'to establish firmly', 'to abide, reside, remain'; it also means, much like *tawliyah*, 'to commission someone with the management of something'. In the comment, the first 'establishing' relates to the origination of creation; the second concerns firmly establishing knowledge and awareness of the Truth within creation.

إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ

8:24

idhā da‘ākum limā yuhyikum

when He invites you to what enlivens you.

Ja‘far said: Life is life in God, and that is gnosis. As God, most high, has said: *verily We shall enliven him with a good life (16:97).*

لِيَقْضَىٰ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا

8:44

li-yaqdiya’llāhu amran kāna mafūlan

in order that God conclude a matter that was [to be] done.

Ja‘far said: That which He has decreed in pre-eternity, He manifests in moment after moment and instant after instant.⁸⁷

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكْ مُغَيِّرًا نِّعْمَةً . . .

8:53

dhālika bi-anna’llāha lam yaku⁸⁸ mughayyiran ni‘matan

that is because God would not alter a blessing.

Ja‘far said: As long as the slave acknowledges God’s blessings upon him, God shall not remove a blessing from him—until he does not know [or acknowledge] a blessing and does not thank God for it, at which point, he becomes deserving of having it stripped from him.

87 That is to say, God’s pre-eternal decree (*qadā*) is incepted in time, at every instant. This comment is suggestive of later ideas on causation enshrined in the ‘temporal atomism’ of Ash‘arī theology (cf. occasionalism) and the Sufi conception of *tajdidu’l-khalq bi’l-anfās*, whereby creation is renewed at every instant, literally ‘with every breath’.

88 Nwiyā’s edition has *yakun* instead of *yaku*.

8:67

تُرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ

turīdūna 'araḍa'l-dunyā wa'llāhu yurīdu'l-ākhirah

you wish for the contingencies of the world while God wishes [for you] the hereafter.

Ja'far said [glossing the Qur'ānic phrase]: You wish for this world but God wishes for you the hereafter, and what God wishes for you is better than what you wish for yourselves.

8:69

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا غَنِمْتُمْ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا

fa-kulū mimmā ghanimtum ḥalālan ṭayyiban

then consume the lawful and good from among the spoils of war you have taken.

Ja'far said: The lawful is that in which God is not disobeyed, and the good is that in which God is not forgotten.



﴿ 9 ﴾

سُورَةُ التَّوْبَةِ

al-Tawbah (Repentance)

9:25

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ

la-qad našarakumu'llāhu fi mawāṭina kathiratin

God has granted you victory in many fields.

Ja'far said: The procurement of victory lies in one thing: submissiveness and neediness (to God) and [recognition of our] helplessness (before God), according to His words, *God has granted you victory in many fields*. You did not base yourselves, in them (i.e., in those fields), on yourselves, you did not witness your own strength nor your plentiful numbers, and you knew that victory is not found in strength but that God, He is the Bestower of victory and the Helper. When the slave acknowledges the reality of his weakness, God helps him; whereas abandonment by God comes about through one thing: self-conceit.⁸⁹ God says: *and on the day of Hunayn, when the large quantity of your numbers delighted you, yet they did not benefit you at all* (9:25).⁹⁰ When they regarded their strength as proceeding from themselves rather than from God, He cast defeat upon them and the earth was straitened for them. God says: *then you turned away and fled*, [when] left to your (own) might and your (own) strength and your (own) plentiful numbers.

89 *Ujb*, meaning self-admiration; pride.

90 Historically, this verse refers to the battle of Hunayn, where, despite their plentiful numbers, the Muslim army suffered a severe setback initially, but ultimately triumphed.

9:37

زُيِّنَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ أَعْمَالِهِمْ

zuyyina lahum sū'u a'mālihim

the evil of their deeds is made to appear fair to them.

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq was asked about His (above) words, and he said: It [refers to] hypocrisy.

9:40

وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا

wa ayyadahu bi-junūdin lam tarawhā

and He strengthened him with armies that you saw not.

Ja'far said concerning His [above] words: Those are the armies of certainty, confidence in God and trusting reliance upon God.

9:46

وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لَأَعَدُّوا لَهُ عُدَّةً

wa law arādū'l-khurūja la-a'addū lahu 'uddatan

and had they intended to go forth they would surely have made some preparations for it.⁹¹

Ja'far said: If they knew God, they would surely be ashamed before Him and they would surely part, for Him, from their souls, their spirits and their wealth, in place of⁹² one of His commands.

91 Nwyia reversed the order of this verse.

92 *Kharaja* 'an has among its several meanings both 'to part from' and 'to disagree with'.

al-Tawbah (Repentance)

9:46

وَلَكِنَّ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ اتِّبَاعَهُمْ

walākin kariha'llāhu'nbi'āthahum

but God was averse to their being sent forth.

Ja'far said: He demands of His slaves the Truth; but He did not make them worthy of that; then He did not excuse them but rebuked them for that. Do you not see Him say: *and they say: Do not go forth in the heat* (9:81).

9:91

مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

mā 'alā'l-muḥsinīna min sabilin

there is no path against those who do good.

Ja'far said: He who does good is the one who perfects the etiquette of serving his Lord.⁹³

9:100

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ

raḍiya'llāhu 'anhum wa raḍū 'anhu

God is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him.

Ja'far said: *God was pleased with them*, in the care and success that was preveniently bestowed on them from God; *and they were pleased with Him* in what He bestowed upon them in their following His Messenger ﷺ and (in) the acceptance of what he brought, and (in)

93 *Sayyidihi*, may also be translated as 'his master'. 'Sayyid' is one of the titles of the descendants of the Prophet. The Shī'ī implication is that the *muḥsin* is the one who perfects his attitude to the imams. The word *ādāb*, rendered as 'etiquette', refers to behaviour both inward and outward. As noted elsewhere, good manners, be they external or internal, are rooted in virtue, which is divine.

their spending of (their) possessions and expending (their) best efforts [to be pleasing to God].⁹⁴

9:111 ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ

inna'llāha'shtarā mina'l-mu'minīna anfusahum wa amwālahum
*verily God has purchased from the believers their souls
 and their possessions.*

Ja'far said about His [above] words: (God) honours them in [both] the language of reality and in the language of commerce: He has purchased from them their bodies as loci for the coming down of love through their hearts; thus He enlivens them with the means for attachment (to Him).⁹⁵

9:116 إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مَلِكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

inna'llāha lahu mulku'l-samāwāti wa'l-arḍ
*verily God, to Him belongs the sovereignty of the heavens
 and the earth.*

Ja'far said: All beings belong to Him—so let not that which belongs to Him distract you from Him.

94 In the context of the Qur'ānic verse, the phrase refers to the early Muslims who emigrated from Mecca to Yathrib (known as the *muhājirūn*, 'emigrants') and to the first Muslims among the native residents of Yathrib (known as the *anṣār*, 'helpers'). Here again, all goodness is seen to proceed from God. Thus human goodness is a blessing received by those who do good.

95 The physical body contains the soul which bears the spiritual heart which is the receptacle of divine love. Divine love is the means for attachment to God.

9:128

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ

la-qad jā'akum rasūlun

there has come to you a messenger.

Ja'far al-Şādiq said: God knows the weakness of His creatures in obeying Him and He informs them of that so that they know that they cannot attain purity through [their] service to Him. So He has established between Himself and them a creature of their own kind in form. Thus He says:

9:128

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ

la-qad jā'akum rasūlun min anfusikum, 'azīzun 'alayhi mā 'anittum⁹⁶

there has come to you a messenger from among yourselves for whom what they have (of distress) is hard to bear.

Thus [said Ja'far] He clothed him from His quality of pity and mercy and sent him forth to creation as a faithful ambassador. And He made obedience to him obedience to Him and conformity to him conformity to Him for he says: *Whoever obeys the Messenger, verily he has obeyed God (4:80).*



96 In Nwya's Arabic text, the Qur'an quotation reads mā 'indahum, instead of mā 'anittum, what (distress) afflicts you, even though the commentary cites the correct form.

﴿ 10 ﴾

سُورَةُ يُونُسَ

Yūnus (Jonah)

10:13

لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا

lammā ḡalamū

when they did wrong.

Ja'far said: When they received Our blessings with ingratitude.

10:25

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُوا إِلَىٰ دَارِ السَّلَامِ

wa'llāhu yad'ū ilā dāri'l-salām

and God calls to the Abode of Peace.

Ja'far said: The invitation is general but the guidance is particular.

He also said: Paradise is good only through the Peace (therein). He has chosen you through these privileges solely so that you shall not choose anyone over Him.

He also said: The invitation acts upon the secret reaches of souls,⁹⁷ so that they are liquefied by it and incline to it peacefully.

97 *Sarāyir* (sic., for *sarā'ir*), here rendered 'secret reaches of souls', is the plural of *sarīrah* (secret, secret thought, heart, mind, soul). *Rakana ilā* means 'to incline to something such as to become calm of mind'. See Lane at *r-k-n*.

10:57

وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ

wa shifā'un limā fi'l-ṣudūr

and a healing for what is in the breasts.

Ja'far said: *A healing for what is in the breasts*, that is, repose for what is in the secret reaches of souls.

And Ja'far said: For some of them there is the healing of gnosis and serenity; and for some is the healing of acceptance and contentment; while for others is the healing of repentance and faithful fulfilment; and for some is the healing of witnessing and the meeting [with God].

10:58

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا

qul: bi-fadli'llāhi wa bi-rahmatihi fabi-dhālika fal-yafraḥū

say: in God's grace and in His mercy, in those let them delight.

Concerning this verse Ja'far said: This is vigilance against forgetfulness or the disruption of submissiveness; (and it is) to move away from the calls of the carnal appetites.

And Ja'far said: The grace of God is knowledge of Him, and His mercy is the success He gives.

10:107 وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ

wa in yamsaska'llāhu bi-ḍurrin falā kāshifa lahu illā huwa

wa in yuridka bi-khayrin

and if God touches you with some hurt or loss, then there is none who can remove it save Him; and if He intends for you some good

Ja'far said: God has made the hurt or loss dependent upon your quality but the intention for good for you dependent upon His quality—in order that your hope be greater than your fear.

﴿ 11 ﴾

سُورَةُ هُودٍ

Hūd

11:96

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٩٦﴾

wa la-qaḍ arsalnā Mūsā bi-ayātinā wa sulṭānin mubīnin

and We sent Moses with Our signs and evident authority.

Ja'far said: The *signs* are humility towards the friends of God and great *authority* against the enemies of God.⁹⁸

11:112

فَأَسْتَقِيمَ كَمَا أُمِرْتُ

fa'staqim kamā umirta

then be upright even as you have been commanded.

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said: Be poor unto God with firm resolution.



98 In this comment, *al-āyāt* is taken as a reference to Moses's humility towards the friends of God, such as the wisdom figure whom Moses encounters in *Sūrat al-Kahf* (18), while *al-sulṭān* refers to power against the enemies of God, such as Pharaoh.

﴿ 12 ﴾

سُورَةُ يُوسُفَ

Yūsuf (Joseph)

12:19 قَالَ يَبُشْرِي هَذَا غُلَامٌ وَأَسْرُوهُ بِضَاعَةً

qālā yā bushrā hādihā ghulamun wa asarrūhu biḍā'atan

he said: O good news! Here is a slave-boy. And they concealed him for merchandise.

Ja'far said: God, most high, had a secret in Joseph. He hid the situation⁹⁹ of His secret from them, for had He disclosed to them the reality of what He had deposited in (Joseph), they would have died. Do you not see how they said 'Here is a slave-boy'? Had they known the traces of the [divine] power in him they would have said 'Here is a prophet and a truthful one.' Indeed, when part of the matter was disclosed to the women they said: *this is no human; this is naught but a noble angel* (12:31).¹⁰⁰

12:20

وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍ بَخْسٍ

wa sharawhu bi-thamanin bakhsin

and they sold him for a paltry price.

Ja'far said: They sold him for a paltry price because of their ignorance of the subtleties of knowledge and marvellous signs which God had

99 *Mawḍi'a*, meaning 'rank', 'position', 'location', translated here as 'situation.'

100 Later in the *sūrah* we are told that the wife of the 'Aziz invited the women of the town, who were gossiping about her love for Joseph, to see for themselves the beauty of Joseph. When she sent him into the room where the women were seated, they exclaimed what is quoted above.

deposited within him.

Ja'far [also] said: You are amazed at how Joseph's brothers sold him so very cheaply, yet what you do is more astonishing than that; for you sell your portion of the hereafter for a passionate glance or thought of the world. It may be that a man sells his realisory knowledge for a paltry sum, and it may be that his good fortune from his Lord escapes him by the very smallest [margin].

Ja'far [also] said: God had in Joseph a secret concealed from them. It was already deposited in him at the time they brought him forth out of the pit and he was sold for a paltry sum. Had they witnessed in him the secrets of the Truth that were deposited in him they would all have died in looking at him¹⁰¹ and their tongues would never have obeyed them in their statement 'here is a slave-boy'. But in their view he was a slave-boy, while in the view of the Truth he was one of the luminaries.

12:30

قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا

qad shaghafahā ḥubban

he has smitten her [heart] with love.

The pericardium is like the clouds: veiling (her) heart from thoughts about anyone other than him and from preoccupation with anything other than him.¹⁰²

101 In seeing the secrets of the Truth in Joseph they would have seen the divine secrets in him, and that would have entailed annihilation.

102 The *shaghāf* or pericardium is defined in Lane as 'the fat which clothes the heart'. The meaning is that the love of Joseph acted upon the heart of Zulaykha as clouds act upon the sky, covering and darkening it, thus her heart was closed off from thoughts of anyone or anything other than her beloved. The Arabic text reads 'his heart' after 'veiling'; in which case the second half of the comment, rather surprisingly, refers to Joseph instead of to Zulaykha, with the meaning that Joseph's heart was closed off from thoughts about or preoccupation with anything other than God. Or the comment may simply be a general one: 'The pericardium is like the clouds veiling the heart of (a person) from thoughts about anyone/anything other than (his beloved) and from preoccupation with anything other than (the beloved)'. However, in the apparatus, one manuscript is cited as having *qalbhā* ('her heart'). As this fits in with the overall context, I have opted

إِنَّا لَنَرْنَهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

12:30

innā la-narāhā fi ḍalālin mubīnin

indeed, we consider her to be in evident error.

Ja'far b. Muḥammad was asked about passionate love, and he said: (It is) error. Then he recited: *indeed, we consider her to be in evident error.* He said: The meaning of this is: 'in passionate love for something outward'.¹⁰³

12:31

فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ

fa-lammā ra'aynahu wa akbarnahu¹⁰⁴

then when they saw him and they extolled him.

Said Ja'far: The awe of prophethood [that fell] upon them overlaid the

to use the variant for the English translation at this point.

103 *Fī 'ishqī zāhirin* could be read *fī 'ishqin zāhirin* ('an outward, passionate love'). This comment displays the early status of *'ishq* among the Sufis, when it was considered negatively. Later, however, *'ishq* came to be used for the fervent love of God. In this text, the love of the divine in Joseph's story is manifested in the women of the city (rather than in Zulaykha), who perceiving the inner divine beauty extoll Joseph, proclaiming him 'a noble angel'. So here, Zulaykha, who loved his outer beauty, represents the corporeal person's longing for physical things, while the women who perceived his inner beauty, and through this perception transcended carnal desire, represent the higher lover.

104 The Arabic text has an extra full-sized *waw* here so that the Qur'ān citation seems to read: '*fa-lammā ra'aynahu wa akbarnahu*'. It may be that it is the original letter which is indicated by the small sized letter to be found at this place in Ḥafṣ. Such small letters 'indicate the fact that there ought to be big ones which are left out in the copies of the Qur'ān compiled and authorized by the Khalifa 'Uthmān and the pronunciation of which is obligatory'. See Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an* (London: Nadim and Co., 1983), p. xxxi, section ix. However, the small sized *waw* of the Ḥafṣ *muṣḥaf* is attached to the end of *ra'aynahu* and would indicate a long enunciation of the *hu* rather than meaning 'and'.

situation¹⁰⁵ of their desire for him, then they extolled him.

12:67

لَا تَدْخُلُوا مِنْ بَابٍ وَاحِدٍ

lā tadhulū min bābin wāhidin

do not enter through one gate.

Ja'far said: In his words, *do not enter through one gate*, Jacob forgot to rely on (divine) protection¹⁰⁶ and [the divine] strength, and (he forgot) that the divine decree overwhelms [all human] planning. Then, helped by God-given success (in goodness, *tawfiq*), he soon corrected (himself) and said: *I cannot avail you aught against God in anything* (12:67).

12:70

أَيُّهَا الْعَيْرُ إِنَّكُمْ لَسَارِقُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

ayyatuhā'l-īru innakum la-sāriqūn

O you caravan, surely you are thieves!

Ja'far said: In his order to his crier (to accuse) them of theft, Joseph made a veiled reference to what they did in Joseph's story, with regard to their father [as though saying] 'the deed which you committed (against) your father resembles the deed of a thief.'

12:76

كَذَلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوسُفَ ۗ

ka-dhālika kidnā li-Yūsufa

thus We contrived for Joseph.

Ja'far said [glossing]: (Thus) We manifested in Joseph the collective blessings of his sincere/truthful forefathers inasmuch as We protected

¹⁰⁵ The plural *mawādī'*, in the comment, is rendered by the English 'situation'; as 'situations' would have read inelegantly.

¹⁰⁶ *ʿIṣmah* means chastity, innocence, infallibility and also safeguarding, protection, preservation.

Yūsuf (Joseph)

him through (the divine contrivance) in the time of affliction.¹⁰⁷

12:81

إِنَّ أَبْنَكَ سَرَقَ

inna'bnaka saraqā

lo, your son has stolen.

Ja'far said: The meaning of this [phrase] is 'lo, your son has not stolen'— for how should it be possible that this phrase be used about a prophet [who is the] son of a prophet? This phrase is one of the difficult ones of the Qur'an; it is like His words in the story of David, *two litigants one of whom has been unjust towards the other* (38:22), while they were not litigants and had not been unjust.

12:92

لَا تَثْرِبَ عَلَيْنَا

lā tathriba 'alaykum

(there is) no reproof against you.

Ja'far said: There is no shame upon you concerning what you did for you were compelled to it as that was predestined for you.

12:93

أَذْهَبُوا بِقَمِيصِي هَذَا

idhhabū bi-qamiṣī hadhā

go with this shirt of mine.

[It is related] from Ja'far [that] he said: The intention in [sending] the

107 A comment with strong Shī'i overtones: The use of the verb 'a-ṣ-m in 'aṣimnāhu, which is rendered 'We protected him', implies the protection of his innocence and chastity, his 'iṣmah, which, on the spiritual register, signifies pure receptivity towards God. Moreover, the imams are held to inherit from their forefathers all the knowledge of the Prophet. See Douglas Crow, *The Teaching of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq* (Thesis, McGill University, Montreal 1980).

shirt was that, [since] distress had come to Jacob with the shirt, as stated in His words: *And they came with false blood on his shirt* (12:18), [Joseph] wished that joy should come to him (Jacob) through that wherewith sorrow had come to him.

12:94

قَالَ أَبُوهُمْ إِنِّي لَأَجِدُ رِيحَ يُوسُفَ ۗ

qāla abūhum innī la-ajidu riḥa Yūsuf

their father said: truly I sense the fragrance of Joseph.

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said: It is said that the east wind asked God most high, and said: 'Assign me, that I give him the good news of his son'; and God gave it permission to do that. Jacob was in prostration then raised his head and said: *truly I sense the fragrance of Joseph*. And his children said to him: *surely you are in your old aberrance* (12:95), that is, in your old love [of Joseph]. The fragrance was blended with divine care and compassion and mercy and notification of the end of the severe trial. Even thus, the confirmed believer finds the fragrance of the fresh breeze of faith in his heart and the breath of gnosis (coming) from the divine care, preveniently given to him from God in his inmost self.

12:100

وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ

wa qad aḥsana bī idh akhrajani minā'l-sijn

and He was good to me when He brought me out of prison.

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said: Joseph said, *and He was good to me when He brought me out of prison*, and he did not say 'when He brought me out of the well' even though that was the more distressing, because he did not wish to confront his brothers with [the statement]: 'for you treated me cruelly and flung me in the well' after he had said: *(there is) no reproof against you this day* (12:92).

إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِّمَا يَشَاءُ^{١٠٨}

12:100

inna Rabbī laṭīfun limā yashā'u

verily my Lord is kind to whom He wills.

Ja'far al-Šādiq said: He has made His slaves stand under His will. If He wills He chastises them, and if He wills He effaces [their sins] from them; and if He wills He brings them close [to Himself], and if He wills He distances them [from Himself]—in order that the willing and power be His and no one else's. Then He manifests His loving kindness to His special slaves—through love and gnosis and faith; thus His words: *verily my Lord is kind to whom He wills*: to His slaves to whom care and friendship from Him have already been granted.

عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ^{١٠٨}

12:111

'ibratun li-ūli'l-albāb¹⁰⁸

and a lesson for those who possess spiritual minds.

Ja'far al-Šādiq said [in paraphrase]: 'For the possessors of secrets with God.'



108 According to the dictionary, *albāb* ('heart, mind, intellect, reason, understanding') is the plural of *lubb* ('kernel, essence, innermost'). *Albāb* is equated in this comment with the inmost self of a person, their secret (*sirr, asrār*). The spiritual mind is the inmost spiritual consciousness of a person. 'Those who possess spiritual minds' are those in whom the spiritual mind is functioning rather than lying dormant or smothered under *daran*.

﴿ 13 ﴾

سُورَةُ الرَّعْدِ

al-Raʿd (Thunder)

13:9

الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالِ ①

al-Kabirī'l-Mutaʿālī

the Great, the Exalted.

Jaʿfar said: The place where He alights¹⁰⁹ is of great significance in the hearts of the sages, while [whatever is] other than Him is insignificant in their view. He is exalted above being drawn near to except through His pure generosity.

13:11

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ②

inna'llāha lā yughayyiru mā bi-qawmin ḥatā yughayyirū mā bi-anfusihim

*verily God does not change that which is with a people until they change that which is in their souls.*¹¹⁰

Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq said: He does not deem it suitable for them to change their inmost selves, nor does He alter for them their states; were He

109 'The place where He alights' translates *maḥall*, which means 'a place where a person or party alights or descends and stops or sojourns . . . or . . . takes up his abode, abides, lodges or settles.' See Lane at *maḥall* under *h-l-l*.

110 This is usually understood to mean that God does not alter the condition of a people until they alter the condition of their souls. See Asad, *Message of the Qurʾān*, p. 360. This Qurʾānic phrase, taken on its own, is a *naṣṣ* that supports the principle of micro-macro cosmic correspondence by showing how changes in the one affect the other. The dynamic flows both ways.

to make suitable for them the changing of their inmost selves and the witnessing of tribulation and need,¹¹¹ they would become humble and needy, and through that they would attain to salvation.

13:14

وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ﴿١٤﴾

wa mā du'ā'-kāfirina illā fi ḍalālin

and the call of the disbelievers is only in error.

Ja'far said: Whoever calls [people] through his [lower] soul¹¹² calls to his [lower] soul, and that is unbelief and error. That is the place of betrayal and the falling away from the ranks of the loyal. For there are different types of people who summon: there is a caller who calls through the Truth; there is a caller to the Truth; and there is a caller to the way of the Truth. All of these callers invite creation to these ways [but] not through themselves.¹¹³ Thus, these are the ways of the Truth. For the caller who invites through his lower soul, invites to error no matter what he is calling [people] to.¹¹⁴

111 *Balwā* comprises both the meanings of trial and need. Instead of applying the *bi-qawmin* to the macrocosmic condition, the *tafsīr* applies it to the innermost levels of the microcosm, and shows that when the divine is active or activated in the heart, then the soul is automatically affected positively. It would seem that the issue here is the state of the inmost self—does it breathe freely and easily or is it oppressed by the darkness of the soul. The emphasis in the Qur'ānic citation is on the need for the person to make good the state of their soul, while the *tafsīr* emphasises the precedence of divine activity in both the inner and outward dimensions.

112 *Bi-nafsihi* ('by/of/in himself'; or 'through/of his lower soul'). This implies an element of egoism in such a caller, an egoism that sullies his invitation at a profound level. It is 'the hidden fold of the ego'. In light of the discussion of qualities, this phrase would mean to summon people through your own 'poor and wretched' soul which would not lead to the Truth. This Qur'ānic verse begins with the phrase: *Lahu dā'watu'l-Haqq*, which may be rendered: 'To Him is the true summons' or 'His is . . .'. The verb *dā'ā* means to call, invite, summon. The word *dā'ī*, here rendered caller, has the specific meaning of 'missionary'. In the Shī'i hierarchy the rank of the *dā'ī* is the one above the ranks of the common believers.

113 *Lā bi-anfusihim*, i.e., with no interference from their lower soul/ego.

114 The point in this comment seems to be that any intrusion of the individual

13:27 إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ أَنَابَ ﴿٢٧﴾

inna'llāha yuḍillu man yashā'u wa yahdī ilayhi man anāba

*verily God lets go astray whom He will and guides to Himself
whomever turns to Him repentant.*

Ja'far said: He lets the person who seeks Him through his lower soul, stray from perceiving Him and His being. Whereas He guides, that is, He causes to attain His deepest truths, the one who seeks Him through Him.¹¹⁵

13:38 لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ ﴿٣٨﴾

li-kulli ajalīn kitābun

for every appointed time there is a divine prescript.

Ja'far said: There is a time for seeing (God).

13:39 يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُنْبِتُ^ط

yamḥu'llāhu mā yashā'u wa yuthbitu

God effaces what He will and establishes.

Concerning [the above] words of God, [it is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad [that] he said: He effaces unbelief and establishes faith; He

ego fatally flaws the work of the summoner—thus only he who is divinely appointed to be a summoner and who is divinely preserved from sin and error (*ma'sūm*) and has divine assistance (*tawfiq*) is able to convey the summons correctly. This may be understood as having Shī'i overtones: that the imams are the true and correct summoners to be followed.

- 115 This continues the point of the previous comment and touches on the theme of *tawakkul*, which is spoken of in several comments: he who relies on himself rather than on God is in error; the guarantee of success is total and trusting reliance on God, for which there must be no reliance on oneself, no subtle, false claims by the ego, for God is All-Powerful and the creature is utterly needy and helpless.

al-Ra'd (Thunder)

effaces ignorant denial and establishes gnosis; He effaces forgetfulness and establishes the remembrance (of God); He effaces hatred and establishes love; He effaces weakness and establishes strength; He effaces ignorance and establishes knowledge; He effaces doubt and establishes certainty and He effaces passionate inclinations and establishes the intellect, in this manner. The indication of this is in [His words]: *everyday He is concerned with some matter* (55:29), [that is,] effacing and establishing.

وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ ﴿٣٩﴾

13:39

wa 'indahu ummu'l-kitāb

and with Him is the archetype of the Book.

Ja'far said: The Book in which distress and felicity are ordained. Nothing is added to it nor is anything subtracted from it. *The Word with Me is not altered* (50:29). Deeds are signs. Then he for whom felicity was ordained will have felicity at the end, while he for whom distress was ordained will have distress at the end.



﴿ 14 ﴾

سُورَةُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

Ibrāhīm (Abraham)

14:1 كَتَبْنَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

kitābun anzalnāhu ilayka li-tukhrija'l-nāsa mina'l-ẓulumāti
ilā'l-nūr

*a Book which We have sent down to you that you may bring
forth mankind from the darkneses into light.*

Said Ja'far: [It is] a pledge with which you have been distinguished. In it is a clear statement of the perdition of previous communities and of the salvation of your community [O Muḥammad]; *which We have sent down to you that you may bring forth* people, by means of it, from the darkneses of disbelief into the light of faith, and from the darkneses of innovation into the lights of [the prophetic] custom and from the darkneses of the [lower] soul into the lights of the heart.

14:26 وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ

wa mathalu kalimatīn khabīthatīn ka-shajaratin khabīthatīn
*and the likeness of a harmful word is as a harmful tree.*¹¹⁶

Ja'far said: The harmful tree is the carnal appetites; its soil is the lower soul; its water wishful expectation; its leafage is indolence; its fruits disobedience; and its final end is the fire.

116 *Khabīthah* (bad, wicked, evil, malicious, harmful, vicious).

Ibrāhīm (Abraham)

14:32 وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الْفُلُكَ لِتَجْرِيَ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ

wa sakḥkhara lakumu'l-fulka li-tajriya fi'l-baḥri bi-amrihi

and He has made of service to you ships, that they may wend their way upon the sea by His command.

Ja'far said: He has made the heavens of service to you with the rains, and the earth with vegetation, and the two seas as ways for trade. He has made of service to you the sun and the moon which turn around you and cause the benefits of fruits and crops to reach you. He has made the heart of the believer of service to His love and His knowledge. God's share of the slaves is their hearts and nothing else, because the heart is the receptacle of His gaze and the repository of His trust¹¹⁷ and of the knowledge of His secrets.

14:35 رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا

(Rabbi) 'j'al hādhā'l-balada āminan

(my Lord), make this land safe.

Concerning [these] words of His, [it is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad that he said: (This refers to) the hearts of the sages; 'make them sanctuaries of Your secret and safe from being cut off from You.'

وَأَجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

wa'j'nubnī wa baniyya an na'buda'l-aṣnām

and preserve me and my sons from worshipping idols.

Ja'far said: Do not take me back to my witnessing the friendship [that I have with You], nor take my offspring back to witnessing the prophethood.¹¹⁸

117 *Amānah* (a deposit in trust, entrustment, charge, trusteeship). In other words, the spiritual heart contains the theophany, the *ḥaqīqah*.

118 Here the point seems to be that friendship or prophethood are 'idols'

14:37

فَأَجْعَلْ أَقْدَةَ مَنِ النَّاسِ تَهْوَى إِلَيْهِمْ

fa'jal af'idatan mina'l-nāsi tahwī ilayhim
so incline the hearts of people towards them.

Ja'far said: *so incline the hearts of people towards them* since their hearts are inclined to You.

14:52

هَذَا بَلَّغٌ لِلنَّاسِ

hādhā balāghun li'l-nāsi
this is a clear message to people.

Ja'far said: (It is) spiritual counsel for creation and a warning for them to avoid evil associates and the gatherings of those who contend [against God]. For when hearts become habituated to sitting with the adversaries [of God] they are perverted and degenerate.



to the extent that they distract from God, and that the awareness even of the elevated status of sanctity or prophethood is an intrusion of ego-consciousness.

﴿ 15 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْحِجْرِ

al-Hijr (The Rocky Tract)

15:9 إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾

innā nahnu nazzalnā'l-dhikra wa innā lahu la-ḥāfiẓūn

verily We, but We, sent down the Remembrance and verily We are its guardian.

Ja'far said: *and verily We are its guardian*—‘[Protecting it] in him for whom We intend good and taking it away from him for whom We intend adversity.’

15:28

إِنِّي خَلِيقٌ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَلٍ

innī khāliqun basharan min ṣalṣālin

verily, I am creating a human from clay.

Ja'far said: He tested them, the angels,¹¹⁹ in order to prompt them to

119 The angels too keep growing in knowledge of and awe at the wonders of His power, wisdom, and mercy. Concerning the prostration of the angels to Adam, Muslims too often think that this means all angels should bow to all people. So it is worth pointing out that it is to Adam, the first man, that the angels bowed. Moreover, according to some scholars and contrary to popular belief, the angels do have free will (that is why Iblis could chose to refuse to prostrate to Adam). The ‘superiority’ of the ordinary incarnate human over the angels (to generalise and not to go into the many categories and levels of angelic beings), lies in the fact that the incarnate human contains within his person all levels of being, including the lowest level of dense physical matter—as God on the metacosmic scale contains the whole of being including the hells, in Himself. And

wa la-qad ātaynāka sab'an mina'l-mathānī¹²¹

and We have given you seven of the oft-repeated.

[It is related] from Ja'far, concerning this verse, [that] he said, [in explanatory paraphrase]: 'We have honoured you and revealed to you and sent you [as Our messenger] and inspired you and guided you and established you in authority and power. Then We honoured you with seven miracles,¹²² the first of which is right guidance; the second is prophethood; the third is mercy; the fourth is compassion; the fifth is devoted love (*mawaddah*) and intimate love (*ulfah*); the sixth is bliss; and the seventh is the Peace (of the divine Presence) and the exalted Qur'ān in which is the most exalted name of Allāh.'



121 *Al-mathānī* are traditionally taken as referring to the seven verses of the *Fātiḥah*, the opening *sūrah* of the Qur'ān, which is recited in every cycle (*rak'ah*) of every canonical prayer.

122 *Karāmāt*, which could also be rendered 'marks of honour', came to be specifically associated with the miracles performed through saints, the word *mu'jizah* being reserved for the miracles vouchsafed to the prophets.

﴿ 16 ﴾

سُورَةُ النَّحْلِ

al-Naḥl (The Bee)

16:12

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ

wa sakhkhara lakumu'l-layla wa'l-nahāra wa'l-shamsa
wa'l-qamar

*and He has placed the night and the day and the sun and the
moon at your service.*

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq عليه السلام said: He has placed at your service the rains in the heavens, and the plants and vegetation on earth, and the various animals, in the day and at night. He has placed at your service the angels who praise (God) on your behalf; and on earth, the grazing livestock, domestic animals, the ships, and the [other] creatures.¹²³ He has placed everything at your service in order that nothing should busy you and distract you from Him and so that you can be at the service of Him who has placed all these things at your service. For indeed, He has placed all things at your service and has placed your heart at the service of His love and knowledge of Him—that is the portion allotted to the slave from his Lord.

123 *Khalq* may mean specifically 'mankind'.

16:96

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ

mā 'indakum yanfadu wa mā 'inda'llāhi bāqin

what is with you comes to an end but what is with God is unending.

Ja'far said: *What is with you comes to an end* that is, acts such as [the performance of] the religious obligations and supererogatory prayers; but *what is with God is unending*, His qualities and attributes. For what is new is transient but the Pre-existent One is everlasting.¹²⁴

16:97

فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً

fala-nuhyiyannahu ḥayātan ṭayyibatan

We shall indeed enliven him with a good life.

Ja'far said: The 'good life' is knowledge of God, sincerity of station with God and sincerity of standing with God.¹²⁵

Ja'far [also] said: The 'good life' is that it be made good for His sake—in that it is all from God and returns to Him.

124 *Al-Qadīm*, 'the Pre-existent One', is one of the divine names. *Al-ḥadath* ('the new') implies the occurrence or advent of something which did not previously exist. (Later, philosophers would use the term *ḥādith* for that which is temporally incepted.) Thus everything which at some point did not previously exist is *ḥadath* and is doomed to pass away—only the Uncreated, which always was, shall always be.

125 *Maqām*, 'station', in later Sufism came to mean specifically a permanent realisation of a spiritual station, as opposed to a temporary state (*ḥāl*). *Wuqūf* ('standing'), also means halting, stopping, staying, standing still; it also means cognisance, knowledge, understanding. For the later development of the mystical concept of this 'standing' or 'halting', see A. J. Arberry, ed. and trans., *The Mawāqif and Mukhātabāt of Muḥammad b. 'Abdī'l-Jabbār al-Niffarī* (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 1978), especially the sections on *waqfah* and *wāqif* in Arberry's Introduction.

16:125 اذْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

(u)d'u ilā sabīli Rabbika bi'l-ḥikmati wa'l-maw'izati ('l-ḥasanah)

call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel.

Ja'far said: Calling with wisdom is that (a person) summons (another) [with a summons] from God to God through God; and good counsel is that creation be seen to be bound by the reins of the divine power—so (the one) who gets it right [should be] thanked and (the one) who rejects [it should be] excused.¹²⁶

16:127 وَأَصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

wa'ṣbir wa mā ṣabruka illā bi'llāh

and be patient—and your patience can only be through God.

Ja'far said: God enjoined patience upon His prophets; and He appointed the highest portion (of patience) for the Prophet ﷺ, inasmuch as He commanded him to be patient through God, not through himself.



126 That is, those who reject the right way and, perhaps more specifically, those who reject the imams. This comment, suggestive as it is of a Jabri-latitudinarian attitude which excuses 'sinners' for what they cannot avoid, is in keeping with the rigorous predestinarian doctrine manifest in this commentary.

سُورَةُ الْإِسْرَاءِ

al-Isrā' (The Night Journey)

Banī Isrā'īl (The Children of Israel)

It is said that a man came to Ja'far b. Muḥammad and said: Describe for me the ascent (*mi'rāj*).¹²⁷ He replied: How should I describe for you a station which even Gabriel, with all the magnitude of his rank, was not able [nor permitted]¹²⁸ to enter.

127 The *isrā'* is the famous night journey of the Prophet during which, accompanied by the archangel Gabriel and riding on the heavenly steed named Burāq, he was taken in spirit from Mecca to Jerusalem and thence on the ascent (*mi'rāj*) through the seven heavens ascending to the utmost limit. For the traditional account of this journey, see Martin Lings, *Muhammad* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1983), pp. 101–104; and Asad, *Message of the Qur'ān*, Appendix IV. The Qur'ānic verses 53:13–18 are traditionally understood to refer to the *mi'rāj*.

128 *Lam yasīf* comprises both the meanings given above of 'not being able' and 'not being allowed'. Tradition tells us that the archangel accompanied the Prophet on his spiritual journey all the way to the furthest boundary beyond which it was not for Gabriel to go. This comment is rather intriguing given that the alchemical theurgy does pertain to a soul's spiritual journey or ascent. Looking closely at the wording some things are clear: 1) The Imam declines to describe a particular station (*maqām*), (rather than the whole journey), which pertains to the Prophet. 2) He refused to give a description of this to the man asking the question, saying 'How should I describe for you . . .' 3) Moreover, the unusual way this comment begins, 'It is said that a man came to Ja'far', indicates that the questioner was not someone Ja'far's circle of students were familiar with. So perhaps it is not at all surprising that the teacher of alchemists refused to provide an extempore description of the whole alchemical journey to an unknown person.

17:65

وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلًا ﴿٦٥﴾

wa kafā bi-Rabbika wakīlan

and sufficient is your Lord as trustee.

Ja'far said: Sufficient is your Lord as trustee for him who trustfully relies on Him and entrusts his affair to Him.¹²⁹

17:70

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ ﴿٧٠﴾

wa la-qaḍ karramnā banī Ādam

verily We have honoured the children of Adam.

Ja'far said: We have honoured the children of Adam with spiritual knowledge.¹³⁰

17:80

أَدْخِلْنِي مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ ﴿٨٠﴾

adkhilnī mudkhalā ṣidqin

*make me enter through the portal of sincerity.*¹³¹

Concerning His [above] words, [it is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad that he said: *Make me enter* therein in the condition of contentment [with You]; *and bring me forth* from it with You content with me (17:80).

He also said: *Bring me forth* from the grave to the standing before You on the path of sincerity with the sincere ones.

And he said: To seek entrustment¹³² is that He be the one entrusted

129 This is reflected in the *du'ah*, current to this day: 'alā'llāhi tawakkaltu wa ilayhi fawwaḍtu amri (upon God I trustfully rely, and to Him I entrust my affair).

130 *Ma'rifah*, 'spiritual knowledge' or 'gnosis', denotes realisatory understanding of spiritual truths.

131 In addition to sincerity, *ṣidq* means faithfulness and truthfulness.

132 *Tawliyah* is the verbal noun from the second form of the verbal root *w-l-y*, which means 'to seek to appoint someone as governor, ruler, manager; to make someone the head of something, to entrust someone

al-Isrā' (The Night Journey)

to, that is to say: 'Make me enter the arena of Your gnosis and bring me forth from the witnessing in gnosis to the witnessing in the Essence.'¹³³

وَأَجْعَلْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ سُلْطَانًا

17:80

wa'jal li min ladunka sulṭānan

and grant me authority directly from Yourself.

Ja'far said [interpreting this direct authority]: A strength in religion for me, through which love is awarded to me.¹³⁴

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ

17:101

wa la-qad ātaynā Mūsā tis'a āyātin

and indeed We gave Moses nine signs.

Ja'far said: Among the signs with which God distinguished him are the making [of Moses for God's own purpose]; the casting of love upon him;¹³⁵ speaking (to him); steadfastness in the locus of the (direct, divine) oration; protection on the Nile; the white hand;¹³⁶ and the giving

with something, to commission someone' etc. 'Entrustment'—as *tawliyah* is rendered in the text—is to be understood in the sense of seeking 'to appoint someone as ruler (*wāli*). . .'

133 The phrases 'the witnessing in gnosis' and 'the witnessing in the essence' render '*mushāhadat al-ma'rifah*' and '*mushāhadat al-dhāt*' which might also be translated 'the witnessing of gnosis' and 'the witnessing of the essence'. The translation opted for in the text conveys better the concepts of witnessing God through knowledge of Him and witnessing Him in and through the essence—which is what the Arabic indicates.

134 *Awjaba li bihā al-mahabbah* could also be rendered 'through which love is made incumbent for me'.

135 This and the casting of love upon Moses, are a reference to 20:39, 41 where God says to Moses: *I cast love from Me upon you, and and I made—or 'took'—you for Myself.* (My thanks again to Feras Hamza for drawing my attention to these references.)

136 One of the possible interpretations of the white hand of Moses is that through it God revealed the hand of Moses's spiritual body—which was

of the tablets [of the Commandments].

17:105

وَبِالْحَقِّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَّلْ

wa bi'l-ḥaqqi anzalnāhu wa bi'l-ḥaqqi¹³⁷ nazala

and in truth We have sent it down, and with truth has it descended.

Ja'far said: The Truth has been sent down upon the hearts of His distinguished ones—from His concealed benefits,¹³⁸ the wonders of His beneficence and the subtleties of His handiwork—that wherewith their inmost selves are illumined and their hearts purified and their exteriors adorned; and with the Truth has He sent down these subtleties upon them.¹³⁹

fully angelic and made of the white light of God. Cf. the discussion at 28:29, on how Moses became an angelic being when he approached the burning bush and the lights of holiness permeated him and the robes of intimacy enveloped him and the divine speech passed through him.

137 These Qur'ānic words are usually taken to be a reference to the Qur'ān itself. See the translations by Muhammad Pickthall, *The Glorious Koran* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980), and Asad, *Message of the Qur'ān*, for example. The phrase *bi'l-ḥaqqi* means both 'with truth' and 'in truth'. The specific use of the divine name *al-Ḥaqq*, as the reference to God in the commentary, should also be kept in mind.

138 *Fawāyid* (*sic.*), plural of *fā'idah* incorporates the meanings of benefit, profit, or advantage; good; knowledge—which God bestows upon a man such that he consequently seeks it and acquires it. See Lane under *f-y-d*. In this connotation of the *fawā'id* being benefits that God gives a person to seek and acquire, we meet again that double blessing: the initial, prevenient blessing of seeking the good and the second, subsequent blessing of acquiring that good.

139 That is, the subtleties and benefits bestowed pertain to the Truth; they are illuminating, purifying, adorning truths from God, the Truth.

﴿ 18 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْكَهْفِ

al-Kahf (The Cave)

18:14 وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

wa rabaṭnā ‘alā qulūbihim idh qāmū fa-qālū rabanā
rabbu'l-samawāti wa'l-ard

*and We fortified their hearts when they stood forth and they say
our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth*

Ja'far said: *when they stood forth*, that is to say, (when) they stood [in prayer]¹⁴⁰ and were dedicated in supplicating Us.

He said: They stand forth for the Truth, through the Truth, with a seemly standing, and call on Him with sincerity, showing Him correct poverty, and have the best recourse to Him; and they say: *our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth*—proud of Him and magnifying Him. Then the Truth repays them for their standing (thus) by responding to their call with the best response and the most subtle oration,¹⁴¹ and He manifests in them signs at which [even] the messengers marvel [as] when He said: *had you beheld them you would surely have turned away from them, fleeing* (18:18).¹⁴²

140 The verb *qāma* comprises several meanings including 'to stand forth, rise up' and 'to stand to perform the canonical prayer'. In addition to dedicated, *akhṣāṣū* means 'they were devoted, faithful, sincere'.

141 *Khiṭāb*: the direct divine oration in the heart.

142 The end of this verse is *and you would have been filled with utter terror because of them*.

18:17

ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ . . . ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ

dhāta'l-yamīni . . . dhāta'l-shimāl

on the right . . . on the left.

Ja'far said: A person's 'right' is his heart and his 'left' is his soul. Divine care encircles them; were it not for that (the person) would perish.

18:18

لَوْ أَطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا

law iṭṭala'ta 'alayhim la-wallayta minhum firāran

had you beheld them you would surely have turned away from them, fleeing.

Ja'far said: If you beheld them from your standpoint, you would surely turn from them in flight; but if you beheld them from the standpoint of the Truth you would surely witness in them the meanings¹⁴³ of (God's) onliness and things divine.

Ja'far said (too): *If you beheld* the traces of Our power and care that were in them and the governance of (Our) custody over them, *you would surely turn from them, fleeing*, that is, you would have been unable to stand steadfast to witness what was in them through awe of Us. Thus the reality of the flight [is that you would be fleeing] from Us not from them, because what showed through them was from Us.¹⁴⁴

Ja'far also said: *If you beheld them from your standpoint* you would have fled; but if you beheld them from My position you would have stayed. That is because the friend of God has states with God [such that] he who looks at (the saint) through his [lower] soul is unable to behold him due to human weakness; (the saint) escapes his seeing (him). Thus did the Prophet ﷺ escape the disbelievers.¹⁴⁵

143 *Ma'ānī*, plural of *ma'nān* (meaning, significance, explanation; but also 'good qualities').

144 This is another testification to the sanctified soul. The sleepers of the cave are taken as saints; their sleep is symbolic of the effacement of their souls in the face of the divine, which is why what is in them is overpowering.

145 This elliptical reference to the Prophet is to be understood on the

18:24

وَأَذْكُر رَبِّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ

wa'dhkur Rabbaka idhā nasīta

and remember your Lord when you have forgotten.

Ja'far said: *When you have forgotten others, then draw close to Me with remembrance.*¹⁴⁶

18:30

إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا ﴿٣٠﴾

innā lā nuḍī'u ajra man aḥsana 'amalan

verily We do not neglect the recompense of one who does good.

Ja'far said: Those who trust God with their provisions and the meeting of their requirements, and who seek [such] provision from His countenance, the seeking of which God has permitted,¹⁴⁷ God truly shall not let their effort in seeking His gratification go to waste. He facilitates for them the way of trusting reliance (upon Him) that they may, thereby, be free of the need for searching and action.¹⁴⁸ Thus He brings them forth from the narrow confines of seeking into the vast openness of trusting reliance (upon Him).

spiritual register: the essential reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of the Prophet escaped the disbelievers because they looked at him through their own qualities, with their human limitations. Had they looked at him through the divine qualities, they would have perceived his true status.

146 *Adhkār* (lit. 'remembrances') includes meditative prayers, repetitions of holy formulae and Qur'ānic phrases, and monologic prayer, involving the invocation of the divine name(s). In this comment, the two aspects of the *shahādah*, the negation and the affirmation, are taken up and elaborated: *nasiyu'l-aghyār* (the forgetting of others is the negation, *nafiy*: 'lā ilāha; no god'); and *dhikru Rabbika* (the remembrance of your Lord is the affirmation, *ithbāt*: 'illā'llāh, except God').

147 In other words, they seek the *ḥalāl* in a manner that is *ḥalāl*.

148 The word translated as 'action' is *ḥaraka*, which has 'movement' as a primary meaning. It also means 'undertaking' and 'enterprise', which may be more pertinent in the context of the comment.

18:46

وَأَلْبَقَيْتُ اللَّصْلِحَاتِ

al-bāqiyātu'l-ṣāliḥāt

enduring good deeds.

[Concerning this phrase] Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said: It is to render unadulterated the affirmation of God's unity, for that subsists in the subsistence of the one who professes God's unity in the subsistence of the unified One (*muwahḥad*).

18:67

قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٦٧﴾

qāla innaka lan tastaṭī'a ma'iya ṣabran

He said: verily you shall never be able to bear patiently with me.

Ja'far said: You are not patient with one who is beneath you [in rank] so how can you be patient with one who is above you?¹⁴⁹

18:84

وَعَاتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا ﴿٨٤﴾

wa ātaynāhu min kulli shay'in sababan

and We gave him a means to everything.

Ja'far said: Verily, God, most high, has made a cause¹⁵⁰ for everything,

149 The Qur'ānic reference is to the mysterious figure of al-Khiḍr who is, on the basis of 18:65, associated with *al-ilm al-ladunī* (direct God-given knowledge). In the context of his meeting with al-Khiḍr, Moses represents the exoteric, the outward, the *zāhir*, while al-Khiḍr represents the esoteric, the inward, the *bāṭin*.

150 *Sabab*, plural *asbāb*, can be variously rendered as means, cause, a rope that extends vertically. For the translation we have made use of both 'means' and 'cause(s)' as renditions suited to the context. In the teaching of Imām Ja'far, *sabab/asbāb* has an important place as the concept of the means or ropes by which the imam is linked to the divine realm. The *asbāb* have a dual function: first, they convey the spiritual support which the imam receives in his inmost self, for instance, his 'ilm, knowledge, which

and He has made the causes the qualities of being. Whoever witnesses¹⁵¹ the cause is detached from the thing caused; while the heart of him who witnesses the making of the thing caused is filled with doubts about the causes. Now when a person's heart is filled with doubt, it comes between him and perception and it veils him from witnessing.

18:101

وَكَانُوا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعًا ﴿١٠١﴾

wa kânū lā yastaṭīʿūna samʿan

and they are incapable of listening.

Jaʿfar al-Šādiq said: They are incapable of listening to the Word of the Truth, or to the traditions of *al-muṣṭafā* (the Prophet) ﷺ, or to the stories of the lives of the righteous guides among the prophets and the truthful ones, because they have not been placed among those who accept the Truth; and so they are prevented from listening to the oration of the Truth.

18:110

وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا ﴿١١٠﴾

wa-lā yushrik bi-ʿibādati Rabbihi aḥadan

and let him not give a share to anything else in the worship of his Lord.

Jaʿfar said: When he stands before his Lord he does not see anything other than Him, nor is there anything other than Him in his concern or endeavour.

includes the correct and complete understanding of the Qurʾān; second, it is the sole means by which God's continual guidance is conveyed to man, through the vehicle of the imam. See further, Crow, *Teaching of Jaʿfar al-Šādiq*, pp. 37–38.

151 *Shahida* (to witness, see, experience personally; to attest, confirm, testify; acknowledge). The implication of all these meanings of the verb needs to be borne in mind.

﴿ 19 ﴾

سُورَةُ مَرْيَمَ

Maryam (Mary)

19:6

وَأَجْعَلُهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا ۝

wa'jalhu Rabbi raḍīyan

and make him, my Lord, content.

Ja'far said: *Content*, that is, content with what occurs [both] for him and against him.¹⁵²

19:8

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ

qāla Rabbi annā yakūnu li ghulāmun

He said, my Lord, how shall I have a son.

Ja'far said: He received the blessing with thanks before it had actually come to pass. *How shall I have a son*—‘through what kindness or deed or obedience could I deserve to draw forth from Yourself this answer [to my prayer], this bounty and generosity save through Your prevenient bounty and blessings upon Your slaves in all circumstances; for if I have despaired of my acts, I have not despaired of Your grace.’

152 In keeping with the tone of the *tafsīr*, this contentment may be understood—be it on the level of external life in the world or on the inner level—to be with whatever occurs to the advantage of the higher self and whatever occurs against the lower soul or ego.

19:23

يَلِيَّتِي مَتَّ قَبْلَ هَذَا

yā laytanī mittu qabla hādhā

O would that I had died before this.

Ja'far said: When she saw no one suitable, no guide, no person of discernment among her folk who might exonerate her against their statements, she (Mary, the Blessed Virgin) said: *O would that I had died before I saw in my people what I see.*

And Ja'far said: *O would that I had died before I saw for my heart any attachment other than God.*¹⁵³

19:52

وَقَرَّبْنَاهُ نَجِيًّا

wa qarrabnāhu najīyan

and We drew him near in secret converse.

Ja'far said: He who has been brought close to God, most high, has three distinguishing characteristics: When God gives him knowledge, He provides him [the means to] act upon that knowledge; and when He has raised him to act upon that knowledge, He gives him faithfulness in his action. And when He appoints him to the company of those who have submitted to God, He bestows in his heart respect for them and he knows that respect for those who believe is a part of respect for God most high.¹⁵⁴

153 The verb *ta'allāqa* has the meanings of attachment in the sense of both 'suspension from' and 'fondness for'. The words of the blessed Virgin are taken and here used to express the sentiment: What is the point of corporeal life if the heart be dead, for to the extent that al-Ḥayy, the Living One's presence (His spirit /life and light /qualities), does not permeate the heart to that extent the heart is dead. Earthly life is all about striving to let the spiritual heart live in the earth of corporeality. Thus this comment picks up again on that major theme of this commentary: striving to become godly by letting God's life and light extend through the heart and soul.

154 Note the progressive purifications: knowledge granted; action that expresses this knowledge; sincerity in those actions; humble respectfulness

19:85

يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ

yawma nahshuru'l-muttaqin

the day We gather the God-aware.

Ja'far said: The God-aware [person] is he who is wary of everything other than God; and the God-aware is he who is wary of following his desires.¹⁵⁵ Whoever is characterised thus is carried by God, flanked by light, to the Presence of witnessing, so that the people at the assembly¹⁵⁶ might know his place among them.

19:93 إِنَّ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتَى الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا ﴿٩٣﴾

(in kullu man fi'l-samawāti wa'l-arḍi) illā ātī'l-Raḥmāni 'abdan;

(there is none in the heavens nor the earth) but comes to the Gracious as a slave.

Concerning His (above) words, [it is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad that he said: (. . .) *but comes to the Gracious as a slave*, either poor and wretched through his own qualities or noble through (and) corroborating the qualities of the Truth.

in the knowledge of qualitative oneness.

155 It is difficult to convey in a single English word all that is implied by *hawan* (pl. *ahwā'*), rendered here as 'desires'. One should bear in its other meanings: passions, whims, longings, pleasures, inclinations.

156 The Arabic phrase *ahl al-mashhad* ('the people at the assembly') captures, in a way that English does not, the connotation of an assembly of 'witnessers,' or those blessed with '*mushāhadah*', witnessing. Both *mashhad* and *mushāhadah* derive from the verbal root *sh-h-d* (to see with one's own eyes, to witness, to experience personally, to attend, to be present).

﴿ 20 ﴾

سُورَةُ طه

Ṭā' Hā'

20:3

إِلَّا تَذَكِيرًا لِّمَن يَخْشَى ﴿٣﴾

illā tadhkiratan liman yakhshā

but only as a reminder for him who fears.

Ja'far said: God sent down the Qur'ān as a spiritual counsel for those who fear, as a mercy for the believers and as an intimacy for the lovers. Thus He said: *We did not send down the Qur'ān to you that you should be troubled. But only as a reminder for him who fears* (20:2-3).

20:11-12

فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ يَمْوَسَىٰ ﴿١١﴾ إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ

fa-lammā atāhā nūdiya yā Mūsā. Innī anā Rabbuka

then when he came to it, he was summoned: O Moses. Verily I am I, your Lord.¹⁵⁷

Ja'far said: It was said to Moses ﷺ 'How did you know that the call was the call of the Truth?' He said: 'Because it effaced me and pervaded me; it was as though every hair of mine was addressed by a call from all directions and it was as though they, of themselves, expressed a response. Then, when the lights of awe had pervaded me and the lights of glory and omnipotence had surrounded me, I knew that I was being addressed from the precinct of the Truth. Since the beginning of the

¹⁵⁷ *Innī Anā Rabbuka*, is often rendered with the likes of 'Verily I, I am your Lord.' Carl Ernst translates it: 'I am I, your Lord' which we feel conveys more accurately the tremendous nature of this phrase. See Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, p. 10.

oration was [the phrase] *Innī*; verily I, followed immediately by [the word] *Anā*; I—I knew that no one has the right to refer to himself with these two phrases together, consecutively, except for the Truth. I marvelled; and that was the locus of effacement. I said: “You are You, who never ceased and never ceases; Moses has no standing with You nor has he the courage to speak unless You allow him to subsist through Your eternal subsistence and (unless) You qualify him with Your character so that You are wholly the orator and the one addressed.” Then He said: “None bears My oration other than Me, nor answers Me except Me—I am the speaker and the one spoken to, while you are in the middle, a corporeal form¹⁵⁸ in whom lies the locus of the oration.”

20:12

فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ

fa'khla' na'layka

so put off your two sandals.

Ja'far said [glossing this phrase]: So excise attachments from yourself, for you are under Our eye.¹⁵⁹

158 *Shabḥun* means a bodily, corporeal form (see Lane); it also means apparition, indistinct shape, ghost, phantom, spirit, figure, person (see Wehr).

159 *Bi-ā'yuninā* (lit., 'in Our eyes'); this Qur'ānic phrase, which also occurs at 11:37, is rendered by some as 'in Our view' (see Lane under *ayn*). In effect, the phrase denotes being under God's gaze, but since I use this latter to render *nazar*, I have opted to reflect the difference of Arabic terms. To engage in *ta'wil*, the use of the word '*alā'iq* (attachments) brings to mind another pertinent word from the same verbal root: '*ulayqah*, as in the phrase '*ulayqat Mūsā* (see Wehr at '*-l-q*), a reference to the burning bush. When Moses is at the '*ulayqah*, where he is fully cognisant of being under God's gaze, where he is fully aware of God's eternal Presence, there is no possibility of any attachment ('*alā'iq*) to other than God, just as there simply cannot be any water in flaming fire.

20:18

وَلِي فِيهَا مَكْرِبٌ أُخْرَى ﴿١٨﴾

wa liya fiḥā ma'āribu ukhrā

and I have other uses for it.

Ja'far said [glossing *other uses*]: Various benefits, the greatest benefit for me in it being Your addressing me with the words: *And what is that in your right hand O Moses?* (20:17).

20:27

وَأَحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّن لِّسَانِي ﴿٢٧﴾

wa'ḥlul 'uqdatan min lisānī

and undo the knot from my tongue.

Ja'far said: When God spoke to Moses, He tied back his tongue from talk with other than Him. Then, when He commanded him to go to Pharaoh, he whispered to Him with his inmost self and said: *And undo the knot from my tongue* that I may fulfil (Your) command in the most perfect tone.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ The word *maqām* is the name for musical modes and can mean, literally, 'tonality,' implying both the sound quality of the voice and the style of discourse. The spiritual significance of 'the most perfect tone' (*atamm maqām*) is that the tone is purely divine with no interference from the individual mouthpiece. In other words, when God spoke to him, the attribute of speech in Moses was divine; and Moses's request was that after the loosening of the knot from his tongue, which here means after individual, human speech was restored to him, the attribute of individual, human speech in Moses would not interfere in his delivery of the divine message. For more on the spiritual significance of sound see J. Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), and S. Pearce, *Alchemy of Voice* (London: Hodder Mobius, 2005). In addition, *maqām* means 'standing, position, rank,' with the following possible rendition of the Arabic phrase *atamm maqām*: 'that I may fulfil (Your) command from the most/more perfect standing.' The same interpretation holds—for the most perfect standing is the one in which the divine qualities flow through Moses unimpeded by his individual human attributes.

20:33

كَيْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

kay nusabbiḥaka kathīran

so that we praise You much.

Said Ja'far: It was said to Moses: 'You consider your praise of Me much and that you utter *lā ilāha illā'llāh* and *Allāhu Akbar* much and you have forgotten Our initial graces upon you in protecting you on the river and restoring you to your mother and nurturing you in the chambers of your enemy. And much more than all this, Our oration with you and Our speaking to you; and more than that, Our notification that We have made you for Us.'¹⁶¹

20:82

وَإِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِّمَن تَابَ

wa inni la-ghaffārun liman tāba

and verily I am indeed forgiving to he who repents.

Ja'far said: *And verily I am [indeed] forgiving to he who repents*, 'to him who has recourse to Me in his affairs and does not turn to anyone other than Me'; *and believes*, 'and who witnesses Me and does not witness alongside with Me anyone other than Me'; *and who does good*, 'who dedicates his heart faithfully and sincerely to Me'; *and thereafter follows right guidance*, 'and thereafter never opposes the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ'.¹⁶²

161 The comment emphasises that man's thanks and praise, even that of the prophets, can never equal God's graciousness, nor is there ever parity between the graces bestowed and the praise offered.

162 On the spiritual register, the Sunnah of the *nabī* is perfect receptivity to God ('*ubūdiyyah*') and the manifestation of the divine qualities in the cosmos. It is to be in harmony with the inner *nabī* or the 'imam of your being' (*imām wujūdika*). For the Shī'ah this harmony with the microcosmic imam coincides with being in harmony with the macrocosmic imam.

20:115

وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ آدَمَ مِن قَبْلُ فَنَسِيَ

wa la-qad 'ahidnā ilā Ādama min qablu fa-nasiya

and We had indeed entrusted a pledge to Adam before, but then he forgot.

Ja'far said: We entrusted a pledge to Adam that he not forget Us in (any) state, but he forgot Us and was preoccupied with the garden. Then he was tried with transgressing the prohibition. That [transgression occurred] because the bliss distracted him from the Benefactor. Thus he fell from the blessing through the trial and was expelled from the bliss and the garden so that he would know that the bliss lies in being close to the Benefactor, not in the enjoyment of eating and drinking.

20:121

وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَىٰ

wa 'aṣā Ādamu Rabbahu fa-ghawā

and Adam disobeyed his Lord and thus went astray.

Ja'far said: He viewed paradise and its bliss with his eye and so it was proclaimed against him, until the day of judgement: *and Adam disobeyed his Lord*. Had he looked at it with his heart, a complete abandonment would have been proclaimed against him for all eternity. But then God had compassion on him and was merciful to him, (as seen) in His words: *then his Lord chose him and relented towards him and guided (him)* (20:122).

20:124

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي

wa man a'raḍa 'an dhikrī

but whoever turns away from My remembrance.

Concerning this verse, Ja'far said: If they knew Me they would not turn away from Me. Whoever turns away from Me, him I return to [a state of] preoccupation with the species and beings appropriate to him.

﴿ 21 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ

al-Anbiyā' (The Prophets)

21:83 ﴿ وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ ۗ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّحِيمِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

wa Ayyūba idh nādā Rabbahu annī massaniya'l-ḍurru wa anta arḥamu'l-rāhimīn

and Job, when he cried out to his Lord that 'Verily adversity has befallen me and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful'.

Ja'far said: These words emerged from him, not as a complaint, but as part of his secret converse [with God] seeking a response from the Truth that would reassure him.

Ja'far [also] said: When God subjected Job to the trial and lengthened its duration, Satan came to Job and said: 'If you wish to be free from this trial then bow down to me once.' Upon hearing this Job said: *Satan has touched me with disease* (38:41). And (he said): '*Adversity has befallen me* in that Satan hopes for me to bow down to him.'

Ja'far also said: When Job had attained a high degree in the trial and he found it sweet, the trial became [as it were] a home for him. Then when his soul was at ease in (the trial) and he dwelt calmly with it, people extolled him for his patience and praised him. But he said: *adversity has befallen me*, for the loss of patience.

[It is further related] from Ja'far concerning His words: *adversity has befallen me*, that he said: Revelation was withheld from Job for forty days, [which made him] fear being abandoned by his Lord and being cut off [from Him]; thus he said: *adversity has befallen me*.

21:89

وَزَكَرِيَّا إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا

wa Zakariyā idh nādā Rabbahu, Rabbi lā tadharnī fardan

and Zakariyā, when he called to his Lord, my Lord do not leave me alone.¹⁶³

Ja'far said [in paraphrase]: Do not make me one of those who has no way to secret converse with You or to adorn [myself] with the ornaments of service to You.

He [also] said [concerning] *alone*: [That is, separated] from You, there being for me no access to You.



163 *Fardan* ('solitary, alone'). English translations of the Qur'ān often render this term as 'childless,' given the Qur'ānic context. I prefer the more general rendition, especially as the comments imply that Zakariyā is saying, 'Do not leave me alone, separated in Being without any means of direct access to You.'

﴿ 22 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْحَجِّ

al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage)

22:2

وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَرَىٰ

wa tarā'l-nāsa sukārā

and you see mankind [behaving] as [though they are] intoxicated.

Ja'far said: They are intoxicated by what they see of the unfolding of [His] glory, the sovereignty of [His] omnipotence and the pavillions of [His] grandeur; until the prophets resort to saying 'my soul, my soul!'

22:26

وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِي لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ ﴿٢٦﴾

wa ṭahhir baytiya li'l-ṭā'ifin wa'l-qā'imīna wa'l-rukka'i al-sujūd

and purify My house for those who circumambulate and those who stand and those who bow and prostrate [to God]

Concerning His [above] words, [it is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad [that] he said: Purify yourself/your soul from keeping company with those who are opposed¹⁶⁴ [to the Truth] and from associating with other than the Truth. *And those who stand* with [a] mind [like that] of the sages standing with Him upon the carpets of intimacy and service. *and those who bow and prostrate [to God]*, [that is,] the foremost imams, who return to the beginning from the utmost end.

164 *Mukhālifin* includes the meaning of 'those who are inconsistent and/or incompatible (with the Truth)'. It is from *kh-l-f*, the same verbal root as *mukhālafah*.

22:28

لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ

li-yashhadū manāfi'a lahum

that they may witness [things that are] of benefit to them.

Ja'far said: (This is a reference to) what they witness, in that place, of the beneficence of the Truth, in that He grants them the success of witnessing that tremendous assembly. Furthermore, their benefits (are) the increase, blessings, and responses (to prayers) that are promised to them for it [i.e., promised to them as their due upon their performance of the pilgrimage].¹⁶⁵

22:34

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

wa bashshiri'l-mukhbitin

and give glad tidings to the humble.

Concerning the (above) words of God, [it is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad [that] he said [defining *the humble*]: Whoever obeys Me and moreover fears Me in his obedience and is humble for My sake. *And give glad tidings to him whose heart trembles with an ardent longing to meet Me; and give glad tidings to him who remembers Me when alighting in My neighbourhood;*¹⁶⁶ *and give glad tidings to him whose eyes shed tears in fear of being left separated from Me. Give them (all) the glad tidings that My mercy surpasses My anger.*¹⁶⁷

165 *Hajj*: the pilgrimage to the Holy Ka'bah in Mecca, which every Muslim is required to perform at least once in his/her life, if possible. The physical pilgrimage is an ectype of the spiritual journey of the soul. However, the whole of an incarnate person's life is the ongoing manifestation on earth of that soul's journey in the spiritual realm—although the correspondences are not always easily recognised or understood correctly.

166 That is, at the holy house; but also more generally, when alighting in the vicinity or environs of God's direct Presence, for instance, at the times of the canonical rites.

167 *Sabaqat rahmatī ghaḍabī*, a *ḥadīth qudsī* (a sacred saying). The *aḥadīth qudsiyah* are a distinct category of the traditions from the Prophet. Although uttered on the tongue of the Prophet they are of purely divine origin; God

(Ja'far) also said (explaining the nature of the *glad tidings*):
Authority in intercession.¹⁶⁸

(Ja'far) also said: *Give glad tidings* to those who long to gaze at My face.

(Ja'far) also said: The humble person, in his humility, is like the earth that bears all dirt and conceals every impurity and all dross.¹⁶⁹

22:78

فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٧٨﴾

fa-ni'ma'l-mawlā wa ni'ma'l-naṣīr

a perfect Patron and a perfect Granter of victory.

Ja'far said: [God is] the perfect helper (*mu'in*) for those who turn to Him for help; and *the perfect Granter of victory* to those who seek His assistance.

is the Speaker—but they are not part of the Qur'ān. Concerning *sabaqat*, rendered above as 'surpasses', the meanings of 'precedence', 'forestalling,' and 'outstripping' are essential to the verb, and are, clearly, all meant to be understood in this phrase. God's mercy comes *before* His anger as it is an essential aspect of God's nature in a way that anger is not; His mercy *forestalls* or restrains His legitimate anger; His mercy *overrides* His anger.

168 The humble are to be given glad tidings of receiving the power/ authority (*mulk*) of intercession for others.

169 This comment is susceptible of more than one interpretation. 1) That the humble do not react except peaceably when they encounter the *daran* of others' misdeeds and mistakes, and that when they witness the impurities and shortcomings of others, they do not reveal them; with regard to their own impurities and shortcomings—they do not flaunt them, correctly being ashamed of them. 2) That the humble person is the one who has been brought to the state of 'universal man' and that, as a microcosmic being, they bear the spiritual pollution of all on earth in that they seek to cleanse the whole earth, i.e., to wash away the sins of the world by offering to God their prayers and righteous acts on behalf of the whole collectivity of souls on earth. This links back to the glad tidings of the authority to intercede for others.

﴿ 24 ﴾

سُورَةُ النُّورِ

al-Nūr (The Light)

24:30 قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ

qul li'l-mu'minīna yaghuḍḍū min abṣārihim

tell the believers that they [should] lower their gaze.

Concerning this verse, Ja'far al-Šādiq said: Lowering the gaze from that which is forbidden and from that which is not related to the Truth is an obligation upon the slaves [of God]. The injunction of the obligation is to avert one's thought(s) from all that which the slave regards as legitimate, and its meaning is the protection of the heart and its thoughts from gazing at Being, lest through that it (the heart) be banished [from God's Presence], (or be) forgetful [of God], (or) veiled [from God]—even though (such thoughts) be permissible in the manifest [realm].

24:35 ۞ اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Allāhu nūru'l-samāwāti wa'l-ard

God is the light of the heavens and the earth.

Ja'far b. Muḥammad said: The lights are varied: the first of them is the light of the protection of the heart; then there is the light of fear; then the light of hope; then the light of recollection; then there is perception through the light of knowledge; then the light of shame; then there is the light of the sweetness of faith; then the light of surrender; then the light of goodness; then there is the light of blessing; then the light of grace; then the light of favours; then the light of generosity; then the

light of compassion; then the light of the heart; then there is the light of encompassment; then the light of awe; then the light of bewilderment; then the light of life; then the light of intimacy; then the light of integrity; then there is the light of quiescence; then there is the light of tranquillity.¹⁷⁰ Then there is the light of sublimity; then the light of majesty; then the light of power; then the light of strength;¹⁷¹ then there is the light of Godhood; then the light of the (divine) onliness; then there is the light of the (divine) singularity; then is the light of (God's) eternal future; then the light of beginningless and endless eternity; then there is the light of permanence; then the light of (God's) eternal past; then the light of eternal subsistence; then there is the light of totality; then there is the light of the Ipseity.¹⁷²

Each one of these lights has its people; it has its state and its locus. All (the lights) are from the lights of the Truth, which God, most high, has mentioned in His words: *God is the light of the heavens and the earth*. Each one of His slaves has a drinking place at one of these lights; and it might be that (a slave) has an apportioned lot from two lights or three. These lights are never perfected¹⁷³ except for *al-muṣṭafā*,

170 The lights so far pertain either to God in His relationship with the soul (protection, generosity, compassion, grace, etc.) or to states of soul that open the soul to the divine influx (fear, hope, shame, surrender). Now come the purely divine lights—the qualities pertaining to God in Himself—of which the other lights are extensions.

171 Paul Nwyia notes in his apparatus that one of the manuscripts has a variant reading of *qūwah* (strength), instead of the repetition of *jalāl*, majesty.

172 Since the full list is introduced by the phrase *awwaluhā* ('the first of which'), followed by . . . *thumma* . . . *thumma* . . . ('then . . . then . . .'), it might seem that there is a strict order of ascendance. However, the list may be taken as offering a schema of categories some of which are on the same level while others are self-evidently higher—especially if the relevant Arabic word is read as *thamma* which means 'there', and, in this context, 'there is'. In our English text, we read *thumma* as 'then', while the words 'there is' are due to the nominative case of the phrases.

173 The Arabic verb *tamma* means 'to complete, perfect, to finish, to accomplish'. Thus the phrase *lan tatimm li* could have been translated as: 'These lights are never accomplished (or attained) except by the Chosen One'. The rendition given in the body text has the benefit of conveying the receptive nature of the perfection, which the comment itself goes on to point out. Thus the lights are perfected for the perfect 'abd, the perfectly receptive one, by God the Light Himself. The Prophet here, as the perfect

the Chosen One ﷺ—for he stands with God most high through the condition of having perfected slavehood and love. For He is light, and he from his Lord is in possession of light.¹⁷⁴

[It is also related] from Ja‘far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq, concerning this verse, [that] he said: [God] has illumined the heavens with the light of the stars and the sun and the moon; and He has illumined the earths with the light of the plants: the red ones, the white, the yellow, and others; and He has illumined the heart of the believer with the light of faith and surrender. He has illumined the paths¹⁷⁵ to God with the light of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, and ‘Alī ﷺ—it is for this reason that the Prophet ﷺ said: My companions are like the stars—whomever of them you choose to follow, you shall be rightly-guided.

[Ja‘far] also said, concerning this verse: (God) illumined the heavens through four: Jibrā‘īl (Gabriel), Mīkā‘īl (Michael), Isrāfil (Seraphiel), and ‘Izrā‘īl (Azrael) ﷺ and He illumined the earth through Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, and ‘Alī ﷺ.

24:35

لَا شَرْقِيَّةَ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةَ

lā sharqīyatin wa-lā gharbīyatin

neither eastern nor western.

Concerning this verse, Ja‘far said: Neither fear which imposes despair, nor hope which brings about an extensive delight. Thus he stands [balanced] between fear and hope.

muṣtafā, is the *insān kāmil*, the perfect/complete human.

174 The choice of words here recalls the Qur’ānic phrase: *fa-huwa ‘alā nūrin min Rabbihi*; and so he is in possession of light from/through his Lord (39:22). ‘*Alā nūrin* has been rendered here as ‘in possession of light’ since ‘*alā* has ‘in possession of’ as one of its usages. See Wehr at ‘*a-l-y*.

175 The word *ḥuruq* immediately evokes the later Sufi orders, all of which trace their lineages back to one of the aforementioned companions of the Prophet ﷺ.

24:37 رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

rijālun lā tulhīhim tijāratun wa-lā bay'un 'an dhikri'llāh

men whom neither trade nor commerce distract from the remembrance of God.

Said Ja'far: In reality, these are the (true) men from among men, for God, most high, has preserved their inmost selves from returning to that which is other than Him and from noticing other than Him. Thus (neither) the trade of this lower world, its blessings and attraction, nor the hereafter and its rewards divert them from God, most high—for they are in the gardens of intimacy and the meadows of remembrance.

24:39 وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَلُوهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ

wa'lladhīna kafarū a'māluhum ka-sarābin

as for those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage.

Ja'far said: The tyranny of the company of other than God has overshadowed them and so there is something like a mirage over their hearts;¹⁷⁶ it does not benefit them and it does not lead them to the Truth. Were they to find the way to God, the secret reaches of their souls would be illumined and thus would be as God, most high, has said: *light upon light* (24:35).

176 Tyranny (*zulm*); overshadowed (*azallat*); both the Arabic terms have the attendant connotation of darkness—a wordplay that English cannot quite reproduce. *Zalama* in particular means both 'to sin or transgress' and 'to darken or oppress'. The deeds of those who deny God by veiling the lights of His qualities through their *kufir* cast the dark shadow of their own contradictory qualities over their hearts.

24:63 لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا

lā taj'alū du'a'a'l-rasūli baynakum ka-du'a'i ba'dikum ba'dan

*do not take the summons of the Messenger among you as
(though it were only like) the summons of one of you to another.*

Ja'far said: The sacred things¹⁷⁷ follow one upon the other. He who breaches the sanctity of creatures has breached the sanctity of the believers. He who breaches the sanctity of the believers has breached the sanctity of the saints. He who breaches the sanctity of the saints has breached the sanctity of the prophet; and he who has breached the sanctity of the prophet has breached the sanctity of God.¹⁷⁸ He who does not respect the sanctity of God, most high, has entered the divan of the wretched damned. The best of good morals is to safeguard respect for the sacred.¹⁷⁹ He from whose heart respect for the sacred has fallen, becomes careless about the religious obligations and the customs (of the prophets).¹⁸⁰

177 *Hurumāt* (sing. *ḥurmah*) has been rendered as 'sacred things' and 'respect for the sacred', as the word encompasses both the meanings of sanctity, holiness, sacredness and respect, reverence, veneration. *Ḥurmah* is rendered as sanctity. See Wehr at *ḥurmah* under *ḥ-r-m*.

178 This comment demarcates graphically the ontological empathy and continuity of God with His creatures—since the sanctity of God in Himself, Beyond Being, is absolutely inviolable.

179 See Qur'ān 4:139; 10:65; 35:10, where it is stated *inna'l-'izzata li'llāhi jamī'an*; verily, all dignity/honour belongs to God. For 'izzah see Asad, *Message of the Qur'ān*, 4:139; 10:65 and note 86.

180 *Hurumāt* is also applied specifically to the divinely ordained prohibitions and the inviolable ordinances of God. In this sentence, the imam connects respect for the sacred with upholding God's ordinances. The concept of 'respect for the sacred' being the best of morals and manners is of great importance in later Sufism. *Ādāb al-sulūk*, 'Etiquette of the Spiritual Journey' is a whole discipline within Sufism. Ibn 'Arabī discusses the subject in depth in his treatment of *Adab* which has been called 'one of the foundations of his hermeneutics'. See Denis Grill, 'Adab and Revelation,' pp. 228–263 in *Muhyiddin b. 'Arabi, A Commemorative Volume*, ed. Hirtenstein & Tiernan (Rockport, MA: Element Books, 1993).

﴿ 25 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْفُرْقَانِ

al-Furqān (The Criterion)

25:7 مَالٍ هَذَا الرُّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ

mā li-hādha'l-rasūli ya'kulu'l-ṭa'āma wa yamshī fī'l-aswāq

what is this Messenger that he eats food and walks in the markets.

Ja'far said: They blamed the messengers for (their) humility and happiness and they did not realise that (the humility and happiness) was most perfect due to their awe (of God) and (was) a most strong manifestation of the reverence due to them. That [ignorant attitude] was because (those who blamed) had witnessed in (the messengers) only the external aspect of (their) nature. Had they witnessed in them the special characteristics of their privileges, it would have kept them back from their words *what is this Messenger . . .*

25:20 وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا إِنَّهُمْ لَيَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ

wa mā arsalnā qablaka mina'l-mursalīna illā innahum
la-ya'kulūna'l-ṭa'ām

and We have not sent before you messengers except that they ate food.

Ja'far said: That is: God, most high, never sent a messenger without revealing his external aspect to mankind through the messenger's being with them in the human condition; but He kept (the messenger's) inmost self from noticing them and from being preoccupied with them—for the inmost selves of the prophets are in the (divine) grasp

and do not in any state disengage from the witnessing.

25:61

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا

tabāraka'lladhī ja'ala fi'l-samā'i burūjan

blessed is He who placed in the sky stellar mansions.

[It is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad, concerning [the above] words [of God] ﷻ (that) he said: The sky (*samā'*) has been so named because of its height. Now the heart is a sky because through faith and gnosis it rises¹⁸¹ without limit or end. Just as the one known has no limit to Him, even so, knowledge of Him has no limit.

The mansions of the sky are the orbits of the sun and moon. They are Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces. There are mansions in the heart too and they are the mansion of faith, the mansion of gnosis, the mansion of the intellect, the mansion of certainty, the mansion of submission, the mansion of goodness, the mansion of trusting reliance upon God, the mansion of fear, the mansion of hope, the mansion of love, the mansion of yearning, and the mansion of rapture. The continued well-being of the heart is through these twelve mansions just as through the twelve [zodiacal] mansions, Aries, Taurus, etc., is the well-being of the transient realm and its folk.

25:63

الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا

alladhīna yamshūna 'alā'l-arḍi hawnan

those who walk upon the earth gently.

Ja'far said: [*Those who walk*] without pride or conceit, without swaggering pompously but with humility and the Peace (of the Presence of God) and dignity and serenity; of good moral character;¹⁸² and of

181 The verbal root *s-m-w* from which the words *samā'* (sky) and *yasmū* (rises) are derived, means 'to be high'.

182 *Husn al-khulq* also comprises the meanings of 'well-mannered' and 'good-natured'. Good manners are, after all, rooted in virtue.

joyful countenance—even as the Prophet ﷺ described the believers when he said: ‘Gentle and mild, like a compliant camel;¹⁸³ if it is led, it goes along, and if it is made to kneel upon a rock, it kneels down.’ That is due to what they have observed of the exaltedness of the Truth and His awesomeness, and what they have witnessed of His magnificence and majesty; because of this their spirits are humble and their souls have surrendered, for it imposes humility and submissiveness upon them.

25:71

يَتُوبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَتَابًا ﴿٧١﴾

yatūbu ilāʾllāhi matāban

he repents to God with true repentance.

Jaʿfar said: He does not resort to the Truth who has recourse to other than Him. (Only when) he resorts to God and none other than Him, (both) externally and inwardly, only then is he repentant to Him.

25:72

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ

waʾlladhīna lā yashhadūnaʾl-zūr¹⁸⁴

and those who do not testify to falsehood.

Jaʿfar said: *falsehood* is [a reference to] the desirous demands¹⁸⁵ of the

183 *Anf* means ‘pride’, but here it denotes self-respect. *Jamal anf* describes a camel that does not require being shouted at or hit to do what its master requires of it; like a camel led by the nose. (Thanks to Feras Hamza for pointing this out.)

184 The word *zūr* means ‘falsehood’ not only in a general sense but also in the very specific sense of something false that is taken as lord or worshipped in place of God. Thus the phrase *lā yashhadūnaʾl-zūr*; *who do not testify to falsehood* means: ‘not bearing false witness’, but also ‘not testifying to false gods’. This sense is also evoked by the word *yashhadūna* itself, which comes from the same verbal root as the word *shahādah* (the Islamic testimonial of faith: there is no god but God). The lower soul (*nafs*), then, is a false god.

185 *Amānī* (desires, demands, claims, longings) is the plural of *umniyah* from the root verb *manā*.

al-Furqān (The Criterion)

lower soul and the following of its caprices.

25:74

هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ

hab lanā min azwājinā wa dhurriyātinā qurrata a'yunin

grant us joy through our spouses and our offspring.

Ja'far said: Grant us in our spouses help in obeying You and in our children a balm that we may be delighted by them.¹⁸⁶



186 A possible alternative translation, taking the *min* as redundant, and reading *barrahum* instead of *barhamun*, is as follows: 'God grant us spouses that help in obeying You and the most dutiful of children, that we may be delighted by them.'

﴿ 26 ﴾

سُورَةُ الشُّعَرَاءِ

al-Shu‘arā’ (The Poets)

26:50 قَالُوا لَا ضَيْرٌ إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

qālū lā ḍayra; innā ilā Rabbīnā munqalibūn

they said: No harm; verily to our Lord we return.

Ja‘far said: Whoever feels a trial in love, is no lover; indeed, whoever observes a trial in love is no lover. Indeed, whoever does not delight in a trial in love, is no lover. Do you not see how, when the first stages of love came to the magicians, their [extrinsic] fortunes abandoned them yet it was easy for them to sacrifice their lives in the witnessing of their Beloved; and so they said: *no harm*.

26:62 قَالَ كَلَّا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٦٢﴾

qāla kallā; inna ma‘īya Rabbī sa-yahdīni¹⁸⁷

He said: Never; for verily my Lord is with me, He will guide me.

Ja‘far said: Whoever is in the care of the Truth and under His protection is not affected by anything among [secondary] causes nor is he alarmed by the dangers of the way¹⁸⁸ for he is under the protecting shelter of the Truth and in His grasp. As for him who is [engaged] in witnessing (God) and is in [the divine] Presence, how should he be affected by that which proceeds from him or redounds to him? Do you not see how

187 Nwyia has *yahdīnī*, with the final long i.

188 *Mawārid* is the plural of both *mawrid* and *mawridah* (watering place; a road or way to water). See Lane under *w-r-d*.

God has related of him to whom He spoke, in His words: *for verily my Lord is with me, He will guide me.*

26:80

وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ ﴿٨٠﴾

wa idhā maridtu fa-huwa yashfini

and when I am ill He heals me.

Ja'far said: And when I am sickened by the sight of my deeds and my states, He heals me with the reminder of (His) grace and generosity.

26:114

وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾

wa mā anā bi-ṭāridi'l-mu'minīn

and I am not [one] to reject the believers.

Ja'far said: I do not give the lie to the truthful.

26:127

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ

wa mā as'alukum 'alayhi min ajrin

and I do not ask of you any recompense for it.

Ja'far said: Ambition is removed from all the messengers, because of its baseness. Thus every messenger gives notification of himself with His words:

26:212

إِنَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّمْعِ لَمَعْزُولُونَ ﴿٢١٢﴾

innahum 'ani'l-sam'i la-ma'zūlūn

verily they are cut off from hearing.

Ja'far said: This is to hear spiritual counsel but pay no heed to it.

26:220

إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٢٢٠﴾

innahu huwa'l-Samī'u'l-'Alīm

verily He, even He is the Hearer, the Knower.

Said Ja‘far: *The Hearer* is He who hears the secret converse of the inmost self and *the Knower* is He who knows the volitions¹⁸⁹ of the conscience.



189 In addition to ‘volitions,’ *irādāt* means ‘intentions, decrees, desires, wishes.’ In this comment, *al-asrār* and *al-ḍamāyir* (for *al-ḍamā’ir*) have been rendered in the singular as ‘the inmost self’ and ‘the conscience.’ Alternatively, the definite article could have been dropped: ‘inmost selves’ and ‘consciences’.

سُورَةُ النَّملِ

al-Naml (The Ants)

27:21

لَأُعَذِّبَنَّهُ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا

la-u'adhhdhibannahu 'adhāban shadīdan

I shall indeed chastise him with a severe chastisement.

Ja'far said [glossing]: Indeed I shall try him with a dispersed inmost self.¹⁹⁰

27:34

إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا

inna'l-mulūka idhā dakhalū qaryatan afsadūhā

verily, kings, when they enter a town, destroy it.

Ja'far said: (In this) He alluded to the hearts of the believers. For when gnosis enters hearts, it removes from them all demands and all desires—so that there is no place in the heart for anything other than God most high.

¹⁹⁰ These Qur'ānic words are those spoken by Solomon, concerning the hoopoe who was not present at Solomon's great gathering. The comment treats the hoopoe as a symbol of man. On this basis, an equation is being made between a dispersed inmost self and the chastisement for not being present at the King's gathering; dispersion being the opposite of recollection. In recollection one is gathered together in the presence of the King; in dispersion one is separated from Him and scattered far and wide. There is a connection with 29:21, where the chastisement is a dispersal or division of concern, while here it is far more severe: the dispersal or division of the inmost self.

27:36

بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بِهَدْيَتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

bal antum bi-hadiyatikum tafraḥūn

rather it is you who exult and delight in your gift.

Ja'far said: In the sight of God and His prophets and His friends, the world is too small for them to delight in it or sorrow over it.¹⁹¹

27:50

وَمَكَرُوا مَكْرًا وَمَكَرْنَا مَكْرًا

wa makarū makran wa makarnā makran

so they plotted a plot and We plotted a plot.

Ja'far said: God's plot is more hidden than the crawling of an ant upon a black rock on a pitch-black night.

27:61

أَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا

am-man ja'ala'l-arḍa qarāran

or He who made the earth stable

Concerning these words of His, Ja'far said: That is to say, He who made the hearts of His friends the dwelling place of His spiritual knowledge and placed therein rivers of increase from His beneficence in every breath, and consolidated them with the mountains of trusting reliance upon God, and beautified them with the lights of faithfulness, certainty, and love.

191 This should not be misunderstood as a lack of concern for the well-being of creation. Rather, it is a lack of worldliness; an inner detachment through transcendence.

27:61

وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا

wa ja'ala bayna'l-bahrayn ḥājizan

and placed between the two seas a barrier.

That is to say: between the heart and the lower soul, lest the lower soul should overwhelm the heart with its darknesses and thus oppress it. So He placed God-given success and the intellect (*ʿaql*) as the barrier between the two.

27:88

وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ

wa tarā'l-jibāla taḥsabuhā jāmidatan wa hia tammurru marra al-sahābi

and you see the mountains which you deem rigid (and motionless) and they pass along as do the clouds.

Ja'far said: You see the soul *rigid (and motionless)* when the spirit goes forth;¹⁹² while the spirit enters deep into *Firdaws*,¹⁹³ betaking itself to its place under the divine throne.

Ja'far [also] said: The light of the hearts of those who profess God's unity and the restlessness of the plaintive moans of those who yearn *pass along as do the clouds* until they see the Truth—then they rest at peace.

192 The soul is a corpse when the individuated and differentiated spirit within it sheds it; just as the body is a corpse without the soul. This comment emphasises that the enlivenment of the soul lies in the presence of the divine Spirit within it. To the extent that the divine permeates the soul, to that extent is the soul alive.

193 Speaking of a spirit that has a place under the divine throne means that *Firdaws* is the realm of the undifferentiated but individuated spirits that are the archetypes, the realities (*ḥaqā'iq*), of all beings. See also Abū Bakr Sirāj ad-Dīn, *The Book of Certainty* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1992), pp. 6–7.

﴿ 28 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْقَصَصِ

al-Qaṣaṣ (The Story)

وَأَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ فَارِغًا ۚ إِن كَادَتْ لَتُبْدِي بِهِ لَوْلَا

28:10

أَن رَّبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قَلْبِهَا

wa aṣbaḥa fu'ādu ummi Mūsā fārighan; in kādat la-tubdī bihi lawlā an rabaṭnā 'alā qalbihā

and the mind of Moses' mother became desolate; she almost disclosed him, had We not strengthened her heart.

Ja'far said: The breast is the fount of consent; the heart is the fount of certainty; the mind¹⁹⁴ is the fount of perception; the conscience is the fount of the inmost self and the soul is the sheltering place of ever good deed and every misdeed.

28:22

وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تِلْقَاءَ مَدْيَنَ

wa lammā tawajjaha tilqā'a Madyan

and when he turned his face towards Midian.

Ja'far said: He turned his face in the direction of Midian, and he turned his heart towards his Lord, seeking from Him the way of guidance.¹⁹⁵

194 *Fu'ād*, here rendered 'mind' (as in Lane's *Lexicon* and in keeping with the context), is often translated as 'heart'. But it tends to signify only the physical heart, whereas *qalb* signifies the essential, spiritual heart. See Lane at *fu'ād* under *f'-d* and *qalb* under *q-l-b*.

195 This is a reference to the rest of this Qur'ānic verse: *he said: it might be*

28:35

وَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمْ سُلْطٰنًا

wa najʿalu lakumā sulṭānan

and We will grant you both authority.

Said Jaʿfar: Dread in the hearts of the enemies and love in the hearts of the friends (of God).



سُورَةُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ

al-ʿAnkabūt (The Spider)

29:21 يُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْحَمُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ^ط

yuʿadhdhibu man yashāʾu wa yarḥamu man yashāʾu

He chastises whom He intends (to) and He is merciful to whom He intends.

Jaʿfar said: *He chastises whom He intends with the dispersal¹⁹⁶ of [their] concern; and He is merciful to whom He intends by bringing together [their] concern for Him [alone].*

29:45 إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ^ط

inna'l-ṣalāta tanhā ʿani'l-faḥshā'i wa'l-munkar

verily prayer restrains from vile deeds and (from) that which is repugnant.

Jaʿfar said: When prayer is acceptable, it restrains one from proclaiming deeds and from seeking recompense.

196 *Shatāt*, here rendered 'dispersal,' means 'dispersed, separated, scattered, broken.' 'Bringing together their concern for Him alone' is not as limiting as it might sound, but the opposite, since He is infinite and contains everything. However, 'their concern' in all things at all levels will be God and His qualities: peace, mercy, justice, love, compassion. The extension of the divine qualities pertains to both microcosm and macrocosm.

29:69

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا

wa'lladhīna jāhadū finā

but those who strive for Us.

Ja'far said: The spiritual struggle is sincere neediness (to God) and that is the detachment of the slave from his soul, and his attachment to his Lord.¹⁹⁷ The spiritual struggle frees the slave from all that he is attached to. The spiritual struggle is the generous expending of one's spirit¹⁹⁸ for the satisfaction of (God) the Truth.

He also said: Whoever strives with his soul for his soul¹⁹⁹ attains the munificence of his Lord; while he who strives with his soul for his Lord attains to his Lord.



197 Detachment (*infiṣāl*) and attachment (*iṭṭiṣāl*). Thus the *nafi* and the *iṭhbāt*, respectively, of the *shahādah* constitute *mujāhadah*.

198 *Badhl al-rūḥ*. Since spirit (*rūḥ*) is the divine breath of life breathed into man at his creation, *badhl al-rūḥ* means to expend the whole of life, appropriately, at all levels, in satisfying the One who breathes through and in all creatures. *Ṣafā* too has its service to God, its *khidmah*.

199 Fearing hell or hoping for paradise; to such a person, God's generosity shall grant avoidance of hell or entry into paradise. The striving of the soul for God is the *khidmah* or *murūwah* of Marwah.

﴿ 30 ﴾

سُورَةُ الرُّومِ

al-Rūm (The Byzantines)

30:17 ﴿١٧﴾ فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

fa-subhāna'llāhi hīna tumsūna wa hīna tuṣbihūn

then glorify God when you enter the evening and when you enter the morning.

Ja'far said: So begin your morning with God and with Him draw your evening to a close. For whoever has his beginning with God and his end with Him will not be troubled in what lies between the two.

30:40 اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ

Allāhu'lladhī khalaqakum thumma razaqakum

God is the one who created you, then provided for you.

Ja'far said: *Created you, then provided for you*—moved you to the manifestation of the effects of the Lordship in you; *then He deadens you, then He enlivens you*, through [His] Self-veiling and Self-disclosure.

30:53 وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادِي الْعُمْيِ

wa mā anta bi-hādi'l-'umyi

and you cannot guide the blind.

Ja'far said: The manifestation of the signs of your messages are for those to whom the Truth, in pre-eternity, manifested the signs of felicity and

whom He adorned with the ornament of distinction—because your summons to such a one is a reminder and spiritual counsel but [it is] not an initial summons. For it is not possible for you to bring someone to the place of felicity if felicity has not already been bestowed upon them in pre-eternity. You are the summoner and the warner; God is the guide. Do you not see Him say: *And you cannot guide the blind.*



al-Sajdah (Prostration)

﴿ 32 ﴾

سُورَةُ السَّجْدَةِ

al-Sajdah (Prostration)

32:16

يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا

yaḍ'ūna Rabbahum khawfan wa ṭama'an

who call to their Lord in fear and in hope.

Said Ja'far: Fearing Him and hopeful in Him.



﴿ 33 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْأَحْزَابِ

al-Aḥzāb (The Confederates)

33:35

وَالصّٰدِقِيْنَ وَالصّٰدِقٰتِ

wa'l-ṣādiqīna wa'l-ṣādiqāt

and the truthful men and the truthful women.

Ja'far said: The truthful person is one who describes for you the good of the hereafter, not the good of the world, and who shows you the best moral qualities, not the worst; and who gives you his heart, not his limbs.²⁰⁰

33:46

وَدَاعِيًا اِلٰى اللّٰهِ بِاِذْنِهٖ وَسِرَاجًا مُّنِيْرًا ﴿١٦﴾

wa dā'iyan ilā'llāhi bi-idhnihi wa sirājan munīran

and as a summoner to God, with His permission, and as an illuminating lamp.

Ja'far said: A summoner to God, not to himself, he glories in his slavehood, not in his prophethood, that thereby his call to his [Lord-] Master may be sound. Then the summons becomes, for the one who responds to it, an illuminating lamp which leads him upon the way of right guidance, and enables him to see the faults and offences of the soul.

²⁰⁰ A comment that is in keeping with the text's emphasis on qualities—for good manners are rooted in virtue and virtue is the presence of the divine qualities. 'Who gives you his heart . . .' i.e., who is sincerely with you, and not just in outward appearance.

﴿ 34 ﴾

سُورَةُ سَبَاٍ

Sabā' (Sheba)

34:10

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا ۝

wa la-qad ātaynā Dāwūda minnā faḍlan
and indeed We gave David grace from Us.

Ja'far said: *Grace*—confidence in God and trusting reliance upon Him.



﴿ 35 ﴾

سُورَةُ فَاطِرٍ

al-Fāṭir (The Originator)

al-Malā'ikah (The Angels)

35:1

يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ

yazidu fī'l-khalqi mā yashā'u

He augments in creation what He wills.

Ja'far said: [Augments with] soundness of natural disposition and the power of spiritual sight.

35:28

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

innamā²⁰¹ yakshshā'llāha min 'ibādihi'l-'ulamā'u

only the knowledgeable among His slaves [truly] fear God.

Ja'far said: The knowledgeable fear the abandonment of reverence²⁰² in (the rites of) worship; and the abandonment of reverence when informing about the Truth; and the abandonment of reverence when following the Messenger ﷺ; and the abandonment of reverence when serving the friends (of God) and the sincere, truthful ones.

201 The particle *innamā* could be taken as governing the phrase *yakshshā'llāha* (as Pickthall has done), in which case the rendition would be: 'the knowledgeable among His slaves fear God alone.'

202 *Hurmah* also means holiness, sacredness, sanctity, respect, veneration, inviolability, and hence dignity.

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا^ط

35:32 فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ

(thumma awrathnā'l-kitāba'lladhīna'ṣṭafaynā min 'ibādinā)
fa-minhum ḡālimun li-nafsihi wa minhum muqtaṣidun wa
minhum sābiqun bi'l-khayrāt

(then We made those of Our slaves whom We chose to inherit the Book;) among them is he who wrongs his own soul; and among them is he who is moderate; and among them is he who is foremost through good deeds.²⁰³

Concerning these words of God, most high, Ja'far said: God, most high, distinguished [in the Book] three categories of believers. First of all He called them *mu'minīn*; believers; then He called them *'ibādinā*; Our slaves, thus attaching them to Himself as a grace and generosity from Himself; then He said (*alladhīna*) *iṣṭafaynā*; (whom) We chose—He made them all [specially chosen] bosom friends knowing their different stations. Then, at the end of the verse, He put them all together, at the entry into paradise, for He said: *gardens of Eden which they enter* (35:33). Moreover, He commenced with those who wrong their souls, by way of informing [us] that He shall not be drawn close to except purely by His generosity. For wrongfulness has no effect on [divine] pre-election. Then He (mentions) next the moderate, for they are between fear and hope. Then He sets the seal with the foremost lest anyone feel safe from His plot. All of them are in paradise because of the sanctity of one word, that is, the word 'faithfulness'.

Ja'far [also] said: The lower soul is wrongful; the heart is moderate; and the spirit is foremost.

He also said: Who looks with his soul to the world is wrongful; who looks with his heart to the hereafter is moderate; who looks with his spirit to the Truth is foremost.

203 *Khayrāt* rendered as 'good deeds' also means 'blessings'. The full Qur'ānic verse has been given because the commentary refers to it, even though part of the verse is not explicitly cited in the Arabic edition.

﴿ 36 ﴾

سُورَةُ يٰسِّ

Yā Sīn

36:1

يس ﴿١﴾

Yā Sīn.

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq ؑ said about His words *Yā Sīn*: They mean, *Yā Sayyid*; O lord (and are) addressed to His Prophet ﷺ. That is why the Prophet ﷺ said: '*Anā sayyidukum*; I am your lord'. In that he was not praising himself, rather he was relating the meaning of the Truth's addressing him with His words *Yā Sīn*.



سُورَةُ الصَّافَّاتِ

al-Ṣāffāt (Those Ranged in Ranks)

37:103

فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا

fa-lammā aslamā

then, when the two of them had surrendered.

Said Ja'far: Abraham expelled from his heart the love of his son; and Ishmael expelled from his heart the love of life.²⁰⁴

37:164

وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿١٦٤﴾

wa mā minnā illā lahu maqāmun ma'lūmun;

there is none of us but has his known station.

Ja'far said: Creatures have different stations with God. Whoever oversteps his bounds perishes.²⁰⁵ The prophets have the station of witnessing; the messenger(s) have the station of eye witnessing; the angels have the station of awe; the believers have the station of proximity and service; the disobedient have the station of repentance; and the unbelievers have the station of banishment and the lack of God-awareness. This is the meaning of the words of (God) most high: *There is none of us but has his known station.*

204 The context is the trial of Abraham and Ishmael, when Abraham saw in a dream vision that he was to sacrifice his son. See the verses that immediately precede this one in the Qur'an for their story.

205 This hierarchy is to be applied on both the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels.

﴿ 38 ﴾

سُورَةُ صَّ

Ṣād

38:20

وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَضَّلْنَا الْخِطَابَ ﴿٢٠﴾

wa ātaynāhu'l-ḥikmatah wa faṣla'l-khiṭāb

and We gave him wisdom and decisive oration.

Ja'far said: Sincerity of word, integrity in vows, and constancy in matters.

38:24²⁰⁶

وَوَظَنَّ دَاوُدُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ

wa zanna Dāwūda annamā fatannāhu fa'staghfara Rabbahu;

and David guessed that We had tried him; so he begged forgiveness of his Lord.

Ja'far said: Part of that is what God, most high, mentions about His trying David and his trial and test, and what was brought forth for him in the way of immense renunciation, remorse, continual weeping, sorrow, and immense fear, such that he clung close to his Lord.²⁰⁷ Thus although the occasioning sin therein was extensive, its final outcome

206 Nwyia has this as 38:25.

207 Given that *lahiqa bi* ('to cling close to'), also means 'to reach, join, catch up with,' another equally possible rendition of the last phrase would be: 'until he reached his Lord.' Indeed, in clinging close to his Lord, he reaches his Lord. Although *lahiqa bi-Rabbihi* is commonly used to mean simply 'he died,' this does not fit in with the implication of the comment, nor with the tenor of the commentary.

was immense, glorious and exalted—because through it, God gave (David) intimate closeness and the favoured state of being beloved.²⁰⁸

38:35

وَهَبْ لِي مَلِكًا

wa-hab lī mulkan

bestow upon me a kingdom.

Ja'far said: *Bestow upon me a kingdom*, that is, contentment with Your apportionment such that I have no choice alongside Your choice.

38:78

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ لَعْنَتِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٧٨﴾

wa inna 'alayka la'nati ilā yawmi'l-dīni

*and verily, My curse is upon you until the day of judgement.*²⁰⁹

Ja'far said: My displeasure, which ceases not flowing from Me upon you, reaching you at your ordained times, in your bygone days.²¹⁰

208 *Huzwah*: 'a state of fortunateness or happiness; nearness to the heart; a state of favour, of being beloved, of being in high estimation; high rank or standing.'

209 God's words addressed to Satan.

210 At first glance this is an unusual instance of severity in the commentary. The 'unceasing' nature of the divine displeasure is to be understood in terms of the Qur'ānic context, where it is Satan's pride and disobedience to God that evokes it. However, the comment explains that effects of this divine displeasure touch the recipients only at specific, ordained moments in 'bygone days' i.e., in time before the Day of Judgment, which was the Qur'ānic cut off point—thereby emphasising that God's displeasure is not unceasing or eternal.

﴿ 39 ﴾

سُورَةُ الزُّمَرِ

al-Zumar (The Groups)

39:29 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

al-ḥamdu li'llāhi, bal aktharuhum lā ya'lamūn

praise belongs to God, but most of them do not know.

Ja'far said: They do not know that no one among the slaves of God attains the requisite in His praise, nor [do they attain to] that praise which is rightfully due from the slaves of God, for His blessings; [nor do they know] that no one praises Him as is His due—save [He in] His praise of Himself.

39:30 إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

innaka mayyitun wa innahum mayyitūn

*verily you are dead and verily they are dead.*²¹¹

Ja'far said: *Verily you are dead* to the preoccupation they are in—with themselves, their children and their world; *and verily they are dead*, that is, far-removed from the different kinds of miracles by which you

211 Concerning the words *mayyit* and *mayyitūn*, some scholars assert that these words pertain to that which is dying but as yet has life in it; other scholars hold that they pertain to what is already dead. See Lane at *mayyit* under *m-y-t*. Translators of the Qur'ān usually take these words in this phrase in the sense of 'are bound to die', 'will one day die'. See Asad, *Message of the Qur'ān* and 'Ali, *Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān*. We have translated the words as 'dead' since this is how they seem to be taken in the comment.

are distinguished.

39:65

لَيْنَ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ

la-in ashrakta la-yahḅaṭanna ‘amaluka

if you associate aught with God (as His equal or partner), your works shall be to no avail.

Ja‘far said: If you look at²¹² other than Him, you will, in the hereafter, be debarred from meeting Him.

212 The verb used is *naẓara ilā*, which means ‘to look at with the eyes, to pay attention to, to contemplate or consider’. *Naẓar* is the word used for God’s gaze which is received by the subtle heart. In the light of the earlier interpretation of God’s gaze—as that which transmits His qualities—the comment here implies that if you look at other than Him, with the gaze of your inner being, you will close your subtle receptivity towards Him, you will obscure your *ḥaqīqah*; and if you do that, you will remain with your own wretched qualities, which will be a barrier between you and God, for you will not be *qualified* to meet God. To ‘meet’ God in the profoundest sense, you have to be godly. Looking at God means being effaced in Him as expounded at 7:143, 83:24. The effacement in God is the ultimately beatific meeting with God, a matter of the very dearest importance. The principle enunciated in the comment stands—it is part of the spiritual economy. However, mercy has the last word: if, despite all your failings and shortcomings, you actually love what God is (which is to say that you love God) and you *want* to meet God, then from His tremendous grace and infinite mercy, He will accept the very minimum effort from you towards that, and render it victorious, by Himself picking you up and carrying you to Him. He will ensure that you look at Him properly. God’s grace and mercy are potent—the creature has but to receive them. The Qur’anic phrase itself implies that if you attribute any of God’s qualities to other than God, then you commit *shirk*. Goodness, beauty, mercy, and so forth all belong to God no matter where they manifest. So while it can be said ‘so and so is wise or beautiful’, it should be known in the heart whose wisdom and beauty is manifest in the locus of that creature.

39:74

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقْنَا وَعَدَّهُ

al-ḥamdu li'llāhi'lladhī ṣadaqānā wa'dahu

praise belongs to God who has fulfilled for us His promise.

Ja'far said: *Praise belongs to God who has fulfilled for us His promise*, is the praise of the sages who dwell in the abode of stability with God most high. While His words: *praise belongs to God who has put sorrow away from us (35:34)*, is the praise of those who have attained [to God].



سُورَةُ غَافِرٍ

Ghāfir (Forgiving)

al-Mu'min (The Believer)

40:16

لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾

limani'l-mulku'l-yawm lillāh al-Wahid al-Qahār

to whom belongs sovereignty this day to God, the Only, the Irresistible.

Ja'far said: He reduced the beings endowed with spirits to silence, (and kept them) from answering His question in His words: *to whom belongs sovereignty*. No one at all could dare to answer, nor was anyone other than Him qualified to answer His question. Then when mankind was silenced from answering, He answered Himself with the requisite response; thus He said: *to God, the Only, the Irresistible*.

40:51

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

innā²¹³ la-nanşuru rusulanā wa'lladhīna āmanū

truly We do indeed help Our messengers and those who believe.

Ja'far said [in interpretive paraphrase]: Through the believers We help Our messengers in outward (matters); and through the messengers We help the believers in inner (matters).²¹⁴

213 In Nwya's edition, this is written as *innanā*. The meaning is exactly the same in both cases; it is simply a difference of orthography.

214 In outward (matters) this is *zāhīran*; in inner (matters), it is *bāṭinan*; i.e., in external, worldly matters and inner, spiritual matters respectively.

40:66

وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُسَلِّمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

wa umirtu an uslima li-Rabbi'l-'ālamīn

and I am commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds.

Ja'far said: I [take refuge in and] resort to none but Him; nor do I humble myself save before Him—for resorting to Him is the locus of joy; and humility before Him is the fount of honour.



سُورَةُ فَصَّلَتْ

Fuṣṣilat (Detailed Signs)

41:12

وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ

wa zayyannā'l-samā'a'l-dunyā bi-maṣābiḥ

and We adorned the lower heaven with lights.

Ja'far said: We have adorned the limbs of the believers through service.

41:31

نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

Naḥnu awliyā'ukum fī'l-ḥayāti'l-dunyā

We are your friends in the lower life.

Ja'far said: The angels are the protecting friends²¹⁵ of the person who perceives merit and recompense in his works. And God is the protecting friend of the person who is proved true²¹⁶ in his deeds and performs them witnessing the [divine] command (in them)—for God, most high, says: *God is the protecting friend of those who believe* (2:257).

215 *Awliyā'*, singular *wali* (friend, close helper, supporter, patron, protector). See also the comment and relevant note on 4:59.

216 *Tuḥuqqiqa*, he whose deeds affirm and extend his *ḥaqīqah*, and who perceives the divine activity in them.

41:44

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا هُدًى وَّ شِفَآءٌ

qul huwa li-lladhīna āmanū hudan wa shifā'un

say: It is guidance and healing for those who believe.

Ja'far said: The Qur'ān is a healing for him who is in the shade of impeccability,²¹⁷ while it is inscrutable²¹⁸ for him who is in the darkness of being abandoned.



217 In Shī'ism, the term *'iṣmah* (impeccability, infallibility, innocence, purity) is applied to the prophets and the imams—hence the title 'the infallible imam'. The implication in this comment, therefore, could be that the Qur'ān is a healing for those who follow the infallible imam. This is underlined by the Shī'ī doctrine that the imam is the '*Qur'ān nāṭiq*, the speaking Qur'ān', and so the one who knows the true meaning of the Book.

218 For a full discussion of the term *'aman* see Lane at '*amā'un* under '*-m-*', where it is stated that *'aman* refers to 'anything that the intellectual faculties cannot perceive, and to the definition of which the describer cannot attain'.

﴿ 42 ﴾

سُورَةُ الشُّورَى

al-Shūrā (Counsel)

42:9

وَهُوَ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى

wa huwa yuhyi'l-mawtā

and He enlivens the dead.

Ja'far said: He enlivens the souls of the believers through service to Him; and He deadens the souls of the hypocrites through opposition to Him.²¹⁹

42:23

قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ

qul lā as'alukum 'alayhi ajran illā'l-mawaddah

say: I do not seek of you recompense for it, only devoted love.

Ja'far said: Only that you show devoted love towards me by means of deeds that draw you closer to your Lord.

219 We have here again the concepts of enlivenment and deadening, where enlivenment is equated with *muwāfaqah* (harmony with God) and the deadening of souls is equated with opposition to God (*mukhālafah*). In the comment here, we are told that the enlivenment of the soul consists in its service (*khidmah*) to God. So we have an equation between *muwāfaqah* and *khidmah*. The matter of service to God is related directly to the heroic soul in the commentary on Marwah. Thus the service of the soul lies in its efforts to harmonise itself with God; in other words, in its efforts to be godly. And we are back to the equation: The soul's service of the Lord (*khidmat al-Rabb*), consists in harmony with God (*muwāfaqah bi'llāh*).

﴿ 43 ﴾

سُورَةُ الزُّكْرُفِ

al-Zukhruf (Ornaments of Gold)

43:68 لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

lā khawfun ‘alaykumu’l-yawma wa-lā antum taḥzanūn

no fear is on you this day nor do you grieve.

Said Ja’far ﷺ [in paraphrase]: No fear is upon those who obeyed Me in (My) commands and religious obligations and who followed the customs established by the Messenger.²²⁰

He also said: In the hereafter, no fear is upon the one who feared Me in the world. No fear is upon the one who loved Me and eliminated the love of others from his heart. No fear is upon the one who safeguarded what I placed with him, namely faith and spiritual knowledge. No fear is upon the one who thought good of Me—I shall give him that which he hoped for.

Fear (befalls) the limbs while grief (befalls) the heart for fear of being cut off (from God).

43:71 وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ ﴿٧١﴾

wa fihā mā tashtahī’l-anfusu wa taladhdhu’l-a’yun²²¹

and therein is that which the souls desire and enraptures the eye.

Ja’far said: What a difference between what the souls desire and that

220 The *sunnat al-nabi* is important to both Sunnis and Shī’is. For the latter, of course, it is conveyed foremost by the imams.

221 The text of the *tafsīr* has *tashtahī* without the final pronominal suffix *hi*—which may simply be a scribal error. The meaning is not altered. *A’yun* is

al-Zukhruf (Ornaments of Gold)

which enraptures the eye. For all the blessings, desirable things and delights of paradise are, in comparison with the rapture of the eye, as a finger dipped in the ocean—because the desirable things of paradise have a limit and an end, for they are created. But in the ever-abiding abode the eye is enraptured only in gazing upon the Ever-abiding [Himself] ﷻ! And that has no limit, nor description, nor end.



the plural of *'ayn*, which means not only 'eye' but also 'essence or source' and 'spring or fountain'.

﴿ 46 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْأَحْقَافِ

al-Aḥqāf (The Winding Sand-Tracts)

46:9

مَا كُنْتُ بِدْعًا مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ

mā kuntu bid'an²²² mina'l-rusul

I am not a new thing among the messengers.

Concerning this verse, Ja'far said [in explanatory paraphrase]: There is nothing to do with me in my prophethood. It is purely something which I was given, not because of me but rather by grace from God when He made me suitable for His message and described me in the earlier books of the prophets ﷺ.

46:13

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا

inna'lladhīna qālū Rabbuna'llāhu thumma'staqāmū

verily, those who say our Lord is God and then stand soundly.

Said Ja'far: They stand soundly with God, most high, in the movements

222 *Bid'an* may be understood in either of two ways: 1) Something that is a novelty or new thing or a 'first', in which case the meaning of the Qur'ānic verse is 'I am not the first of the messengers'; 2) Someone that is an innovator, with the meaning 'I am not an innovator among the messengers,' i.e., my message is not an innovation. See Lane at *bid'un* under *b-d-'*. In its Qur'ānic context, this verse and the ones immediately before and after it, contain a protestation for the authenticity of the revelation given to the Prophet. There is also a reference (46:10) to what is interpreted as a Biblical anticipation of the Arab Prophet, which the *tafsir* picks up on: '... and described me in the earlier Books of the prophets ...'. See Asad, *Message of the Qur'an*, 46:10, note 12, p. 771.

of the heart with the witnessings of the oneness of God.²²³

46:30

يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَى طَرِيقٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

yahdī ilā'l-Ḥaqqi wa ilā ṭarīqin mustaqīmin

guiding to the Truth and to a harmonious path.

Ja'far said: He/it leads to the way of the Truth, by bringing (people) forth from known things and rituals,²²⁴ and (to) the realisation of the Truth²²⁵—that is the harmonious way.



223 *Tawḥīd* (monotheism) denotes both the *belief* in the oneness of God, and also, by extension, the oneness of God itself, as rendered in the text.

224 'Rituals' translates *marsūmāt* which, in the singular, refers to that which is recorded in writing and sealed, hence prescripts, edicts, regulations, ceremonies, etiquette, and rituals. This comment might easily be taken as antinomian, however, his point may be that the purpose of all rites and rituals is the realisation of the Truth. So the bringing forth from 'known things and rituals' is the attainment of this realisation. It does not necessarily mean the abandonment of rites and rituals, but rather following them through to their profoundest end—this seems to be confirmed by the following comment. Nevertheless, it presents the following perspective: religion and knowledge are for the purpose of God-realisation; they, in themselves, are not the goal but only a means to the end.

225 *Al-tahqīq bi'l-Ḥaqq* is to be read in apposition to *ṭarīqī'l-Ḥaqq*, both phrases being governed by the *'alā* that immediately precedes *ṭarīq*. The comment reflects the dual guidance of the Qur'ānic phrase.

﴿ 47 ﴾

سُورَةُ مُحَمَّدٍ

Muhammad

47:3

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَتَّبِعُوا الْبَاطِلَ

(a)lladhīna kafarū'ttaba'ū'l-bāṭila

those who disbelieve follow falsehood.

Ja'far said: He who does not order the foundational principles of his states in accordance with the Truth is not successful in following the path of the Truth. He who neglects the foundational principles of his states—what hope is there of him reaching the end of (the path)?

47:19

أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

annahu lā ilāha illā'llāh

that there is no god except God.

Concerning (these) words of His, Ja'far said: He eliminates causes²²⁶ from the Lordship and declares the Truth to be beyond perception.

226 In other words, He eliminates the possibility of there being a cause beyond God; God being the Uncaused Cause. *'Ilal*, as the plural of *'illah*, also means 'weaknesses, deficiencies'.

سُورَةُ الْفَتْحِ

al-Fath (Victory)

48:2

وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ

wa yutimma ni'matahu 'alayka

and to complete His blessing upon you.

Ja'far said: Part of the perfection of the blessing upon His Prophet ﷺ is that He made him His beloved; and [that] He swore by his life;²²⁷ and that through him, He superseded all the revealed laws of the [earlier] messengers; and [that] He made him ascend to the place of closest proximity and protected him in the ascent, such that (*his gaze did not waver; nor did it/he overstep the bounds* (53:17); and [that] He sent him to black people and white; and that He made spoils of war lawful for him and his community; and [that] He made him an intercessor [with God] whose intercession is accepted; and He made him the lord of the progeny of Adam; and [that] He has joined his remembrance with His remembrance, and his satisfaction with His satisfaction;²²⁸ and [that] He has made him one of the two pillars of monotheism.²²⁹ This and the like thereof are among the perfection of the blessing upon (the Prophet) and, through him and his rank, upon his community.

227 For instance, *La-'amruka; By your life* (15:72).

228 As exemplified in numerous Qur'anic verses such as: *Obey God and obey His Messenger* (64:12); *Whoever obeys the Messenger, verily he has obeyed God.* (4:80); see also Qur'an 48:17, 33:71, 4:13, 3:32, etc.

229 This is a reference to the two testimonials of the Islamic faith: that there is no god except God and that Muhammad is His Messenger.

48:26

حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ

ḥamīyata'l-jāhiliyah

the raging fury²³⁰ of the state of ignorance.

Ja'far said: Reprehensible raging fury which oversteps the limits into vengefulness.



230 *Ḥāmīyah* also means fanaticism, zeal, violence. *Jāhiliyah* is often used for the pre-Islamic period in Arabia. Given the spiritual register of this *tafsīr*, I have rendered it more generally.

سُورَةُ الْحُجُرَاتِ

al-Ḥujurāt (The Private Rooms)

49:13

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ

inna akramakum 'inda'llāhi atqākum

verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most God-aware.

Ja'far said: The noble one is the God-aware one in reality; and the God-aware one is cut off from beings, (attached only) to God.²³¹



231 The noble person, imbued with good qualities and characteristics, is God-aware existentially as well as with the mind.

﴿ 50 ﴾

سُورَةُ قَافٍ

Qāf

50:37

لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ

liman kāna lahu qalbun

for whoever has a heart.

Concerning His [above] words, Ja‘far said: That means, a hearing, understanding, seeing heart. Thus whenever it hears the oration²³² of God, most high, without any intermediary in that which is between it and the Truth, it understands what He bestowed upon it through [granting it] faith and surrender—without any request [being made by it], or (any) intercessor or means that it might have had with God, in pre-eternity.²³³ And he sees the power of the All-Powerful, the Creator, in himself, His kingdom, His earth, and His heaven. Through this he is guided to God’s onliness, His power, and His will.

232 *Khiṭāb*, rather than *kalām* which is the term usually used to refer to God’s revealed Word, the Qur’ān. This brings to mind Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Niffarī (d. 354 AH) and his use of the word *mukhaṭābāt* to describe God’s direct speech addressed to his heart. See Arberry, (ed. and trans.), *Mawāqif and Mukhātabāt*.

233 That is to say, the heart is addressed directly and privately by God. And when it hears such an address the heart understands God’s gratuitous gift of faith and surrender which He bestowed upon it in pre-eternity, before the heart had made any request for these things, without the heart having any intercessor to intercede for it or means by which to approach God. Pre-eternity pertains to beyond being.

سُورَةُ الذَّارِيَّاتِ

al-Dhāriyāt (The Scattering Winds)

51:24

ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

ḍayfi Ibrāhima'l-mukramīn

the honoured guests of Abraham.

Concerning these words of (God) most high, Ja'far said: *honoured*, inasmuch as they were given hospitality by the noblest of creatures, the most manifest of them in chivalry,²³⁴ the most distinguished of them in soul, the most exalted of them in fervour, [namely] the Friend, God's blessings and peace upon him.²³⁵

234 *Futūwah*, in addition to chivalry, means honourableness, bountifulness, generosity, liberality, nobility, the sum of the noble qualities of manliness. Later, it became famously connected with the chivalric Sufi orders of Islam. The *Tāj al-'Arūs* of Murtaḍā al-Zabidī notes that the first one who mentioned this term is Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (see Lane at *futūwah* under *f-t-w*). Here then may be another aspect of the imam's legacy to Sufism and to Islam in general.

235 Clearly the implication is that the angelic visitors of Abraham were 'his honoured guests' not only because they are most honourable in themselves or because he showed them much respect and honour, but also because *he* was the one receiving them. The application of such honorifics to a prophet other than the Prophet Muḥammad is an example of the universalism of Islam in keeping with Q. 2:285: *we make no difference between any of His messengers.*

51:49 وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

wa min kulli shay'in khalaqnā zawjayni la'allakum tadhakkarūn
and of everything We created pairs that you might reflect.

Ja'far said: In order that the one who professes God's unity might look at (those) other [than God] and see them as pairs, doubles and fours, and [seeing this] flee from them, and return to the Only, the One so that thereby the profession of God's unity is a verified fact for him.

51:55 وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

wa dhakkir fa-inna'l-dhikrā tanfa'u'l-mu'minin
and remind; for verily, remembrance benefits the believers.

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq عليه السلام said: This means: O Muḥammad, remind My slaves of My open-handed bestowing and generosity, My favours and blessings and My prevenient mercy to your community specifically. The remembrance,²³⁶ which benefits the believers is the slave's remembrance²³⁷ of God, most high, and (of) the pre-existent (divine)

236 *Dhikrā* denotes remembering after being reminded. See Lane at *dhikrā* under *dh-k-r*. In the course of the discussion of this comment in the few notes, the reader should keep in mind the ontological nature of *dh* that this commentary highlights.

237 The translation in the body text takes the particle *li* as indicating possession (*kitābun li* is 'a book by' or 'a book belonging to'), thereby taking the slave as the grammatical subject and God as the object. This rendition implies that the beneficial reminder to the believers is a person's own remembrance of God and of His graces; a de facto reminder by example: be as you would have others be. However, if God is taken as the subject and the slave as the object, then the phrase would mean: 'The remembrance . . . believers, is God most high's remembrance of the slave and [the expression of this remembrance in] the ancient, prevenient divine care . . .' Alternatively, since *dhakara li* means 'to tell', 'to relate to', this phrase could be understood to mean 'the remembrance due to being reminded, *al-dhikrā*, which benefits the believers is [that when] God most high reminds the slave and [in the recollection of] the ancient . . .' In this rendition, God's reminder is through His gaze in the heart, which the

care [manifest] in faith, gnosis, the God-given success to obey (God) and the preservation from sins.

Ja'far said: Whoever remembers God, most high, but then forgets His remembrance, was untouched²³⁸ by His remembrance. The remembrance of God, most high, is His oneness, His prior eternity, His will, His power, and His knowledge—never does any forgetfulness or unawareness befall Him for they are among human qualities. Whoever, then, remembers God, most high, remembers Him through His remembrance of him.²³⁹

soul extends through harmonising with the gaze.

238 *Majhūlan*, literally means 'unknown'. It is tempting to read it simply as a synonym of *jāhil* (ignorant): 'was ignorant/unaware of His remembrance'. However, the implicit connotation of *majhūl* in the phrase *nāqatun majhūlatun* provides a key to the literal text. *Nāqatun majhūlatun* refers to a she-camel that has never been milked, nor yet conceived, or that *has no brand* upon her (see Lane at *majhūl* under *j-h-l*). Thus, rather than rendering the phrase *kānā majhūlan* as 'was unknown', we have preferred 'was untouched', especially since that seems to be the implication of the comment: that those who engage in a transient *dhikr* are untouched by the divine *dhikr* which is the act of God Himself. True *dhikr* is only through absorption into the divine *dhikr*. The theme of how that which is human falls woefully short of the mark is to be found in other comments of the *tafsīr*.

239 An alternative interpretation of the last sentence of the comment could well be: 'Whoever (would) remember God, let him remember Him through His remembrance of Him.' The distinction being drawn here is between a remembrance of God which is transient and lapses into forgetfulness, and which pertains to the human, and the true remembrance of God which is His own eternal, unceasing remembrance and awareness of Himself. Thus, as is explained in the comment, whoever truly remembers God does so through this divine 'Self-remembrance' and never lapses into forgetfulness. The true remembrance of God then, is His own eternal, uninterrupted Self-awareness, and from the human point of view it is an uninterrupted participation in this through the constant receptivity in the heart, of God's gaze which conveys His Presence and qualities, and in the extension of these through the soul. The ceaseless remembrance of God is literally a state of being—that of harmony with the divine qualities.

51:56

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

wa-mā khalaqtu'l-jinna wa'l-insa illā li-ya'budūni²⁴⁰

and I did not create the jinn and mankind except for them to worship Me.

Concerning His [above] words, Ja'far said: Except for them to know Me, then to worship Me on the carpets of spiritual knowledge, so that they absolve themselves of hypocrisy and [the seeking of] a good reputation.



240 Nwya's edition reads *ya'budūnī*, with a long i.

سُورَةُ الطُّورِ

al-Ṭūr (The Mount)

52:1

وَالطُّورِ ﴿١﴾

wa'l-ṭūr

by the Mount.

Ja'far said: [This is an allusion to] the intimacy in My remembrance and the sweet delight in My love that comes suddenly upon the hearts of My beloved lovers.²⁴¹

52:2

وَكُتِبَ مَسْطُورٍ ﴿٢﴾

wa kitābin maṣṭūrīn

and by a Book inscribed in lines.

[This is a reference to] the drawing close and the proximity that the Truth has inscribed upon Himself²⁴² for them [His beloved lovers].

241 Thus, if the *min* is taken as partitive. Alternatively, '[This is an allusion to] what unexpectedly befalls the hearts of My beloved lovers through the intimacy in My remembrance and the sweet delight in My love.'

242 The phrase *kataba 'alā nafsīhi*, which is used in the comment, is itself Qur'anic, occurring at 6:12 and 6:54 as follows: *kataba 'alā nafsīhi'l-rahmah*; *He has inscribed mercy upon His self*. The phrase *kataba'alā nafsīhi* is often rendered as 'He has prescribed for Himself'. However, the very literal rendition is used above in the translation, given its propensity for mystical interpretation.

52:48

وَأَصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا

wa'ṣbir li-ḥukmi Rabbika fa-innaka bi-a'yūninā²⁴³

then endure patiently the decree of your Lord, for verily you are under Our eye.

Ja'far said: At this oration, the cultivation of patience and the bearing of his burden were made easy for him [the Prophet]. Even so, every state benefits the slave in the locus of witnessing.²⁴⁴



243 Nwyia has *fa* instead of the standard *wa* at the beginning of this phrase.

244 Here the *maḥall al-mushāhadah* (the locus of witnessing) seems to be an interpretation specifically of the Qur'ānic phrase *bi-a'yūninā*, 'under Our eye'. Thus, being under God's eye or gaze is identified as the locus of *mushāhadah*.

سُورَةُ النَّجْمِ

al-Najm (The Unfolding Star)

53:1

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ۝

wa'l-najmi idhā hawā

by the unfolding star when it comes down.²⁴⁵

Ja'far said: It is the locus of the [divine] Self-disclosure and Self-veiling among the hearts of the people of gnosis.

[It is also related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad, concerning these [above] words of (God) most high, that he said: *The unfolding star* is Muḥammad ﷺ; as he came down, lights radiated from him.

(Ja'far also) said: *The unfolding star* is the heart of Muḥammad; *when it comes down* [is an allusion to] when it is cut off from everything other than God.

245 This verse is often rendered literally: 'By the star when it sets'. I have preferred to incorporate Asad's understanding which is based on the interpretation given to the above verse by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, who referred to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib as his master in *tafsīr*, as quoted in Ṭabarī's commentary. Asad's understanding and rendition are appropriate, given both the Qur'ānic context and the comment. See Asad, *Message of the Qur'ān*, note 1 on 53:1. However, reading the phrase on the *tafsīr*'s spiritual register, I retain the word 'star', because, in the subtlest realms beyond being, a star is an archetypal essence. The archetypal essence of a *rasūl-safir* is a sun-star. (The manifold categories of beings have their archetypes in manifold categories and exceedingly intricate combinations of levels of individuation within undifferentiated Spirit. "The unfolding star" thus describes the 'descent' of an essence/essential archetype into being and down through the levels of being to the lowest level of dense, physical matter, *al-dunyā*. This 'descent' is an extension rather than a departure from the origin.

53:2

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَى ﴿٢﴾

mā ḍalla ṣāhibukum wa mā ghawā

your companion has not strayed nor is he deluded.

Ja'far said: He has not strayed from His nearness for even the twinkling of an eye.

53:3

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ﴿٣﴾

wa mā yanṭiqu 'ani'l-hawā

nor does he speak from capricious desire.

Ja'far said: How could he speak out of capricious desire, he who pronounced the declaration of monotheism and the completion of the revealed law (*sharī'ah*) and the ethics of commanding and forbidding? Nay, but he spoke only by a [divine] command and was silent only by a [divine] command. (When) he commanded, his command was a closeness to the Truth; (when) he forbade, his forbidding was protective and preventative.

53:8

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى ﴿٨﴾

thumma danā fa-tadallā²⁴⁶

then He/he drew near, reaching down He/he²⁴⁷ drew nearer.

Ja'far said: The question of 'how?' was cut off from [that] nearness. Do

246 In this particular comment, the Prophet is taken as the subject of the verbs *danā* and *tadallā*. Through and indeed in the depths of his spiritual heart, the receptacle of God's gaze, God drew him close to Himself, the Most High. Microcosmic depth = macrocosmic height.

247 Most translators of this Qur'ānic verse take the 'he' to refer to the archangel Gabriel. Clearly the *tafsīr* does not. The drawing near takes place between God and the Prophet. In keeping with the tone of the comments we have presented both possible renditions of the subject of the verbs: He/he. With this in mind, and without wishing to intrude on the 'how' of this

you not see that God, most high, veiled Gabriel from (the Prophet's) nearness [to God] and from his Lord's nearness to him (the Prophet).

He also said: Muḥammad ﷺ drew close²⁴⁸ to the gnosis and faith which had been placed in his heart. Then, through the peace/tranquillity of his heart he reached down (drawing close) to that which drew him near; and doubt and misgiving vanished from his heart.

53:9

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾

fa-kānā qāba qawsayni aw adnā

so that He was but the distance of two half-bows' length or even nearer.

Ja'far said: He drew him near to Him until He was as at [the short distance of] two half-bows' length from him.²⁴⁹ The drawing near to

nearness, it should be noted that the word *tadallā* is remarkably evocative. *Danā* means to come close, draw near; *tadallā* means to hang down, draw near, descend. Discussing this verse, some traditional commentators understand the verb *tadallā* to denote a coming down without leaving the highest place, hence my translation 'reaching down'—which is applicable to both a non-spatial or spatial context. See Lane at *tadallā*. These verses (53:1–12) then, may be taken as describing a 'divine descent' or extension, while the following verses (13–18) describe the human ascent.

248 *Mā adnāhu*, in keeping with the general tone of this comment and taking into account the following comment, is understood to mean that the Prophet was drawn by God to His Presence, through the tranquillity and peace (which is the qualitative aura of the divine Presence) in his heart. Both words being from the same verbal root, the use of the word *sukūn* for tranquillity/peace, evokes *Sakīnah*—the Peace of the divine Presence. Furthermore, as explained in comments elsewhere, the heart is the conveyor of the means for attachment to God. There the means is the divine love; here it is the divine peace. This comment expresses the mystery of the spiritual journey: the 'movement' seems to be from the human but the pull and conveyance are in fact divine.

249 The word *qāba* refers to the short distance between the middle and the end of a bow. The phrase *qāba qawsayni* is used idiomatically to mean 'very close; imminent'.

God, most high, has no limit; but the drawing near to the slave has limits.²⁵⁰

53:10

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾

fa awḥā ilā ‘abdihi mā awḥā

then He revealed to His slave what He revealed.

Ja‘far said: [*He revealed*], without any intermediary in what was between Him and him, a secret to his heart which none but he knows;²⁵¹ without any intermediary except at the end when He grants him intercession on behalf of his community.²⁵²

And (Ja‘far) al-Ṣādiq said, about His words: *He drew near, reaching down He drew nearer*: When the Beloved drew so extremely close to the beloved, extreme awe befell him. So the Truth treated him with extreme kindness—for only extreme kindness can alleviate extreme awe.

And those are His words: *Then He revealed to His slave what He revealed*, that is, what was, was; what came to pass, came to pass; and the Beloved said what the Beloved says to His beloved; and He showed him the kindness (and courtesy) of the Beloved to His beloved, and

250 God is infinite and transcends all limits, and in approaching Him, finitude has to be shed—only the Infinite can reach the Infinite. The slave is created and while the slave remains within the realm of the finite, though he is approaching God and is approached by Him, his full situation is governed by the last restrictions of finitude and, while in the world, the last restrictive differences between the spiritual and physical realms. This comment should be read keeping in mind what is said elsewhere in the commentary, particularly on the vision of God.

251 The comment that this *wahy* (‘revelation’) was a secret revealed directly to the Prophet’s heart—without any intermediary and not as part of the Qur’an which is for all and which was brought to the Prophet by the archangel Gabriel—underlines the identification of God as the one who descends and draws close.

252 The connection between the end of this comment and the rest of it seems to be the matter of the intermediary. That is to say, there is no intermediary between God and the Prophet’s heart during this moment of intimacy but on the Day of Judgement, it is the Prophet who shall be the intermediary, as intercessor, between his community and God.

He confided in him what the Beloved confides in His beloved. The two concealed (their secret) and did not divulge their secret to anyone other than themselves. That is why He said: *Then He revealed to His slave what He revealed*. No one knows that revelation except He who revealed and him to whom it was revealed.

53:11

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى ﴿١١﴾

mā kadhaba'l-fu'ādu mā ra'ā

the heart²⁵³ belied not what it saw.

Ja'far said: No one knows what he saw, except He who showed and he who saw. The Beloved came close to the beloved, a confidant for him, an intimate friend with him. God, most high, said: *We raise [by] degrees whom We will* (6:83).

53:18

لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى ﴿١٨﴾

la-qad ra'ā min āyāti Rabbihi'l-kubrā

truly he saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord.

Ja'far said: He witnessed such indications of love as are too great to be related.

53:32

هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ

huwa a'lamu bikum

He knows you best.

Ja'far said: He knows you best because He created you and ordained

253 Technically *fu'ād* means 'heart' in the sense of the pericardium, while *qalb*, also 'heart', signifies the 'kernel' or interior of the heart, hence the spiritual heart. But *fu'ād* also refers to the mind or intellect and it is in this sense that some of the traditional sources understand it in this verse, for example in the *tafsir* of the Jalālayn. See Lane at *fu'ād* under *f'-d*.

for you [whatever] distress and felicity [is to come to you] even before your birth in being.²⁵⁴ Yet you are agitated by that which has been settled upon you preventively, of the appointed time (of death), sustenance, felicity, and distress. Works of obedience do not procure felicity nor do deeds of opposition (to God) procure distress. Rather the preventient ordinance is what sets the seal to that which was begun.²⁵⁵

53:37

وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى ﴿٣٧﴾

wa Ibrāhīma'lladhī waffā²⁵⁶

and Abraham who rendered fully.

Ja'far said: The quintessence of sincerity is faithful fulfilment in every state and in every deed.

53:44

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَمَاتٌ وَأَحْيَا ﴿٤٤﴾

wa annahu huwa amāta wa ahyā

and that it is He who deadens and enlivens.

Ja'far said: He deadens through the turning away from Him; and He enlivens through spiritual knowledge of Him. He deadens souls through opposition (to Him) and He enlivens hearts with the lights of harmony (with Him).

254 The comment here emphasises that the final end is known before the beginning of a soul's being; in other words, in the realms beyond being.

255 As witnessed in this text, predestination is an important aspect of the Imām al-Šādiq's teachings. The preventient ordinance, established in pre-eternity, in beyond being, sets the seal—it is the end. Our deeds along the way do not alter the final end, but they can affect the course the journey takes to that unalterable end.

256 *Waffā*, being the second form of the verbal root *w-f-y*, means to render fully a due or a right; to pay fully what is owed. *Wafā'* (faithful fulfilment).

﴿ 54 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْقَمَرِ

al-Qamar (The Moon)

54:55

فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ

fi maq'adi şidqin

in the seat of sincerity.

Ja'far said: [This is] praise of the place in which sincerity²⁵⁷ is—none but the sincere ones are seated therein. It is the seat wherein God fulfils the promises [made to] His friends, in that they are permitted to look at His august face.



257 *Şidq* also means 'faithfulness'.

﴿ 55 ﴾

سُورَةُ الرَّحْمَنِ

al-Raḥmān (The Gracious)

55:11

فِيهَا فَكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ ﴿١١﴾

fiḥā fākihātun wa'l-nakhlu dhātu'l-akmām

therein is fruit and the palm tree endowed with calyces.

Ja'far said: The Truth has made the hearts of His friends meadows of His intimacy. He has planted in them trees of gnosis whose roots are firmly fixed in their inmost selves and whose branches stand in the divine Presence in the assembly (of witnessing). They reap the fruits of intimacy at every instant. That is [the interpretation of] the words of (God), most high: *Therein is fruit and the palm tree endowed with calyces*, that is, endowed with different varieties. Everyone harvests from it a type in keeping with the scope of his effort and (according to) the manifestations of mystical knowledge and the effects of divine friendship that are unveiled for them.

55:60

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ﴿٦٠﴾

hal jazā'u'l-iḥsāni illā'l-iḥsān

is the meed of goodness aught save goodness.

Ja'far said: Is the meed for one to whom goodness was extended in pre-eternity aught save the preservation of the goodness upon him for all future eternity.

﴿ 56 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْوَاقِعَةِ

al-Wāqī'ah (The Inevitable Event)

56:19 لَا يُصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنْزِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

lā yuṣadda'ūna 'anhā wa-lā yunzifūn

from which they get no headache nor are they exhausted [by it].

Ja'far said: Their intellects are not distracted from the well-springs²⁵⁸ of realities [flowing] to them, nor are they absent, in any state, from the gathering of the witnessing.

56:30

وَوَظِلٍّ مَّمْدُودٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

wa ḡillin mamdūdin

and widespread shade.

[It is related] from Ja'far, concerning His [above] words, that he said: The *shade* is God's prevenient mercy to the community of Muḥammad ﷺ; and the *widespread* is His grace upon those who affirm God's unity and His justice upon deviants.

258 'Well-springs' renders the word *mawārid*, which means, among other things, 'wells, springs, the original sources'. The *mawārid* are both the source wells *in divinis* of the realities, and the flowing springs themselves. Here, the *tafsīr* refers to the continual receptivity of the inhabitants of paradise to the *ḥaqā'iq* (the divine lights, the divine qualities), that flow to them from God.

56:33

لَا مَقْطُوعَةٌ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

lā maqtū'atin wa-lā mamnū'atin

neither cut short nor forbidden.

Ja'far said: Gnosis and strengthening²⁵⁹ are never cut off from them—were those to be cut off from them they would perish. Nor are they forbidden from taking enjoyment in being right next to the Truth—were they forbidden that, they would be desolated.

56:73

نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذْكَرَةً

Naḥnu ja'alnāhā tadhkiratan

We have made it a reminder.

Ja'far said (glossing *reminder*): Spiritual counsel for the repentant and, for the firm sages, an instrument for bearing it.²⁶⁰

259 The reader should note the continuous nature of the divine influx: a continual strengthening by God, and an ongoing conferral of spiritual knowledge in the absence of which the inhabitants of the paradises would perish. This comment complements the idea expressed in the comment above; there is a constant neediness on the part of the 'ibād and a constant inpouring from God, serving to underline the theophanic nature of the inhabitants of the paradises that are 'next to the Truth'. By extension, all creation is also constantly and totally dependent on the Creator and Sustainer, in a way that is analogous to the constant need for sunlight and oxygen that earthly creatures have.

260 The Qur'ānic verse in full is: 'We have made it a reminder and a comfort for those in the wilderness'. In the Qur'ānic context, the verse refers to 'the fire' mentioned in the immediately preceding verses. The comment interprets the word *tadhkirah*, 'reminder'. The reminder is spiritual counsel for the repentant and a means, for the firm sages, of bearing it. *Aqwiyā'* has been read as the plural of *qawiy* (firm, strong, sturdy, robust, potent). The final suffix *hu*, then, remains ambiguous. It might refer to the Qur'an; it might refer to God. However, it would seem most likely that it refers to 'wilderness' as indicated by the word *muqwin* ('those in the wilderness') at the end of this Qur'ānic verse; in which case it refers to the reminder that it is a means for the firm and sturdy sages to bear the wilderness

56:79

لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

lā yamassuhu illā'l-muṭahharūn

only the purified touch it [i.e., the Qur'ān].

Ja'far said [explaining *the purified*]: Only those who uphold its rights and who follow its commands and preserve (the sanctity) of what it has sanctified.



in which they find themselves. This comment should be read keeping in mind certain associations noted throughout the commentary. For instance, where *tadhkirah* refers to the Qur'ān; where reference is made to recollection being *tadhakkur*; where *tidhkār* is the healing reminder of God's grace and generosity; where reminder (*tadhkīr*) is mentioned alongside spiritual counsel (*maw'izah*); and where *tadhkirah* refers to the Qur'ān itself and is glossed as *maw'izah*.

﴿ 57 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْحَدِيدِ

al-Ḥadīd (Iron)

57:1

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ

sabbaha li'llāhi mā fi'l-samāwāt

what(ever) is in the heavens glorifies God.

Everything—totality—praises Him while He has no need for their praise. How should that²⁶¹ attain to Him when He is the one who brings it forth and is responsible for its manifestation?

وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١﴾

wa huwa'l-'Azīzu'l-Ḥakīm

and He is the Mighty the Wise.

Ja'far said: He is the one who is not grasped²⁶² by those who seek Him and who cannot be eluded by those who [wish to] flee from Him.

261 'That' most likely refers to the praise; however it might refer to totality itself, for God is responsible for manifesting both totality and the praise of totality.

262 *Lā yudrikuhu ṭālibuhu*, literally 'whose seekers do not grasp Him'. It is God who grasps the seeker. The verb *daraka*, here rendered by the verb 'to grasp', also means to know, perceive, comprehend, understand, attain to, overtake. In other words, only God knows God.

huwa'l-Awwalu wa'l-Ākhiru wa'l-Zāhiru wa'l-Bāṭin

He is the First and the Last and the Manifest and the Hidden.

Ja'far said: He is the one who makes first the first and makes last the last, who manifests the manifest and conceals the hidden.²⁶³ Then these concepts fall away and there remains [only] He.

Ja'far [also] said: *The Hidden*—He is hidden in every place. [No place is] ever without Him, for His being was when no place was. Through His kindness, He veiled the essential nature of 'He was' while, through His power He made visible the fixedness of 'He was'. Thus He made clear to us 'He was' but He veiled from us the essential nature of 'He was'; but He disclosed to us the manifestation of the perfection of 'He was'—through the realisation of which faith is perfected.

lā yastawī minkum man anfaqa min qabli'l-faṭḥi wa qātala

they are not equal among you, those who spent and fought [in God's way] before the victory, [and those who did not].

Ja'far said: [This is a reference to] the firm intentions and the sound faith of the emigrants, the people of the bench²⁶⁴ and their *imām* and lord, the greatest sincere one, God's pleasure be upon him.²⁶⁵ They are the ones

263 This translation is based on the presence, in the edition of the Arabic, of the *shaddah* over the second consonants of *a-wa-la* and *a-kha-ra*. My own preferred rendition would be without a *shaddah*: 'He is the foremost of the first, the very last of the last, the most manifest of the manifest and the most hidden of the hidden.'

264 'The people of the bench' were newly-arrived, impoverished Meccan Muslim emigrants to Madīnah, who, having nowhere to live and no means of livelihood, lived in a part of the Prophet's mosque where a stone bench was placed for their use. They endured the hardships of homelessness and poverty in order to be with the Prophet and practise their religion in peace.

265 This comment indicates the citation of a Shī'i statement by a non-Shī'i

who did not give preference to this world over the hereafter. Rather, they sacrificed (the world) and did not turn towards it; they relied, in that, on their Lord and sought His satisfaction and (to be in) harmony with the Messenger ﷺ. So God, glory to Him, distinguished them from among the (Muslim) community, with His words: *they are not equal* . .



source. The title *al-ṣiddīq al-akbar* is used by the Shī'ah for the Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, on 'Alī's own authority. However, the blessings, *raḍīya'llāhu 'anhu* and *riḍwānu'llāhi 'alayhi* are used for him by the Sunnis; the Shī'i eulogy for the Imam being *'alayhi'l-salām*.

﴿ 59 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْحَشْرِ

al-Ḥashr (The Gathering)

59:23

الْقُدُّوسُ

al-Quddūs

the Holy.

[It is related] from Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, that, concerning (God’s) words: *al-Quddūs; the Holy*, he said: The one who is pure of every defect and who purifies of defects whom He wills (to purify).

الْمُهَيِّمِ

al-Muḥaymin

the Guardian

The one *like to whose likeness there is nothing* (42:11). The Qur‘ān has been named *muḥayminan* (5:48) because no other speech resembles it.²⁶⁶

266 *Muḥaymin* is from the verb *haymana* (to say ‘amen’). Hence it sets the seal on something, and comes to mean protector, guardian, or master. It seems to be in this sense of ‘master’, hence ‘unsurpassed, unequalled’ (‘the last Word’) that it is used in this comment.

﴿ 61 ﴾

سُورَةُ الصَّافِّ

al-Ṣaff (The Ranks)

61:5 فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ

fa-lammā zāghū azāgha'llāhu qulūbahum

then when they deviated, God made their hearts deviate.

Ja'far said: When they abandoned the commands of service, God removed the light of faith from their hearts and He made for Satan a path to them. Thus he turned them away from the path of the Truth and made them enter the way of falsehood.

61:13 وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

wa bashshiri'l-mu'minīn

and give glad-tidings to the believers.

Ja'far said: The good news of beholding Him²⁶⁷ in the seat of sincerity near a powerful King (54:55).

267 *Ru'yah* indicates the acutal visual beholding (of God), while *ru'yā* is used for a vision.

سُورَةُ التَّغَابُنِ

al-Taghābun (Mutual Disillusion)

64:15

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ

innamā amwālukum wa awlādukum fitnatun

verily, your possessions and your children are but a trial.

Ja'far said: Your possessions are a trial because of your preoccupation with accumulating them improperly and misappropriating them.²⁶⁸ Your children are a trial because of your preoccupation with bettering them—thus you are corrupted and they do not thrive in righteousness.²⁶⁹

268 *Wad'ihā li-ghayri ahlihā* ('its placement with those to whom it does not rightly belong'); if this phrase is taken (as in the English text above) to be in apposition to *jam'ihā* and thus governed by the *bi*, then it refers to a person's misappropriation of the possessions of others in order to accumulate wealth. However, the phrase may conceivably be read in apposition to *ishtighālikum*, governed by the *li*; in which case the meaning is that the trial lies in a person's possessions being misappropriated by others.

269 Thus, as far as wealth is concerned, it is a temptation in two ways: 1) inasmuch as it becomes a preoccupation, and 2) inasmuch as it is gained improperly. Children are a temptation, not in themselves, nor in the bettering of them, but when the matter of bettering them becomes a *preoccupation* for the parents. Hence, in both parts of the comment, preoccupation is a critical part of the *fitnah*.

﴿ 66 ﴾

سُورَةُ التَّحْرِيمِ

al-Taḥrīm (Prohibition)

66:9

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ

Yā ayyuhā'l-nabīyu, jāhidi'l-kuffāra wa'l-munāfiqīn

O Prophet; strive against the deniers and the hypocrites.

Ja'far said: Strive against the deniers²⁷⁰ with the hand and against the hypocrites with the tongue.

270 *Al-kuffār* is translated as 'the deniers' in order to emphasise the ontological and microcosmic aspect of *kufr*. The verb *kaḥara* means 'to disbelieve or to deny'; it also means 'to veil or cover or obscure'. So to perform an act that veils God's light, that veils any of God's qualities (which we know, above all, through the divine names) is to perform an act of denial—of ontological *kufr*. Most people limit *kufr* to the denial of God's existence or to *shirk*. However, a formal believer may perform an act of ontological *kufr* because it is an act that obscures or veils God's light/qualities. For example, someone who professes to believe in God may perpetrate an act of violence—which deeply obscures the flow of God's Peace. Such an act denies God who is Peace itself (al-Salām). This is ontological *kufr*. To strive against such *kufr* 'with the hand' means to strive through action—that is to say, to strive against violence with active Peace, against intolerance with active tolerance (for God is the Very Patient, al-Ṣabūr, the Forbearing, al-Ḥalīm), against hatred with active love (for God is the Loving, al-Wadūd). To strive against the hypocrites (those who say they affirm God but in their behaviour deny God's qualities) 'with the tongue' is to say: strive by word, by informing or praying for them. On the intra-microcosmic level such striving begins against the *kufr* and hypocrisy (*nifāq*) present in a person's own behaviour, as part of Marwah's service (*khidmah*).

al-Taḥrīm (Prohibition)

66:9

وَأَغْلَظْ عَلَيْهِمْ

wa'ghluḏ 'alayhim
and be hard on them.

(God) commanded him ﷻ to be hard on them in order to vent His anger upon them despite the insignificance of their claims while He commanded Moses ﷺ to be gentle with Pharaoh despite his high claims.²⁷¹



²⁷¹ This comment draws attention to the sometimes unexpected manner of God's dealings with His creatures, as noted in the comments on 27:50 and 85:13.

﴿ 67 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْمُلْكِ

al-Mulk (Sovereignty)

67:1

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ

tabāraka'lladhi bi-yadihi'l-mulk

blessed is He in whose hand is the sovereignty.

Ja'far said: *Blessed*, that is, He is the one who sends down blessings upon the one who is detached (from all else, dedicated) to Him [alone] or is for Him.



﴿ 68 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْقَلَمِ

al-Qalam (The Pen)

68:1

ن وَالْقَلَمِ

nūn; wa'l-qalam

nūn; by the pen.

Ja'far said: *Nūn* is the light of pre-eternity from which He produced all beings. He made that for Muḥammad ﷺ. That is why it was said of him: *and verily you are in possession of a tremendous nature* (68:4), that is, in possession of the light by which you were distinguished in pre-eternity.

68:4

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

wa innaka la-'alā khuluqin 'aẓīmin

and verily you are in possession of a tremendous nature.

Ja'far said [concerning *the tremendous nature*]: It is untaintedness of faith and the reality of the oneness of God.

68:34

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٍ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٣٤﴾

inna li'l-muttaqīna 'inda Rabbihim jannāti'l-na'im

verily, for the God-aware, there are gardens of bliss in the presence of their Lord.

Ja'far said: The abode of the person who is wary of sins is the gardens of bliss. As for the person who is aware of God, most high, (God) raises

from him the coverings and veils so that he sees the Truth in all states.

68:42

يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ وَيُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ

yawma yukshafu 'an sāqin²⁷² wa yud'awna ilā'l-sujūd

on the day when the shank is disclosed and they are summoned to prostration.

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said: *On the day when the shank is disclosed*, '(When) terrors and calamities and the (narrow) bridge (across the abyss of hell) and the reckoning (are disclosed), [on that day] My believing slave to whom My care and My mercy have already been granted, shall be safe and secure from those terrors and calamities—he shall know nothing of that day's calamities and terrors.' Everyone to whom the care of God, most high, has already been given prostrates themselves before Him, (completely) in need of Him. But he to whom the justice of God, most high, has preceded will be unable to prostrate (himself); his back shall be like an inflexible rock, not yielding to the prostration to the Lord of the worlds.

Ja'far [also] said about His words, *on the day when the shank is disclosed*: When the Friend/friend meets the friend/Friend²⁷³ calamities are removed from him.²⁷⁴

272 The phrase *yukshafu 'an sāqin* is idiomatic, referring to the uncovering of the shanks when a man rolled up his trousers in preparation to meet a difficulty—hence the connotation of a time of difficulty and hardship.

273 The linguistic play touches on the word *walī*, which is both one of the divine names (al-Walī, the Patron, the Friend), and the Islamic word for a saint, *waliyu'llāh*, a 'friend of God'. This phrase might have been rendered as follows: 'when the (divine) Friend meets the (human) friend'; or 'when (God) the Friend meets the (creature His) friend'.

274 This comment exemplifies semi-inverse interpretation, based on the verb *ka-sh-fa*, which means to disclose, uncover, unveil, expose, to remove the veil on. In the Qur'ānic phrase the passive of the first form is used; in the comment the passive seventh form of the verb is used. The comment plays with the idiom, so that instead of calamities being disclosed by the removal of the veil upon them, the calamities themselves are removed.

﴿ 69 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْحَاقَّةِ

al-Ḥāqqah (The Revealing Reality)

69:38-39 فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا لَا تَبْصِرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

falā uqsimu bimā tubṣirūn. Wa mā lā tubṣirūn

nay but I swear by that which you see. And that which you do not see.

Ja'far said: *By that which you see of My handiwork in My kingdom; and that which you do not see of My beneficence to My friends.*

69:48 وَإِنَّهُ لَتَذْكِرَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

wa innahu la-tadhkiratun li'l-muttaqīn

and verily it is indeed a reminder for the God-aware.

Ja'far said: (It is) spiritual counsel for those who have certainty.



﴿ 71 ﴾

سُورَةُ نُوحٍ

Nūh (Noah)

71:12 وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا ﴿١٢﴾

wa yaj'al lakum jannātin wa yaj'al lakum anhāran

and He will grant you gardens and He will grant you rivers.

Ja'far said: He will adorn your external (aspect) with the adornment of service and your internal (aspect) with the lights of faith.



سُورَةُ الْمُزَّمِّلِ

al-Muzzamil (The Enwrapped One)

73:20

فَأَقْرَأُوا مَا تَيْسَّرَ مِنْهُ

fa'qra'ū mā tayassara mina'l-Qur'ān

so recite what is made easy (for you) of the Qur'ān.

Ja'far b. Muḥammad said: *What is made easy* for you in it is humility of heart and purity of inmost self.²⁷⁵



275 In other words, the teachings of the Qur'ān facilitate humility of heart and purity/serenity of inmost self; thus its recitation should produce these things in the reciter. If the alternative reading noted by Nwyia is taken into consideration, there would be a *min* instead of *fihī* and the comment would read: '*What is made easy for you of humility of heart and purity of inmost self.*'

﴿ 76 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْإِنْسَانِ

al-Insān (Mankind)

76:1 هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا ﴿١﴾

hal atā 'alā'l-insāni ḥinun mina'l-dahri lam yakun shay'an
madhkūran

*has there come upon man any time (in which) he was not a
thing remembered?*

Ja'far said: Has there ever come upon you, O Man, [even] an instant in which God did not remember you?

76:21

وَسَقَّوْنَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا ﴿٢١﴾

wa saqāhum Rabbuhum sharāban ṭahūran

and their Lord gives them a purifying drink to drink.

Ja'far said: He gives them the divine unity to drink in the inmost self, and they are totally lost to all other than Him.²⁷⁶ They do not regain their senses except at the eye-to-eye seeing and the veil on that which

276 To take this highly mystical and subtle comment step by step: 1) With the drink, there is the absorption of the consciousness into the divine unity through the inmost self which is the differentiated divine spirit, the *ḥaqīqah*: in other words, the duality of differentiated consciousness is effaced in the undifferentiated Self-consciousness; 2) Then 'duality' of consciousness re-emerges as the individuated spirit in the realm of non-differentiation, at the eye-to-eye seeing, which is the seeing of the one Identity by its individuated identity. Thus the 'duality' of individuated divine consciousness re-emerges, only to be obliterated in the Self-seeing of the unindividuated Sole-identity.

is between them and Him is raised. The drink is taken in what is taken from him [i.e., from the drinker]; and no remnant of him remains in it [i.e., in what is taken from him].²⁷⁷ And He draws him forth²⁷⁸ into the arena of blissful joy and the divine Presence, and the divine clasp [of God's embrace].

Ja'far [also] said, about His words, *a purifying drink*: He purifies them, through the drink, of everything other than Him, since he is not pure who is contaminated by anything pertaining to beings.²⁷⁹

277 The drink of divine unity is drunk by the differentiated, individuated spirit, the *ḥaqīqah*. It is the *ḥaqīqah* that is taken out of the incarnate human being, and there is naught in the *ḥaqīqah* other than al-Ḥaqq. The extracted *ḥaqīqah* is drawn forth into the undifferentiated unity of the divine Presence and clasped therein. To express it thus: a small living inscription of the divine name is clasped by the divine named One; God clasps His living image; this living image is the aspect that is 'in the image of God; it has nothing to do with the creature, just as sunlight entering a room has nothing to do with the room that it shines into. Yet the bliss of the individuated *ḥaqīqah* is experienced by it. When the one God multi-manifests, He experiences things through all the vantage points of His manifestations.

278 The verb is *ḥaṣṣala*, the second form of the root *ḥ-ṣ-l*. Its use here is highly evocative as it means 'to extract, draw forth . . . gold from rock, or the kernel from the shell . . .' See Lane at *ḥ-ṣ-l*. The annihilation and union described in this comment are the highest *fanā'* and *jam'* of the Sufis.

279 The second comment provides further elucidation; we are told that the drink means that the divine aspect is purged of all contamination by that which is not divine. So the 'he' that drinks and is drawn forth from the microcosm is the uncontaminated divine aspect. Here we have entered the realm of God alone who contains and transcends all being; He who is totally beyond form and manifestation, yet manifests within the cosmos, else the cosmos would not be, for the being of the cosmos is derived directly from the beyond-being Self-existence of God. Now, He who manifests within the macrocosm also manifests within the microcosm. Just as there is a microcosmic *walī* and a microcosmic *nabī*, there is a microcosmic Ḥaqq. The microcosmic Ḥaqq is the divine Presence in the spiritual heart, transmitted there by the gaze of God, and who, in turn, transmits the gaze of God to the heart and enlivens therewith the microcosmic Ṣafā. The microcosmic Ḥaqq is the *rasūl-saḥr* to the human microcosm from the absolutely transcendent Divinity. The microcosmic Ṣafā is the *rasūl-saḥr* to the soul from the theophany in the heart. Ṣafā is a theophany of the microcosmic Ḥaqq who is a theophany of the absolute God. With this comment the portrait of the human microcosm presented

﴿ 78 ﴾

سُورَةُ النَّبَاِ

al-Nabā' (The Tidings)

78:35

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِذْبًا ﴿٣٥﴾

lā yasma'una fihā laghwan wa-lā kidhdhāban

therein they hear no vain talk nor any untruth.

Ja'far said: For God, most high, strengthens [such a one] with God-given success so that, in the world, no vain talk flows from him about Him, nor yet is any vain talk heard from him in the divine Presence. *Vain talk* is the mention of any mentionable thing, except for Him. *Nor any untruth*, that is, nor any word except for the truthful word in the attestation of His onliness, prior eternity, and singularity.

78:36

جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا ﴿٣٦﴾

jazā'an min Rabbika 'aṭā'an ḥisāban

*recompense from your Lord, a gift of generous reckoning.*²⁸⁰

Ja'far said: The gift from God, most high, is twofold: [first] in the beginning there is (the gift) of faith and submission (to Him) (given) without request; [second] at the end, there is the gift of His disregarding lapses, negligence, and acts of disobedience. The slave's entry into paradise is by His mercy through His gifts. Even so is the gazing upon His august face.

by the *tafsīr* is complete.

280 *Ḥisāb* ('reckoning, settlement, consideration'), but also 'gift' or 'generous gift'. See Lane at *ḥisāb* under *ḥ-ṣ-b*.

‘Abasa (He Frowned)

﴿ 80 ﴾

سُورَةُ عَبَسَ

‘Abasa (He Frowned)

80:7

وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَّكَّى ﴿٧﴾

wa mā ‘alayka allā yazzakkā

yet it is not upon you if he grow not in purity.

Ja‘far said: You will not dignify through your attention the one whom He has not dignified with guidance and whom He has not adorned with gnosis.



﴿ 82 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْاِنْفِطَارِ

al-Infīṭār (The Cleaving)

82:6 يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿٦﴾

Yā ayyuhā'l-insānu mā gharraka bi-Rabbika'l-Karīm

O Man; what deceives you against your generous Lord?

Ja'far said: What keeps you back from the service of your Patron?

82:13-14 إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ ﴿١٤﴾

inna'l-abrāra lafi na'imin.

Wa inna'l-fujjāra lafi jaḥīmin

verily, the godly ones will be in bliss. While the wicked, sinful ones will be in hellfire.

Ja'far said: *The bliss is gnosis and the witnessing (of God); and hellfire is souls,²⁸¹ for they shall have fires²⁸² that burn.*

281 Wicked, sinful souls are themselves hellfire. As well as an external, macrocosmic situation, *jaḥīm* here is an infernal, microcosmic station of the soul, penetrating it through and through; the complete inverse of a soul permeated with bliss.

282 There is an evocative play on the word *nīrān* here. As the plural of *nār* it means 'fires'; as the multiple plural of *nīr* (as in *nīru'l-faddān*) it means 'yokes'. See Lane at *nīr* under *n-y-r*. The impression thus is of 'fiery yokes that burn'.

سُورَةُ الْمُطَفِّفِينَ

al-Muṭaffifin (The Defrauders)

83:24

تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٢٤﴾

ta'rifu fi wujūhihim naḍrata'l-na'im

you will recognise the radiance of bliss in their faces.

Ja'far said: When they return to their dwelling places after visiting God, most high, there is a shining like that of the sun in their faces because of the enduring rapture of the gazing (at God).²⁸³

283 When reading this comment, the reader should bear in mind that the word *wajh* refers to both 'face' and 'essence'. The face reveals the identity of an individual. In the subtle realm of spiritual forms, the face reveals the state of the essence much more clearly than the corporeal face in the physical realm does. The 'shining' mentioned in this comment is a reference to the radiance of the light of God shining through the angelic nature, the perfect inner 'ubūdiyyah—for when they gaze at God they are effaced and God's light shines through them clearly. There is a dual application of this comment. Since the gazing at God takes place in the spiritual realm, the shining face pertains in the first instance to the spiritual body (the angel within), and in the second instance to the corporeal body. On the spiritual level, when the differentiated spirits of the inhabitants of the paradises gaze at God, in that gazing they are totally reabsorbed into His undifferentiated spirit/light—for they are made of His differentiated light. Then, when they are returned, by God, to the differentiated state, the faces of their spiritual bodies shine like the sun due to the enduring rapture of their *fanā' fi'llāh*: this is the *fanā' fi'llāh* and *baqā' bi'llāh* in the spiritual realm. The face of an archangel appears like a radiant solar disc, brilliant white-gold in colour. On the level of the *dunyā*, if the spirit is still attached to a corporeal body, then this light of inner effacement in God (the result of the spirit gazing upon God) manifests as a non-physical radiance within the corporeal face when they return to their

83:27

وَمِزَاجُهُ مِنْ تَسْنِيمٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

wa mizājuhu min Tasnīmin

and its blend is from Tasnīm.²⁸⁴

Ja'far said: Chalices blended with intimacy from which they inhale the fragrance of closeness (to God).²⁸⁵



physical bodies, having been, in spirit, in God's Presence. The face of a saint, whose *ḥaqīqah* is not veiled, is suffused with ineffable light.

284 One of the springs of paradise, the others being Kāfūr and Salsabīl. For more on the springs of paradise see Sirāj ad-Dīn, *Book of Certainty*.

285 The comment refers to the drink of pure wine, sealed with musk and blended with a draught from Tasnīm, mentioned in verses 25–27 of this *sūrah*.

سُورَةُ الْبُرُوجِ

al-Burūj (The Great Constellations)

85:13

إِنَّهُ هُوَ يُبْدِي وَيُعِيدُ ﴿١٣﴾

innahu huwa yubdi'u wa yu'id²⁸⁶

verily it is He who brings forth and restores.

Ja'far said: *He who brings forth*, thus He annihilates [them] from all other than Him; then *restores*, thus He preserves [them] through His maintaining [them].²⁸⁷

Ja'far al-Şādiq [also] said: *Verily it is He who brings forth and restores*, that is, He dons the garment of the friends for the enemies so that it may be a gradual advancement for them. And He dons the garment of the enemies for the friends, lest they be conceited about their souls.²⁸⁸ Then He restores them, at death, [to their true state].²⁸⁹

286 *Yu'id* means to renew, reproduce, repeat, bring back, take back, cause to return, restore to, re-establish, etc. Al-Mu'id, the Restorer, is one of the divine names.

287 This comment should be read in conjunction with the comments at 42:9, 53:44 and 76:21 and their notes. God annihilates a soul, effacing from it everything other than Himself, thus bringing it forth from the *daran* of its *mukhālafah* and restoring it to the theophanic state of *muwāfaqah bi'llāh*; and then He preserves the soul in that state, maintaining its harmony with God. We have here again the concepts that became famous among the Sufis as *fanā' fi'llāh* and *baqā' bi'llāh*, extinction in God and subsistence through God.

288 The clear implication is that God's wisdom is at work in both the comfortable and the uncomfortable aspects of the spiritual life.

289 Initially this comment may seem counterintuitive; but the spiritual message is a universal one: gentle persuasion of those who need it and precaution against self-satisfaction and pride for those well-advanced on

﴿ 90 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْبَلَدِ

al-Balad (The Land)

90:4

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ ﴿٤﴾

la-qad khalaqnā'l-insān fi kabadin

*verily We have created mankind for difficulty.*²⁹⁰

Ja'far said: For trials and hardship.²⁹¹

His way. Though not exactly the same, the principle here is not totally dissimilar to that which makes Grace hold the fallen one close to the divine breast. In any case, this comment describes a possible aspect of the interaction between God and creature, that may or may not manifest as God journeys with the creature, bringing him/her back to Himself.

290 The primary meanings of *kabad* are toil, hardship, pain, distress, difficulty, and trial. However, Lane (at *kabad* under *k-b-d*) cites an interpretation of this verse whereby '*fi kabadin*' is understood to mean 'in a right and just state; in an erect state; in just proportion.' Asad renders this verse as: 'Verily We have created man into [a life of] pain, toil and trial'; while Pickthall has, 'We verily have created man in an atmosphere' adding in a note 'or "in affliction".' Our translation keeps in mind that *fi* can mean 'for' and takes into account the comment that indicates how the verse was understood.

291 'Trials and hardships' serve the purpose, among others, of providing opportunities for Marwah to help Ṣafā overcome the lower soul, the *nafs al-ammārah bi'l-sū'*.

90:15

يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾

yatīman dhā maqrabatin

an orphan who is a close relative.

Ja'far said: It is that by which you draw closer to your Lord in the support of orphans and in checking on them.



﴿ 93 ﴾

سُورَةُ الضُّحَىٰ

al-Ḍuhā (The Bright Morning Hours)

93:7

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ ﴿٧﴾

wa wajadaka ḍāllan fa-hadā

and (did He not) find you wandering lost and guide you?

Ja'far said: You were straying away from My love for you in pre-eternity; so I bestowed upon you spiritual knowledge of Me.

93:9-10

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ﴿٩﴾ وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ﴿١٠﴾

fa amma'l-yatīma falā taqhar. Wa amma'l-sā'ilā falā tanhar

so, as for the orphan, do not oppress (them). And as for the questioner, do not rebuff (them).

Ja'far said: *The orphan* is one who is deprived of the honourable robe of guidance—do not make him despair of My mercy, for I am able to clothe him with the garment of guidance. As for the questioner, when he questions you about Me, direct him to Me with the most gracious/subtlest direction, for I am indeed near, responsive.²⁹²

292 The choice of words in this comment brings to mind two other verses from the Qur'ān, at 2:186, *And when My slaves question you about Me I am indeed near; I answer the call of the caller when he calls Me; then let them respond to Me and let them believe in Me that they may be rightly-guided.* And the second, at 39:53, *Say O My slaves who have transgressed against yourselves, do not despair of God's mercy, verily God forgives all sins, indeed He, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.*

al-Ḍuḥā (The Bright Morning Hours)

93:11

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ﴿١١﴾

wa ammā bi-ni'mati Rabbika fa-ḥaddith

and as for the blessing of your Lord, speak [of it].

Ja'far said: Inform creation of that with which I have blessed them through you and your position.



﴿ 94 ﴾

سُورَةُ الشَّرْحِ

al-Sharḥ (The Opening Up)

al-Inshirāḥ (The Expansion)

94:1

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ﴿١﴾

a-lam nashraḥ laka ṣadraka

have We not opened up your breast for you?

Ja'far said: *Have We not opened up your breast for you, for witnessing Me and beholding Me?*

94:4

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ﴿٤﴾

wa rafa'nā laka dhikraka

and (have not) We raised high your mention?

Ja'far said: No one mentions you (in connection with) the messengership without mentioning Me (in connection with) the Lordship.

94:7

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ ﴿٧﴾

fa-idhā faraghta fa'nṣab

then when you are free, exert yourself.

Ja'far said: Remember your Lord, while you are empty of everything other than Him.

﴿ 95 ﴾

سُورَةُ التِّينِ

al-Tin (The Fig)

95:4

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ①

la-qad khalaqna'l-insāna fi aḥsani taqwīmin

We have surely created mankind in the best form.

Ja'far said: In the best image.



﴿ 98 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْبَيِّنَةِ

al-Bayyinah (The Clear Proof)

98:8

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ

raḍiya'llāhu 'anhum wa raḍū 'anhu

God is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him.

Al-Ṣādiq عليه السلام said: *God is pleased with them* in that the divine care and God-given success have already proceeded from God to them; *and they are pleased with Him* in that He blessed them with their following His Messenger and (with) accepting what he brought; and (with) expending their wealth and the best of their efforts²⁹³ [in the service] of the Messenger of God ﷺ.²⁹⁴



293 *Muhaj*, singular *muhjah*, has as one of its meanings: 'the best of one's self, one's efforts, endeavours, and energy'. See Lane at *muhjah* under *m-h-j*. Other meanings include 'life, heart, innermost self, core, soul, heartblood' (see Wehr).

294 *Bayna yadayhi*, literally: 'between his hands'. The meaning is that they placed their wealth and efforts at the Messenger's service.

سُورَةُ الْهُمَزَةِ

al-Humazah (The Slanderer)

104:6-7

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقَدَةُ ۗ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ ۗ

nāru'llāhi'l-mūqadah. Allatī taṭṭali'u 'alā'l-af'idah

the kindled fire of God. Which rises up, overwhelming hearts.

[It is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad [that] he said, concerning [the above] words (of God) ﷻ: The fires are diverse, varied. Among them is the fire of love and gnosis burning in the hearts of the monotheists; while the fires of hell burn in the hearts of the disbelievers. When the fires of love ignite in the heart of the believer, they burn up every eagerness for (what is) other than God, and every remembrance other than His remembrance.²⁹⁵



295 Note again the blissful obliteration that is the impact of the blazing presence of the divine qualities. The fires of love/care are to be understood as light, in keeping with the comment at 28:29, where it is said of Moses that he saw a fire; at 27:34, when the conquering King comes in, the town is destroyed of its native (read 'fallen') nature; and as the unveiled vision of God would consume Moses, even so the fires of divine love burn all other than the divine Subject/Object/Content of love.

﴿ 108 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْكَوْثَرِ

al-Kawthar (Abundance)

108:1

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ﴿١﴾

innā ā'ṭaynāka'l-kawthar²⁹⁶

verily We have given you abundance.

Ja'far al-Šādiq said: That is, a light in your heart which leads you to Me and cuts you off from what is other than Me.

He also said [again interpreting the word *kawthar, abundance*]: (It is) intercession for your community.



296 *Kawthar* is the name of the supreme river in paradise, source of all paradisaal rivers. See Sirāj ad-Dīn, *Book of Certainty*, p. 7.

سُورَةُ الْإِخْلَاصِ

al-Ikhlāṣ (Faithfulness)

al-Tawḥīd (The Unity)

112:2

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

Allāhu'l-Ṣamad²⁹⁷

God, the everlasting, self-sufficient, besought Lord.

Ja'far said: *The everlasting, self-sufficient, besought Lord* who gave to His creation from His knowledge only the Name and the quality.²⁹⁸

Ja'far [also] said: *al-Ṣamad* [contains] five letters: The *alif* indicates His indivisible oneness (*aḥadīyah*). The *lām* indicates His divinity (*ulūhīyah*). These two letters are assimilated, they do not manifest upon the tongue (in the uttered word) but do manifest in writing. This shows that His indivisible unity and His divinity are hidden, not known through the senses; and that He cannot be compared to people. The concealment (of these two letters) in the spoken word is an indication that the intelligence cannot perceive Him nor yet comprehend Him through knowledge. While the manifestation (of these two letters) in writing is an indication that He manifests in the hearts of the sages

297 *Ṣamad* (a lord whom people and things repair to, turn to, resort to, betake themselves to). Also, a lord to whom obedience is due, and being that continues everlastingly. See Lane at *ṣamad* under *ṣ-m-d*. The word occurs but once in the Qur'ān and it is applied to God alone.

298 *Ṣifah* (plural *ṣifāt*) is often used with reference to the divine attributes or qualities which are directly linked with the divine names; for example, the divine names *al-Raḥmān* and *al-Raḥīm* express the divine quality of *rahmah* (mercy); and the divine name *al-Qādir* expresses the divine quality of *qudrah* (power).

and that He appears to the eyes of the lovers in the Abode of Peace.

The *ṣād* is an indication that He is truthful in what He promises: His act is sincerity (*ṣidq*), His speech is sincerity (*ṣidq*), and He summons His slaves to sincerity (*ṣidq*). The *mīm* is an indication of His sovereignty (*mulk*) for He is the Sovereign King (*malik*) in reality. The *dāl* is the mark of His permanence (*dawām*) in His eternal future and His eternal past—although there is neither past-eternity nor future-eternity for they are but terms which are used among His slaves according to the [perspective of] temporal variation.²⁹⁹

112:3

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

lam yalid wa-lam yūlad

He did not beget nor was He begotten.

Ja'far said: Majestic is our Lord (beyond) that delusive imaginations, intelligences, or sciences should perceive Him. Rather He is as He described Himself—and the modality³⁰⁰ of His description is not

299 Physical time pertains to the realm of dense matter. In the spiritual realm there is a subtler form of duration (which encompasses dense time), with a greater flexibility and easier directional movement. In the higher echelons of the subtle realm, and of being as a whole, duration is ever more purified, ever more supple, and ever more still. Within beyond being, at the level of non-individuation, the differences of temporal direction and movement disappear completely in the totally pure, absolute stillness of God's unindividuated Self. The Presence of the absolutely still Self is every 'where', all the 'time'. This still Self of God is present through all levels of beyond being and being, through all levels of existence/creation. Not only does God encompass and transcend all duration and location, He permeates them. Wherever, whenever, in His essential Self, He transcends the terms of time. *Wheresoever you turn, temporally or spatially, there is the face/identity/self of God.*

300 *Wa'l-kayfiyyah 'an wasfihi ghayru ma'qūlah* might also be rendered: 'and (to pose the question of) "how?" concerning His description is absurd'. *Kayfiyyah* became an important point in the anthropomorphist (*tashbih*) / deanthropomorphist (*tanzih*) debate in Islamic theology. Ibn Ḥanbal used the phrase *bilā kayf* (literally, 'without asking how') to mean that God's description of Himself in the Qur'an should be accepted without any questions. Later Ḥanbalis such as Ibn Ḥanbal's own son, were more

intellectually perceivable. Glory to Him (beyond) that understandings or intelligences should attain to His modality! *everything is perishing save for His Face/Essence* (28:88). To Him belongs eternal subsistence, beginningless and endless eternity, eternal future, onliness, will and power;³⁰¹ blessed and most high is He!

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝

112:1-4

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝

qul: huwa'llāhu aḥad. Allāhu'l-Ṣamad. Lam yalid wa-lam yūlad.
Wa-lam yakun lahu kufuwan aḥad

say: He, God, is one. God, the everlasting, self-sufficient,
besought Lord. He does not beget nor is He begotten. And there
is nothing equal or comparable to Him.³⁰²

[It is related] from Ja'far b. Muḥammad concerning His (above) words:

anthropomorphist, almost corporealists. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī's attitude of *bilā kayf* was somewhat different and was based on the equation of *kayfiyyah* with *tashbīh* (anthropomorphism). For al-Ash'arī, *bilā kayf* meant that one affirmed the divine attributes or qualities without equating them with human attributes or qualities. This principle was known as *al-ithbāt bi-ghayri tashbīh* (affirmation without anthropomorphism). (Thanks are due to Toby Mayer for help with this note.)

- 301 That is, eternal subsistence (*baqā'*), beginningless and endless eternity (*sarmadiyyah*), eternal future (*abadiyyah*), onliness (*waḥdāniyyah*), will (*mashī'ah*) and power (*qudrah*);
- 302 To pick up on the linguistic lead of this *sūrah*, God, who is the very essence of the masculine and feminine principles, contains within Himself all levels and inhabitants of creation: beyond-being and being (like the unejaculated seed is contained in the paternal loins and the unbegotten babe in the maternal womb, respectively). Never is anything outside of God—for God does not beget: the whole of undifferentiated existence is within the divine 'loins'; the whole of differentiated being is as the unborn babe in the divine 'womb'. Metaphysically speaking, God is the full androgynous parent. Nothing encompasses Him, nor is He begotten from another for there is no existence nor existent other than God's unique Self-existence. God is sui generic. The first verse of *Sūrat al-Ikhlās* is

This means: He has manifested what the souls desire in the written form of the letters. For the deepest realities are well-guarded from being attained by delusive imagination or understanding. The manifestation of that in letters is so that he be rightly guided who *gives ear* (5:37); it is an allusion to the Unseen. The letter *hā'* (of the word *huwa*) tells of the immutable reality³⁰³ [of God] while the (letter) *waw* is an allusion to that which is hidden from the senses.

a statement of oneness, *aḥadiyah*; it pertains to the level of the *kunh*, beyond beyond-being, which encompasses, but also transcends, beyond-being. With the use of the name *al-Ṣamad*, the second verse states both the Self-sufficiency of the one Divinity/Existence, but also introduces duality through this same name which also means 'the Lord to whom others resort to'; this duality pertains to both beyond-being (through individuation) and to being (through differentiation). In graphic and easily comprehensible terms, the third verse describes, first, the condition of duality as being contained within the Oneness, not outside of it; and second, the condition of the Oneness not being outside anything else that it might have issued from. The fourth verse sums this up in a statement of the utter uniqueness of the One, all-encompassing Divinity, and rejoins the first verse through the oneness. The *sūrah* provides a divinely succinct and comprehensive metaphysical description.

- 303 *Ma'nā thābit*. The word *thābit* (fixed, established, constant) is a specific term in later Islamic philosophy that denotes 'ontological subsistence'. Likewise, the word *ma'nā* (meaning, reality, mental image, idea), in Islamic philosophical discourse, is used specifically for an idea/concept as opposed to a material entity. In Lane, the *ma'nā* of something is said to be termed *māhiyah* if it is the response to the question *mā huwa?* (what is it?); *huwiyah* if the subject is being distinguished from others; and *ḥaqīqah* when the subject is being considered as objectively existing. Perhaps we have here the earliest extant use of this phrase as precursor of later philosophical terms.

al-Ikhlāṣ (Faithfulness)

Al-Aḥad (the One), is the sole one (*al-fard*) who has no equivalent, for He is the one who unifies the (multiple) individuations (*al-āḥād*).³⁰⁴

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَبِهِ نَسْتَعِينُ آمِينَ



³⁰⁴ This last comment is a marvellous, pithy explanation of the indivisible unity of God. Initially it is seemingly paradoxical: God is the indivisible One (*al-Aḥad*), yet 'He is the one who unifies the multiple individuations.' But it is not contradictory; rather it is an affirmation of two facts: 'simplicity' and complexity. His unity contains multiplicity within itself. God as a totality is indivisible; a segment or part of Him cannot be detached from Him and set apart from Him. But within His sole one Self, He contains the whole multiplicity of individuated and differentiated creation, of multiple levels of existence and being.

Glossary

- ‘*abd*, pl. ‘*ibād*: slave; a being that is absolutely and totally receptive to the Lord (*Rabb*) and to His influx
- abad*: future eternity
- abadīyah*: future eternity; God’s eternal future
- al-*Aḥad*: the One (divine name); *al-āḥād*: multiple individuations
- aḥadīyah*: (God’s) unity, His unindividuated oneness; total oneness
- ‘*ahd*: pledge
- ahwā’*, sing. *hawān*: desires, whims, passions, longings, inclinations
- ajal*: the appointed time, moment of death, deadline
- akhlāq*: moral qualities; innate characteristics
- akwān*, sing. *kawn*: beings
- ālā’*, sing. *ilan*: divine favours
- alḥāb*, sing. *lubb*: spiritual minds, inmost spiritual consciousness
- amānī*, sing. *umniya*: desirous demands, longings
- amr*: command (particularly the divine command)
- ‘*aql*: intellect
- ‘*arsh*: throne, specifically the divine throne
- aṣṣiyā’*: see *ṣaṣīy*
- ‘*atf*: compassion
- awṣāf*, sing. *waṣf*: attributes, qualities, characteristics
- āyah*, pl. *āyāt*: sign, verse of the Qur’ān
- ‘*ayn*: eye, essence, core, fountain, spring
- pl. *a’yun*: eyes (*bi a’yuninā*: under Our eye (of God))
- pl. *a’yān*: essences
- pl. ‘*uyūn*: springs, fountains
- azal*: pre-eternity, beyond being
- azalīyah*: prior eternity; God’s eternal past
- ‘*aẓamah*: the divine sublimity
- bahā’*: (God’s) brilliance
- al-Barr: the Beneficent (divine name)
- baqā’*: eternal subsistence
- bāqīn*: subsistent
- al-Bāqī: the Eternally Subsistent (divine name)
- baṣīrah*: the faculty of spiritual sight, of subtle seeing/vision
- bāṭil*: falsehood
- bāṭīn*: the inward, concealed dimension; *Bāṭīn*, the Hidden One (God), the unseen
- birr*: beneficence

Glossary

damir, pl. *damāyir/damā'ir*: conscience

darak: attainment

daran: dirt

daran al-mukhālafah/āt: the spiritual dirt or pollution of op-posing God or of being in disharmony with the divine qualities

dawām: permanence; continuity

daymūmiyah: (the divine) permanence

Dhāt: essence, specifically, the divine essence

dhawq: taste; actual personal experience of something

dhikr: remembrance, recollection

dhikru'llāh: the remembrance of God, the practice of invoking God's name/s

dhikrā: recollection or remembrance due to being reminded

dīn: religion

al-dunyā: the lowest (i.e. physical) world; worldliness

fadl: (God's) Grace

fahm: understanding, comprehension

fanā' / fanā fi'llāh: extinction, annihilation, effacement in God: of the soul and of all other than God

fānin: transient

faqr: neediness (to God)

faqir, pl. *fuqarā'*: the person who is needy to God and empty for Him

fardaniyah: (the divine) uniqueness, singularity

fawā'id, sing. *fā'idah*: benefits, advantages, profits, good, knowledge

fitnah: temptation

fu'ād, pl. *af'idah*: mind, heart

futūwah: chivalry, nobleness, honourableness, generosity

hāl, pl. *aḥwāl*: state (esp. spiritual); condition

ḥamd: praise

al-Ḥaqq: God the Truth, the Reality, the Fact

ḥaqīqah, pl. *ḥaqā'iq*: reality, truth, specifically, the deepest Truth/Reality in the human, the manifestation of the divine lights at the core of the spiritual heart; the level of interpretation pertinent to the holy content of the spiritual heart

ḥayā': shame

ḥayāh: life

ḥaybah: awe, awesomeness

ḥayrah: bewilderment

ḥifz al-qalb: protection of the heart

ḥikmah: wisdom

ḥudā: right guidance

ḥukm: ordinance, ruling, decree, judgement; specifically, the divine ordinance

ḥurmah: sacredness, sanctity, dignity, honour, inviolability; respect, reverence, veneration

- huwiyah*: the divine Identity or Ipseity
ḥuwah: a state of fortunateness, nearness to the heart, being beloved
‘ibārah: literal expression, the literal text
idrāk: perception
iftiqār: neediness (to God)
iḥāṭah: encompassment; the realised knowledge of being totally encompassed by God
iḥsān: goodness
ījād: birth in being
ikhlāṣ: faithfulness
ikhtisās: distinction; specifically, being chosen for divinely conferred spiritual privileges
‘ilal, sing. *‘illah*: causes, weaknesses, deficiencies
‘ilm, pl. *‘ulūm*: knowledge
‘ilm al-hurūf: knowledge of the esoteric significance of letters
‘ilm ladunī: knowledge bestowed by God directly
īmān: faith, belief in God
‘ināyah: God’s pre-eternal, continual loving care for His creatures
infiṣāl: detachment
iqtirāb: drawing close
irādah, pl. *irādāt*: wish, desire, intention, volition, decree, specifically, the potent divine intention
ishārah, pl. *ishārāt*: allusion, indication; the level of interpretation pertinent to the distinguished/elite (*khawāṣṣ*)
‘ishq: passionate love
islām: submission/surrender to God; receptivity to the influx of the divine qualities
‘ismah: infallibility, impeccability, purity, divine-preservation from sin and error, innocence
iṣṭifā’iyah: pre-election by God, being chosen by God
istiḳāmah: integrity
istikānah: quiescence, quietude, submissiveness
istitār: the divine Self-veiling
ithbāt: affirmation, specifically the affirmation of ‘except God’ after the negation in the testimonial of faith: ‘there is no God except God’
ittilā’: beholding
ittisāl: attachment, conjunction, attaining to union
‘iwāḍ: replacement, specifically the replacement of the human qualities by the divine ones; recompense
‘iyān: eye-witnessing, seeing with one’s own eyes
mu‘āyin: one who views or sees
izhār: manifestation, to make clear, to make apparent
jafr: the esoteric interpretation of letters
jaḥim: hellfire

Glossary

- Jalāl*: the divine majesty
jannah, pl. *jannāt*: a paradisaal garden
kāfir, pl. *kuffār*, *kāfirūn*: one who denies God by veiling the divine lights with the darkness of his sins
kalām: speech
 kalām Allāh: the speech or Word of God, the Qurʾān
karam: generosity
karāmah: munificence, favour, mark of honour
 pl. *karāmāt*: specifically miracles that are vouchsafed to saints
kawn: being
kayfiyah: modality, nature
khābar, pl. *akhbār*: reported sayings from the Prophet and the Imams
khalwah: solitude with God
khawf: fear
khawāṣṣ, sing. *khāṣṣ*: distinguished people; elite
khayrāt, sing. *khayrah*: good deeds, blessings
khidmah: service
 khidmat Allāh: the service of God (to serve God)
khiṭāb: God's direct oration to the heart
khushūʿ: humility
kibriyāʿ: (divine) magnificence
kufr: disbelief in God, to deny God, to veil or obscure (God's light)
kulliyah: totality, 'allness'
kunh: core, essential nature, substance; the unindividuated essence of God.
kursī: (the divine) seat, chair
al-Laṭīf: the Kind (divine name)
laṭīfah, pl. *laṭāʾif*: subtlety; the level of interpretation pertinent to sanctity of soul, with reference to the subtle realm
ladhdhah: rapture, joy, delight
lawh: the heavenly tablet
lubb: see *albāb*
lutf: kindness
maḥabbah: love
maʿānī/maʿānin, sing. *maʿnā/maʿnan*: significances, meanings, concepts, good characteristics, qualities
maḥall: locus, place
 al-maḥall al-adnā: the place of closest proximity
māʾiyah: quiddity, quintessence, sap, juice
majd: (God's) glory
malak, pl. *malāʾikāt*: angel
al-Mālik: the Sovereign King (divine name)
maqām, pl. *maqāmāt*: station, rank, standing position; tone (sound), musical mode
marḍāt: gratification

- ma'rifah*: gnosis, spiritual knowledge, mystical knowledge, realisatory knowledge
- Marwah*: a hill in Mecca; symbol of the heroic soul
- mashhad*: the place of the assembly of witnessing; assembly, meeting
- mashī'ah*: will, wish; specifically, the divine will
- mawaddah*: devoted love, friendship
- maw'izah*: spiritual counsel
- mawāqif*, sing. *mawqif*: way stations, stopping places, stands
- mi'rāj*: specifically, the Prophet's spiritual/mystical (re-)ascent to God, riding through the seven heavens on the spiritual steed named Burāq, accompanied by Gabriel upto the furthest boundary; the (re-)ascending spiritual journey of the soul/spirit to God
- mithāq*: covenant
al-mithāq al-awwal: the first covenant; the primordial covenant made between God, Lord of all, and all humanity in potentia: 'Am I not your Lord? (*A-lastu bi-Rabbikum*); 'Indeed you are (*Balā*)!'
- mu'āyanah*: eye to eye
- muhjah*, pl. *muhaj*: best effort, energy, life blood, innermost self, core, heart
- mukhālafah*, pl. *mukhālafāt*: opposition/contrast (to God)
- al-Mu'id: the Restorer (divine name)
- mulāḥazah*: perception
- mulk*: authority, sovereignty, power, dominion
- munājah*, pl. *munājāt*: secret converse with God
- al-Mun'im: the Bestower (divine name)
- murūwah*: heroic valor/virtues, chivalry, knightly behaviour
- muṣḥaf*, pl. *maṣāḥif*: copy or edition of the Qur'ān
- mushāhadah*: witnessing by seeing or being present or by personal experience
- muṭāla'ah*: beholding
- muwāfaqah (bi'llāh)*: to be in harmony (with God)
- nabī*, pl. *anbiyā'*: prophet
- nafi*: negation, specifically the negation in the Islamic testimonial of faith (see *ithbāt* above)
- nafs*, pl. *nufūs/ansfus*: soul, specifically lower soul; ego
- nahi*: prohibition
- naḥīzah*: natural disposition
- na'im*: bliss
- nā't*, pl. *nu'ūt*: qualities, characteristics, description
- nazar*: (God's) gaze; seeing; perception
- al-nazar ilā'llāh*: the gazing at God; looking at God
al-nazar bi nūri'l-'ilm: perception through the light of knowledge
- nifāq*: hypocrisy
- nī'mah*, pl. *nī'am*: blessing
- nubūwah*: prophethood, prophecy
- nūr*: Light

Glossary

- qabḍah*: the divine grasp
qaḍāʾ: the divine decree; fate
qadar, pl. *aqdār*: destiny; rank
al-Qaḍīm: the Pre-existent One (divine name)
al-Qaḥhār: the Irresistible (divine name)
qalb: heart, specifically the spiritual heart
qawl: word/s, speech
qanāʾah: temperance
qanūʿ, pl. *qunūʿ*: to be content, temperate
qudrah: the divine power
qurb / qurbah: closeness/proximity (to God)
qūwah: strength, power, potency
raḥmah: the divine mercy
al-Raḥmān: the Gracious (divine name)
al-Raḥīm: the Merciful (divine name)
rajāʾ: hope
rasūl, pl. *rusul*: Messenger (of God)
rīʾyah: (divine) care/charge (for His creatures)
riḍāʾ / riḍā: satisfaction, pleasure, delight, contentment
riḍwān: God's pleasure
risālah: message; messengership, prophetic mission
rubūbiyah: the divine Lordship; the Divinity
rūh: Spirit;
 pl. *arwāh*: spirits; individuations of the One Spirit
ruʾyah: seeing, beholding
ruʾyāʾ: a vision in the sense of apparition or mental vision
saʿādah: felicity, happiness, bliss
sabab, pl. *asbāb*: cause, means, link
ṣabr: patience
ṣādiq, pl. *ṣādiqūn*: truthful, faithful, sincere, veracious ones
Ṣafā: a hill in Mecca; symbol of the individuated, differentiated spirit
ṣafāʾ: serenity, purity
ṣafīy, pl. *aṣfiyāʾ*: bosom friend, intimate companion
ṣafīr: ambassador (of God)
sakhāʾ: liberality, munificence, generosity
al-Sakīnah: the Peace of the Presence of God
al-Salām: Peace (divine name)
sālik: traveller, specifically the spiritual aspirant; an exact equivalent of the
 'journeyman' of the alchemists
al-Ṣamad: the Everlasting, Self-sufficient, besought Lord (divine name)
ṣamadiyah: the absolute Self-sufficiency of God
sanāʾ: (God's) resplendence
sarāyir / Sarāʾir, sing. *sarīrah*: secret reaches of the soul, secret thoughts; mind/s,
 soul/s

- sarmadiyah*: beginningless and endless eternity of God
shabhun: a bodily, corporeal form; an apparition, indistinct shape, ghost, phantom
shafā'ah: intercession
shafaqah: compassion, sympathy, loving care, solicitude
shahādah: testimony; the Islamic testimonial of faith: *lā ilāha illā'llāh*, 'there is no God except God'.
shaqāwah: misery, misfortune, distress
sharī'ah, pl. *sharā'if*: revealed 'laws' i.e. guiding principles for way of life
shawq: yearning
ṣiddiq, pl. *ṣiddiqūn*: truthful, honest, sincere, veracious, loyal
ṣidq: sincerity, truthfulness, veracity, faithfulness
ṣifah, pl. *ṣifāt*: quality, attribute, description
sirr, pl. *asrār*: secret, specifically, the divine secret embedded in the human; the inmost self; in the text, *sirr* is almost synonymous with *ḥaqīqah*
sukūn: peace, calm, tranquillity
Sunnah: custom/s of the Prophet; norm or convention
surūr: joy
tadhakkur: recollection
tafsīr: explanation, exposition, interpretation, commentary (esp. scriptural)
tafwīd: entrustment (of one's affairs to God); to give God full power over one's affairs
tahqīq bi'l-Ḥaqq: realisation of the Truth, God-realisation
tajallī: divine Self-disclosure; theophany, divine manifestation
taslim: consent, surrender, acceptance
taṭbīq: the interpretive method of analogous correspondences
tawādu': humility
tawakkul: trusting reliance upon God
tawfiq: God-given success (in goodness)
tawḥīd: God's oneness, belief in and affirmation of it; monotheism
ta'wil: a method of symbolic interpretation through associated meanings based on the constituent letters of words and their verbal roots
tawliyah: governance
thiqqah bi'llāh: confidence in God
ṭuma'nīnah: tranquillity, serenity, equanimity, the composure that comes through confidence (in God)
'ubūdiyyah: slavehood, the creature's receptivity towards the Lord
'ujb: self-admiration, pride, vanity, conceit
ulfah: intimate love
ulūhiyah: Godhood; divinity
ummu'l-kitāb: literally, the 'Mother of the Book', the original source of scripture; the archetype of all revealed books
uns: intimacy
wafā': faithful fulfillment

Glossary

waḥdaniyah: onliness of God; His uniqueness

al-Wāḥid: the Only (divine name)

wāḥidiyah: (God's) singularity and onliness; the fact that He is alone and unique

walah: rapture

walāyah: divine friendship, sanctity

athār al-walāyah—the effects/traces of sanctity/divine friendship

waqār: dignity

walī (ref. to God): protecting friend, patron

waliyu'llāh / *walī* pl. *awliyā'*: friend of God, saint

wuṣlah: means of attachment (to God)

yaqīn: certainty

Zāhir: the Manifest One (God), the outward, external dimension, the literal, the obvious, visible aspect

zālim: sinner, one who produces darkness in his soul

zulfah: intimate closeness

zulm: darkness, sin; the darkness of sin in the soul

zūr: 'falsehood' in a general sense; specifically, something false that is taken as lord or worshipped in place of God



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LE TAFSIR MYSTIQUE

attribué à Ğa'far Šādiq

Édition critique

Comme pour tant d'autres textes mystiques anciens, l'importance du *Tafsir* mystique attribué par les soufis sunnites à l'Imām Ğa'far Šādiq (m. 148/765) a été soulignée pour la première fois par L. Massignon dans son *Essai sur le lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* (pp. 201-206). A la même époque, J.F. Ruska consacrait à Ğa'far une monographie (1) dans laquelle il examinait la mystérieuse question des rapports entre Ğābir Ibn Ḥayyān et Ğa'far dont les historiens arabes disent qu'il s'occupa d'alchimie et qui aurait été, au témoignage d'Ibn al-Nadīm lui-même, le maître en sciences occultes de Ğābir (2). Dans la première partie de son travail, Ruska passe en revue les divers ouvrages attribués à l'Imām Ğa'far, mais il semble ignorer l'activité exégétique de ce VI^e Imām chiïte ou la laisse en dehors du champ de ses investigations.

L. Massignon, par contre, centre toute son étude sur le « problème littéraire » que pose l'attribution à Ğa'far par les milieux soufis sunnites d'un commentaire mystique du Coran. Ce commentaire nous est parvenu dans l'importante compilation de Sulamī intitulée *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsir*, et Sulamī lui-même indique, dans son Introduction, qu'il en reproduit la recension établie par Ibn 'Aṭā (m. 309/921). Examinant la question de l'authenticité de ce commentaire, Massignon émet l'opinion suivante: « On ne peut a priori rejeter absolument l'attribution de sentences de ce *tafsir* mystique

(1) *Arabische Alchemisten*, II, Ğa'far al-Šādiq, der sechste Imām, 1924.

(2) V. *Fihrist*, p. 355.

à Ğa'far, vu les coïncidences doctrinales remarquables que l'on rencontre entre certaines d'entre elles et les fragments de Ğa'far invoqués de façon indépendante par les Imāmites orthodoxes et par les *ġulāi* (Nuṣayris et Druzes). »

Cette opinion contient deux affirmations majeures que Massignon n'a malheureusement pas pris la peine d'étayer par des preuves. En effet, on aurait aimé savoir ce que sont ces « coïncidences doctrinales » entre le *tafsīr* conservé et transmis par Sulamī et les « fragments » circulant dans les milieux imāmites sous le nom de Ğa'far Ṣādiq. D'autre part, il eut été nécessaire de faire la preuve de l'indépendance réciproque de ces deux traditions. Car si, dans les milieux chiites, on a pu conserver, de façon indépendante des soufis sunnites, des *ḥadīṭ* donnant le commentaire du VI^e Imām sur le Coran, le contraire n'est pas de soi évident. Par contre, il est de plus en plus manifeste que les soufis ont été très ouverts aux idées venant du Chiisme, et rien ne s'oppose à ce qu'ils aient emprunté à quelques sources chiites leur propre recension du commentaire qu'ils attribuent à l'Imām Ğa'far. Massignon ne met-il pas lui-même en doute la valeur de l'*isnād* de *Ḍu-l-Nūn Miṣrī* faisant remonter ce *tafsīr* à Ğa'far *via* Mālik ?

L'authenticité de ce *tafsīr* mystique, attribué à Ğa'far par les soufis, nous renvoie donc aux problèmes fort complexes et encore mal étudiés que soulève l'immense littérature attribuée par les chiites à leurs premiers Imāms.

En ce qui concerne l'Imām Ğa'far lui-même, il existe par bonheur tout un commentaire du Coran compilé sous son nom par Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nu'mānī qui fut disciple de Kulaynī (m. 329/940). Ce commentaire dont une copie existe à la bibliothèque de Bankipore (1) peut être considéré comme le pendant chiite de la recension que nous éditons ici et qui est la recension connue dans les milieux sunnites. La comparaison entre ces deux recensions révèle en fait plus que les « coïncidences doctrinales » dont faisait mention L. Massignon. Nous sommes en présence d'une même

(1) N^o 1460, 232 folios. Nous remercions vivement notre ami le P. Hambye qui a bien voulu prendre la peine de nous le microfilmer.

œuvre, ayant même inspiration, même style et même contenu spirituel. Bien plus, de part et d'autre, nous retrouvons des sentences qui sont littéralement les mêmes, avec, cependant, des variantes importantes qui indiquent deux sources de transmission différentes. Cette constatation, pour importante qu'elle soit, ne résoud évidemment pas le problème de savoir ce qui, réellement, dans ces *Riwāyāt*, soit sunnites soit chiïtes, provient de l'Imām Ğa'far.

Un fait est certain, en ce qui regarde l'histoire du soufisme, et c'est sur ce fait que nous voudrions ici attirer l'attention : quelle que soit l'origine historique de ce *tafsīr* attribué à Ğa'far, son entrée dans les milieux soufis se situe au moment où se forme la doctrine mystique sunnite et où, possédant un vocabulaire technique varié et précis, les soufis du III^e siècle tentent de traduire par écrit le développement de leur expérience spirituelle. C'est dire que ce *tafsīr* est un document primordial pour l'étude de la formation du langage technique mystique en Islam. Dans un ouvrage qui est en préparation, nous montrerons en détail tout ce que les grands soufis du siècle d'or doivent à ce commentaire. Massignon y a fait quelques sondages en ce qui concerne l'influence subie par Ḥallāğ, mais cette influence déborde Ḥallāğ, puisque le *tafsīr* attribué à Ğa'far contient les structures mêmes qui seront celles de l'itinéraire mystique suivi par tous les soufis à qui il a fourni aussi les termes techniques les plus importants. Mentionnons ici, à titre d'exemples, la célèbre classification des étapes mystiques en *maqāmāt* et *aḥwāl*. L'opposition entre ces deux concepts n'est certes pas dans les textes que nous éditons, encore que les deux termes soient fréquemment utilisés, mais le *tafsīr* donne à plusieurs reprises une nomenclature des états mystiques où il faut voir la toute première ébauche des listes de *maqāmāt* et *aḥwāl* devenues classiques après le III^e siècle. Faut-il rappeler aussi les éléments du *ğāfr* — sens ésotérique des lettres de l'alphabet — que le *tafsīr* contient et qui seront repris par les soufis ? Soulignons aussi les très importants passages du *tafsīr* qui analysent l'expérience religieuse des personnages bibliques comme Abraham ou Moïse, passages qui donnent le prototype de ce que sera la méditation des soufis sur les versets coraniques touchant ces mêmes personnages bibliques.

Pour toutes ces raisons il importait que ce document exceptionnel ne reste pas plus longtemps ignoré de ceux qui s'intéressent au soufisme. Son édition n'était pourtant pas aisée car, comme nous l'avons dit, nous ne connaissons ce commentaire que par les citations qu'en a faites Sulamī (m. 412/1021) dans ses *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr*. Il fallut tout d'abord les repérer dans une masse d'autres citations, puisque les *Ḥaqā'iq* sont une vaste compilation de textes soufis anciens. Une fois ce travail achevé sur un seul manuscrit, il fallut de nouveau se livrer au même repérage dans deux autres manuscrits afin d'établir une édition critique.

Celle-ci a été, en effet, effectuée d'après trois manuscrits provenant tous les trois des bibliothèques d'Istanbul:

F = Fatih 260 (164 folios). Manuscrit sans date, copié avec soin, d'une écriture très fine, parfois difficile à lire. Nous l'avons adopté comme manuscrit de base et nous n'avons eu que très rarement à nous écarter de ses lectures.

B = Bašir Ağa 36 (338 folios), daté de 1091/1680. Œuvre d'un calligraphe fort distrait qui saute des lignes entières et qui connaît mal son arabe, ce manuscrit est utile surtout pour confirmer la lecture des deux autres manuscrits, écrits beaucoup moins lisiblement. Ses variantes sont rarement intéressantes.

Y = Yeni Cami 43 (384 folios), manuscrit sans date, mais portant attestation de lecture datée de 771/1369; écriture négligée, souvent sans points diacritiques; mais, copié avec soin par un lettré familiarisé avec les termes techniques soufis, le texte en est excellent, parfois même meilleur que Fatih 260.

On sait qu'il existe un grand nombre de manuscrits des *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr* de Sulamī; nous en avons, nous-même, examiné dix dans les scules bibliothèques d'Istanbul et un au British Museum (Or. 9433). Fallait-il collationner tous ces manuscrits avant d'éditer notre texte? Autant dire qu'il ne serait jamais édité! Encouragé par l'exemple de Massignon qui a

publié, à partir de quelques manuscrits, les sentences de Ḥallāğ citées par Sulamī, nous avons pensé que trois manuscrits offraient des garanties suffisantes pour obtenir un texte fidèle autant que possible à l'original.

Le Bouchet-en-Brenne, 22 août 1967

1, CVIII « انا اعطيناك الكوثر ». قال جعفر الصادق : اي نوراً في قلبك ذلك عليّ وقطعك عما سواي .

وقال ايضاً : الشفاعة لأمتك .

2, CXXI « الله الصمد ». قال جعفر : الصمد الذي لم يعط لخلقه من معرفته الا الاسم والصفة .

وقال جعفر : الصمد خمسة احرف : الالف دليل على احديته . واللام دليل على الوهيته . وهما مدغمان لا يظهران على اللسان ويظهران في الكتابة . فدل ذلك على ان احديته والوهيته خفية لا تدرك بالحواس وانه لا يقاس بالناس . فخفاؤه في اللفظ دليل على ان العقول لا تدركه ولا تحيط به علماً . واطهاره في الكتابة دليل على انه يظهر على قلوب العارفين ويبدو لاعين المحبين في دار السلام .

والصمد دليل على¹ انه صادق فيما وعد ، فعله صدق وكلامه صدق ودعا عباده الى الصدق - والميم دليل على ملكه فهو الملك على الحقيقة - والدال علامة دوامه في ابدية وازليته ، وان كان لا ازل ولا ابد لانها ألفاظ تجري على العوادي في عباده .

3, CXXII « لم يلد ولم يولد ». قال جعفر : جل ربنا عن ان تدركه الاوهام والعقول والعلوم بل هو كما وصف نفسه والكيفية عن وصفه غير معقولة . سبحانه ان تصل الفهوم والعقول الى كفيته . « كل شيء هالك الا وجهه » . له البقاء والسرمدية والابدية والوحدانية والمشية والقدرة تبارك وتعالى .

4-1, CXXII عن جعفر بن محمد في قوله « قل هو الله احد الخ... » . قال : يعني أظهر ما تريده النفوس بتأليف الحروف . فان الحقائق مصونة عن ان يبلغه وهم او فهم . واطهار ذلك بالحروف ليهتدي بها من « القى السمع » وهو اشارة الى غائب . والهاء هو تنبيه على معنى ثابت والواو اشارة الى الغائب عن الحواس و « الاحد » الفرد الذي لا نظير له لانه هو الذي احد الآحاد² .

(1) F : - دليل على || (2) B : - وقال جعفر... الذي احد الآحاد .

- 4, xc « لقد خلقنا الانسان في كبد » . قال جعفر : في بلاء وشدة .
- 15, xc « يتيماً ذا مقربة » . قال جعفر . هو ما تتقرب به الى ربك في تعهد الايتام وتفقدهم .
- 7, xciii « ووجدك ضالاً فهدى » . قال جعفر : كنت ضالاً عن محبتي لك في الازل فننت عليك بمعرفتي .
- 10-9, xciii « فاما اليتيم فلا تقهر واما السائل فلا تنهر » . قال جعفر : اليتيم العاري عن خلعة الهداية لا تنظفه من رحمتي فاني قادر ان ألبسه لباس الهداية . والسائل اذا سألك عني فدلّه عليّ بالطف دلالة فاني قريب محبيب .
- 11, xciii « واما بنعمة ربك فحدث » . قال جعفر : أخبر الخلق بما انعمت عليهم بك¹ وبمكانك .
- 1, xciv قال جعفر : « الم نشرح لك صدرك » لمشاهدتي ومطالعتي .
- 4, xciv « ورفعنا لك ذكرك » . قال جعفر : لا يذكرك احد بالرسالة الا ذكرني بالربوبية .
- 7, xciv « فاذا فرغت فانصب » . قال جعفر : اذكر ربك على فراغ منك عن كل ما دونه .
- 4, xciv « لقد خلقنا الانسان في احسن تقويم » . قال جعفر : احسن صورة .
- 8, xc « رضي الله عنهم ورضوا عنه » . قال الصادق رضي الله عنه : رضي الله عنهم بما سبق لهم من الله العناية والتوفيق . ورضوا عنه بما من عليهم بمتابعتهم لرسوله وقبول ما جاء به وانفاقهم الاموال والمهج بين يدي رسول الله صلعم .
- 7-6, cxv عن جعفر بن محمد قال في قوله عز وجل « نار الله الموقدة التي تطلع على الافئدة » قال : النيران شتى مختلفة : فنها² نار المحبة والمعرفة تنقد³ في افئدة الموحدين . ونيران جهنم تنقد⁴ في أفئدة الكافرين . ونيران المحبة اذا اتقدت في قلب المؤمن احترقت⁴ كل همة لغيره⁵ الله وكل ذكر سوى ذكره .

(1) F : - بك || (2) F : - - فنا || (3) B : تنفذ || (4) Y : تحرق ||
(5) Y : غير ||

- 35, LXXXVIII لا يسمعون فيها لغواً ولا كذاباً». قال جعفر : لان الله تعالى ايدته¹ بتوفيقه² فلا يجرى منه في الدنيا عليه لغو ولا يسمع منه في الحضرة لغو. واللغو ذكر كل مذكور سواه. «ولا كذاباً» اي ولا قولاً الا القول الصادق بالشهادة على وحدانيته وازليته وفردانيته.
- 36, LXXXVIII «جزاء من ربك عطاءً حساباً». قال جعفر : العطاء من الله تعالى على وجهين : في الابتداء الايمان والاسلام من غير مسئلة. والعطاء في الانتهاء³ التجاوز عن الزلات والغفلات والمعاصي. ودخول العبد في الجنة برحمته من عطاياه. وكذلك النظر الى وجهه الكريم.
- 7, LXXX «وما عليك الا يزكى». قال جعفر : لم تكرم بالاقبال على⁴ من لم يكرمه بالهداية ولم يزينه بالمعرفة.
- 6, LXXXII «يا ايها الانسان ما غرك بربك الكريم». قال جعفر : ما الذي اقعديك عن خدمة مولاك.
- 14-13, LXXXIII «ان الابرار لفي نعيم وان الفجار لفي جحيم». قال جعفر : النعيم المعرفة والمشاهدة والجحيم النفوس فان لها نيران تنقده⁵.
- 24, LXXXIII «تعرف في وجوههم نضرة النعيم». قال جعفر : ببقاء⁶ لذة النظر يتلألاً مثل الشمس في وجوههم اذا رجعوا من زيارة الله تعالى الى اوطانهم.
- 27, LXXXIII «ومزاجه من تسنيم». قال جعفر : كؤوساً مزجت بالأنس فتنسوا منها رائحة القرب.
- 13, LXXXV «انه هو يبدي ويعيد». قال جعفر : يبدي فيفني عما سواه ثم يعيد فيبقي بابقائه. وقال جعفر الصادق : «انه هو يبدي ويعيده» اي يلبس لباس الاولياء للاعداء حتى يكون لهم استدراجاً. ويلبس لباس الاعداء للاولياء لئلا يعجبوا بانفسهم ثم يعيد عند الموت⁷.

(1) B : + في الدنيا || (2) YB : + وعصته || (3) Y : الآخرة || (4) F : + عليه (?) ||
 (5) B : والجحيم الجهل والحجاب || (6) Y : يبقى || (7) YB : - وقال... الموت ||

له عنايتي ورحمتي¹ سالم من تلك الاحوال والشدائد ولا يكون له علم بشدائدها واهوالها . وكل من سبق له من الله تعالى العناية يسجد بين يديه مفتقراً اليه . ومن سبق له من الله تعالى العدل لا يقدر ان يسجد وكان ظهره كالحجر لا يلين للسجود لرب العالمين . وقال جعفر في قوله « يوم يكشف عن ساق » قال : اذا التقى الولي مع الولي انكشف عنه الشدائد .

39-38, LXXIX « فلا اقسم بما تبصرون وما لا تبصرون » . قال جعفر : بما تبصرون من صنعي في ملكي وما لا تبصرون من برّي الى اوليائي² .
48, LXXIX « وانه لتذكرة للمتمقين » . قال جعفر : موعظة للموقنين³ .

12, LXXI « ويجعل لكم جنات ويجعل لكم انهارا » . قال جعفر : يزين ظاهركم بزينة الخدمة وباطنكم بانوار الايمان .

20, LXXIII « فاقراءوا ما نيسر من القرآن » . قال جعفر بن محمد : ما تيسر لكم فيه⁴ خشوع القلب وصفاء السر⁵ .

1, LXXVI « هل اتى على الانسان ... » . قال جعفر : هل اتى عليك يا انسان وقت لم يكن الله لك ذاكرًا فيه .

21, LXXVI « وسقاهم ربهم شراباً طهوراً » . قال جعفر : سقاهم التوحيد في السرّ فتاهوا عن جميع ما سواه فلم يبقوا الا عند المعايمة ورفع الحجاب فيما بينهم وبينه واخذ الشراب في ما اخذ عنه⁶ فلم يبق عليه منه⁷ باقية وحصله في ميدان السرور والحضور والقبضة⁸ .

وقال جعفر في قوله « شراباً طهوراً » : طهرهم به عن كل شيء سواه اذ لا طاهر من⁹ تدنس¹⁰ بشيء من الاكوان .

(1) B : المومن من سبقت له من الله العناية والرحمة || (2) B : لأوليائي || (3) YB : للموقنين ||
(4) Y : من || (5) B : قال جعفر... وصفاء السر || (6) B : - واخذ... عنه ||
(7) B : منهم || (8) B : - وحصله... والقبضة || (9) B : طهر لمن || (10) F : + الطاهر
لم يتدنس ||

- 5, LXI « فلما زاغوا أزاع' الله قلوبهم ». قال جعفر : لما تركوا اوامر الخدمة نزع الله من قلوبهم نور الايمان وجعل للشيطان اليهم طريقاً فأزاعهم عن طريق الحق وادخلهم في سبيل¹ الباطل .
- 13, LXI « وبشّر المؤمنين ». قال جعفر : بشارة برويته « في مقعد صدق عند مليك مقتدر » (55,LIV) .
- 15, LXIV « انما اموالكم واولادكم فتنة ». قال جعفر : اموالكم فتنة لاشتغالكم بجمعها من غير وجهها ووضعها في غير اهلها واولادكم فتنة لاشتغالكم باصلاحهم فتفسدون انتم ولا يصلحون هم .
- 9, LXVI « يا ايها النبي جاهد الكفار والمنافقين ». قال جعفر : جاهد الكفار باليد والمنافقين باللسان . « واغلظ عايهم » : أمره بالغلظة عليهم ليشفي غيظه منهم مع قلة دعاويهم وأمر موسى عليه السلام باللين مع فرعون مع علو دعاويه² .
- 1, LXVII « تبارك الذي بيده الملك ». قال جعفر : تبارك اي هو المبارك على من انقطع اليه او كان له³ .
- 1, LXVIII « ن والقلم » . قال جعفر : نون هو نور الازلية الذي اخترع منه الاكوان كلها فجعل ذلك محمد صلعم . فلذلك قيل له « وانك لعلى خلق عظيم » (4,LXVIII) اي على النور الذي خصصت به في الازل .
- 4, LXVIII « وانك لعلى خلق عظيم ». قال جعفر : هو صرف الايمان وحقيقة التوحيد .
- 34, LXVIII « ان للمتقين عند ربهم جنات النعيم ». قال جعفر : من اتقى الذنوب كان مأواه جنات النعيم ومن اتقى الله تعالى كشف عنه الغطاء والحجب حتى يشاهد الحق في جميع الاحوال .
- 42, LXVIII « يوم يكشف عن ساق ويدعون الى السجود ». قال جعفر الصادق : يوم يكشف عن ساق ، عن الاهوال والشدائد والصراط والحساب وعبيد المومن الذي سبقت

(1 Y : مسالك || (2 YB : دعواه || (3 B : - قال ... كان له || (4 B : السوى ||

- 33, LVI « لا مقطوعة ولا ممنوعة ». قال جعفر : لم يقطع عنهم المعرفة والتأييد ولو قطع ذلك عنهم لهلكوا ولا يمنعون (sic) من التلذذ بمجاورة الحق ولو منعوا عن ذلك لاستوحشوا .
- 73, LVI « نحن جعلناها تذكرة ». قال جعفر : موعظة للتائبين وآلة للاقوياء من العارفين في حمله .
- 79, LVI « لا يمسه الا المطهرون ». قال جعفر : الا القائمون بحقوقه والمتبعون اوامره والحافظون حرمانه .
- 1, LVII « سبح لله ما في السموات ». قال جعفر : سبح له الكل وهو غني عن تسبيحهم . كيف يصل اليه ذلك وهو الذي اخرجته وتولى اظهاره .
- « وهو العزيز الحكيم ». قال جعفر : هو الذي لا يدركه طالبوه ولا يعجزه هاربه .
- 3, LVII « وهو الاول والاخر... ». قال جعفر : هو الذي اول الاول وأخر الآخر واطهر الظاهر وأبطن الباطن . فسقطت هذه المعاني وبقي هو .
- وقال جعفر : « الباطن » هو باطن في كل مكان لم يخل منه اذ كان كونه¹ ولا مكان فحجب بلفظه كنهه الكان وأبدى بقدرته تمكين الكان² فبان لنا الكان واحتجب عنا كنه الكان وتجلي لنا ظهور كمال الكان الذي بتحقيقه يتم الايمان .
- 10, LVII « لا يستوي منكم من انفق من قبل الفتح وقاتل ». قال جعفر : الارادات القوية والايمان السليم للمهاجرين واهل الصفة وامامهم وسيدهم الصديق الاكبر رضوان الله عليه . وهم الذين لم يوثروا الدنيا على الآخرة بل بذلوها ولم يرجوا عليها واعتمدوا في ذلك على ربهم وطلبوا رضاه وموافقة الرسول صلعم فخصهم الله سبحانه من بين الامة بقوله « لا يستوي... » .
- 23, LIX عن جعفر بن محمد قال في قوله « القدوس » الظاهر من كل عيب وطهر من شاء من العيوب و « المهيمن » الذي ليس كمثل شيء وسعى القرآن مهيمناً³ لانه لا يشبه غيره من الكلام⁴ .

(1) Y : كانه || (2) FB : المكان || (3) 48, V || (4) B : - عن جعفر... الكلام ||

- 18, LIII « لقد رأى من آيات ربه الكبرى ». قال جعفر : شاهد من علامات المحبة ما كبير عن الاخبار عنها .
- 32, LIII « هو اعلم بكم ». قال جعفر : اعلم بكم لانه خلقكم وقدر عليكم الشقاوة والسعادة قبل ايجادكم . فانتم متقلبون فيما اجرى عليكم في السبق من الاجل والرزق والسعادة والشقاوة ولا تستجلب الطاعات سعادة ولا المخالفات شقاوة ولكن سابق المقثور هو الذي يختم بما بدى .
- 37, LIII « وابراهيم الذي وفى ». قال جعفر : مائة الصدق الوفاء في كل حال وفعل .
- 44, LIII « وانه هو امات واحيا ». قال جعفر : يميت بالاعراض عنه ويحيي بالمعرفة به . وامات النفوس بالمخالفة واحيا القلوب بانوار الموافقة .
- 55, LV « في مقعد صدق ». قال جعفر : مدح المكان الذي فيه الصدق فلا يقعد فيه الا اهل الصدق وهو المقعد الذي يصدق الله فيه مواعيد اوليائه بان يبيح لهم² النظر الى وجهه الكريم .
- 11, LV « فيها فاكهة والنخل ذات الاكمام ». قال جعفر : جعل الحق قلوب اوليائه رياض آنسه فغرس فيها اشجار المعرفة اصوها ثابتة في اسرارهم وفروعها قائمة بالحضرة في المشهد . فهم يجنون ثمار الأنس في كل أوان . وهو قوله تعالى « فيها فاكهة والنخل ذات الاكمام » اي ذات الالوان كل يجني منه لوناً على قدر سعيه وما كشف له من بوادي المعرفة وآثار الولاية .
- 60, LV « هل جزاء الاحسان الا الاحسان ». قال جعفر : هل جزاء من احسنت اليه في الازل الا حفظ الاحسان عليه الى الابد .
- 19, LVI « لا يصدعون عنها ». قال جعفر : لا تذهل عقولهم عن موارد الحقائق عليهم ولا يغبون عن مجلس المشاهدة بحال .
- 30, LVI عن جعفر في قوله « وظل ممدود » قال : الظل رحمة الله التي سبقت لامة محمد صلعم والممدود فضله على الموحدين وعدله على الملحددين .

F (1) : يبيحهم ||

- وقال : النجم قلب محمد « اذا هوى » ، اذا انقطع عن جميع ما سوى الله .
- 2, LIII « ما ضلّ صاحبكم وما غوى » . قال جعفر : ما ضل عن قربه طرفة عين .
- 3, LIII « وما ينطبق عن الهوى » . قال جعفر : كيف ينطق عن الهوى من هو ناطق باظهار التوحيد واتمام الشريعة وآداب¹ الامر والنهي . بل ما نطق الا بأمر وما سكت الا بأمر . أمر فكان أمره قرابة عن الحق ونهى فكان نهيه ادباراً وزجراً .
- 8, LIII « ثم دنا فتدلى » . قال جعفر : انقطعت الكيفية عن الدنو . الا ترى ان الله تعالى حجب جبريل عن دنوه ودنو ربه منه .
- وقال ايضاً : دنا محمد صلعم الى ما اودع في قلبه من المعرفة والايمان فتدلى بسكون قلبه الى ما أدناه وزال عن قلبه الشك والارتباب .
- 9, LIII « فكان قاب قوسين او ادنى » . قال جعفر : ادناه منه حتى كان منه كقاب قوسين . والدنو من الله تعالى لا حد له والدنو من العبد بالحدود .
- 10, LIII « فاوحى الى عبده ما اوحى » . قال جعفر : بلا واسطة فيما بينه وبينه سرّاً الى قلبه لا يعلم به احد سواه بلا واسطة الا في العقبى حين² يعطيه الشفاعة لأمه .
- وقال الصادق في قوله « دنا فتدلى » : لما قرب الحبيب من الحبيب بغاية القرب نالته غاية الهيبة . فلاطفه الحق بغاية اللطف لانه لا تحمل غاية الهيبة الا غاية اللطف . وذلك قوله « فاوحى الى عبده ما اوحى » اي كان ما كان وجرى ما جرى وقال الحبيب ما يقول الحبيب لحبيبه وألطف له الطاف الحبيب لحبيبه واسر اليه ما يسر الحبيب الى حبيبه . فأخفيا ولم يطلعا على سرهما احداً سواهما . فلذلك قال « فاوحى الى عبده ما اوحى » ولا يعلم احد ذلك الرحي الا³ الذي اوحى والذي أوحى اليه .
- 11, LIII « ما كذب القواد ما رأى » . قال جعفر : لا يعلم احد ما الذي رأى الا الذي أرى والذي رأى . صار الحبيب من الحبيب قريباً وله نجياً⁴ وبه انيساً . قال الله تعالى : « نرفع درجات من نشاء » (83,VI) .

(1) B : وايجاب || (2) F : حتى || (3) Y : + الله || (4) B : عبا ||

قدرة القادر الباري في نفسه وملكوته وارضه وسماه فاستدل بها على وحدانيته وقدرته ومشيتته.

24, LI قال جعفر في قوله تعالى : « ضيف ابراهيم المكرمين¹ مكرمين² حيث انزلهم اكرم الخليفة وظهرهم فتوة واشرفهم نفساً واعلامهم همة ، الخليل صلوات الله وسلامه عليه .

49, LI « ومن كل شيء خلقنا زوجين لعلكم تذكرون » . قال جعفر : لينظر الموحد الى الاغيار³ فيراها ازواجاً مثاني واربعاً فيفرّ منها ويرجع الى الواحد الاحد ليصح له التوحيد بذلك .

55, LI « وذكر فان الذكرى تنفع المؤمنين » . قال جعفر الصادق رضي الله عنه : يعني يا محمد ذكرّ عبادي جوذي وكرمي وآلأي ونعماي وما سبق من رحمتي لأمتك خاصة . والذكرى التي تنفع المؤمنين ذكر الله تعالى للعبد وما سبق من العناية القديمة بالايمان والمعرفة والتوفيق للطاعة والعصمة عن المعاصي .

وقال جعفر : كل من ذكر الله تعالى فاذا نسي ذكره كان مجهولاً عن ذكره . والله تعالى ذكره⁴ احديته وازليته ومشيتته وقدرته وعلمه . ولا يقع عليه النسيان والجهل لانهما من صفات البشرية . وكل من ذكر الله تعالى فبذكره له يذكره .

56, LI قال جعفر في قوله « وما خلقت الجن والانس الا ليعبدوني » قال : الا ليعرفوني ثم يعبدوني على بساط المعرفة ليتبرعوا من الرياء والسمعة .

1, LII « والطور » . قال جعفر : ما يطرأ على قلب احبائي من الانس بذكري والالتذاذ بحبي « وكتاب مسطور » ، وما كتب الحق على نفسه لهم من الاقتراب والقربة .

48, LII « فاصبر لحكم ربك فانك بأعيننا » . قال جعفر : عند هذا الخطاب سهل عليه معالجة الصبر واحتمال موته . وكذلك كل حال يرد على العبد في محل المشاهدة .

1, LIII « والنجم اذا هوى » . قال جعفر : هو محل التجلي والاستنار من قلوب اهل المعرفة .

عن جعفر بن محمد في قوله تعالى « والنجم اذا هوى » قال : النجم محمد صلعم اذا هوى انسرح منه الانوار .

(1) B : + صاروا || (2) F : - مكرمين || (3) B : الى الاشياء بين الاعتبار ||
(4) Y : ذكر ||

- 9, XLVI « ما كنتُ بدعاً من الرسل ». قال جعفر في هذه الآية : لم يكن لي في نبوتي شيء .
انما هو شيء اعطيته لا بي¹ بل بفضل من عند الله حيث اهلني لرسالته ووصفي
في كتب الانبياء السالفة صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين .
- 13, XLVI « ان الذين قالوا ربنا الله ثم استقاموا ». قال جعفر : استقاموا مع الله تعالى بحركات
القاوب مع مشاهدات التوحيد .
- 30, XLVI « يهدي الى الحق والى طريق مستقيم ». قال جعفر : يدل على طريق الحق بالخروج
من المعلومات والمرسومات والتحقيق بالحق وهو الصراط المستقيم .
- 3, XLVII « الذين كفروا اتبعوا الباطل ». قال جعفر : لا يوفق لسلك طريق الحق من لم
يُحكَم مبادي احواله مع الحق ومن اهل مبادي الاحوال كيف يرجي له التناهي فيها .
- 19, XLVII وقال جعفر في قوله « انه لا اله الا الله » : ازال العلل عن الربوبية ونزه الحق عن
الدرك .
- 2, XLVIII « ويتم نعمته عليك ». قال جعفر : من تمام النعمة على نبيته صلعم ان جعله حبيبه
واقسم بحياته ونسخ به شرائع الرسل اجمع وعرج به الى المحل الادنى وحفظه في المعراج
حتى « ما زاع » وما طغى » وبعثه الى الاسود والابيض واحل له ولأمته الغنائم وجعله
شفيحاً مشفئاً وجعله سيد ولد آدم وقرن ذكره بذكره ورضاه برضاه وجعله أحد ركني
التوحيد . فهذا وامثاله من تمام النعمة عليه وعلى امته به وبمكانه .
- 26, XLVIII « حمية الجاهلية ». قال جعفر : الحمية المذمومة التخطي من الحدود الى التشفي .
- 13, XLIX « ان اكرمكم عند الله اتقاكم ». قال جعفر : الكريم هو المتقي على الحقيقة والمتقي
المنقطع عن الاكوان الى الله .
- 7, L قال جعفر في قوله « لمن كان له قلب » : يعني قلباً يسمع ويعقل ويبصر . فكلمنا
سمع خطاب الله تعالى بلا واسطة فيما بينه وبين الحق عقل ما من عليه بالايمان
والاسلام من غير مسئلة ولا شفيح ولا وسيلة كانت له عند الله في الازل وابصر

F (1) : بشي. ||

- 66, xli « وأمرتُ ان اسلم لرب العالمين ». قال جعفر : لا ألتجى الا اليه ولا اذل الا له لان الاجاء اليه محل الفرح والتذلل له معدن العزة .
- 12, xli « وزينا السماء الدنيا بمصابيح ». قال جعفر : زينا جوارح المؤمنين بالخدمة .
- 31, xli « نحن اولياؤكم في الحياة الدنيا ». قال جعفر : من لاحظ في اعماله الثواب والاعواض كانت الملائكة اولياءه . ومن تحقق في افعاله وعملها على مشاهدة امرها فهو وليه لانه يقول الله تعالى « الله ولي الذين آمنوا » (257,II) .
- 44, xli « قل هو للذين آمنوا هدى وشفاء ». قال جعفر : القرآن شفاء لمن كان في ظل العصمة وعمى على من كان في ظلمة الخذلان .
- 9, xlii « وهو يحيي الموتى ». قال جعفر : يحيي نفوس المؤمنين بخدمته ويميت نفوس المنافقين بمخالفته¹ .
- 23, xlii « قل لا اسألكم عليه اجراً الا المودة ». قال جعفر : الا ان تتوددوا اليّ من الاعمال ما يقربكم الى ربكم .
- 68, xliii « لا خوف عليكم ولا اتم تخزون ». قال جعفر رضي الله عنه : لا خوف على من اطاعني في الاوامر والفرائض واتبع الرسول فيما سن² .
- وقال ايضاً : لا خوف في الآخرة على من خافني في الدنيا³ . ولا خوف على من احبني وازال عن قلبه محبة الاغيار . ولا خوف على من صان وديعتي عنده وهو الايمان والمعرفة . ولا خوف على من احسن ظنه بي فاني اعطيه مأموله . والخوف يكون على الجوارح والحزن على القلب من مخافة القطيعة .
- 71, xliiii « وفيها ما تشتهي الانفس وتلد الاعين ». قال جعفر : شتان بين ما تشتهي الانفس وبين ما تلد الاعين . لان جميع ما في الجنة من النعيم والشهوات واللذات في جنب ما تلد الاعين كاصبع نغمس في البحر . لان شهوات الجنة لها حد ونهاية لانها مخلوقة ولا تلد الاعين في الدار الباقية الا بالنظر الى الباقي جلّ وعلا . ولا حد لذلك ولا صفة ولا نهاية .

(1) B : قال ... بمخالفته || (2) B : في السن || (3) B : - لا خوف... في الدنيا ||

والاحزان والخوف العظيم حتى لحق بربه . فهذه وان كانت الواقعة فيها تتسع فان عاقبتها عظمت وجلت وعلت لان الله قد اعطاه بذلك الزلفى والحظوة .

35, xxxviii قال جعفر : « هب لي ملكاً » اي القنوع بقسمتك حتى لا يكون لي مع اختيارك اختيار .

78, xxxviii « وان عليك لعنتي الى يوم الدين » . قال جعفر : سخطي الذي لم يزل مني جارية (sic) عليك وواصلة (sic) اليك في اوقاتك المقدرة واياك الماضية¹ .

29, xxxix « الحمد لله ، بل اكثرهم لا يعلمون » . قال جعفر : لا يعلمون ان احداً من عباد الله لم يبلغ الواجب في حمده وما يستحق من الحمد على عباد الله بنعمه وان احداً لم يحمده حق حمده الا حمده لنفسه .

30, xxxix « انك ميت وانهم ميتون » . قال جعفر : انك ميت عما هم فيه من الاشتغال بانفسهم واولادهم وديارهم وانهم ميتون اي مبعدون عما خصصت به من انواع الكرامات .

65, xxxix « لئن اشركت ليحبطن عملك » . قال جعفر : لئن نظرت الى سواه لتحرمين في الآخرة لقاءه .

74, xxxix قال جعفر² : « الحمد لله الذي صدقنا وعده » هو حمد العارفين الذين استقروا في دار القرار مع الله تعالى . وقوله « الحمد لله الذي اذهب عنا الحزن » (34, xxxv) حمد الواصلين .

16, د « لمن الملك اليوم » . قال جعفر : اخرس المكونات ذوات الارواح عن جواب سؤاله في قوله « لمن الملك » فلم يجسر احد على الاجابة وما كان بحقيق ان يجيب سؤاله سواه . فلما سكنت الانس عن الجواب اجاب نفسه بما كان يستحق من الجواب فقال « لله الواحد القهار » .

51, xl « اننا لننصر رسلنا والذين آمنوا » . قال جعفر³ : ننصر رسلنا بالمومنين ظاهراً وننصر المومنين بالرسل باطناً .

(1) B - قال... الماضية || (2) YB : + الصادق || (3) B : + بن محمد ||

الى نفسه تفضلاً منه وكرماً ؛ ثم قال « اصطفينا » جعلهم كلهم اصفياً مع علمه بتفاوت مقاماتهم¹ ثم جمعهم في آخر الآية بدخول الجنة فقال « جنات عدن يدخلونها » ثم بدأ بالظالمين اخباراً انه لا يتقرب اليه الا بصرف كرمه . فان² الظلم لا يؤثر في الاصطفائية . ثم نثى بالمقتصدين لانهم بين الخوف والرجاء . ثم ختم بالسابقين لثلاثا يامن احد مكره . وكلهم في الجنة بجرمة كلمة واحدة يعني كلمة الاخلاص .

وقال جعفر : النفس ظالمة والقلب مقتصد والروح سابق .

وقال ايضاً³ : من نظر بنفسه الى الدنيا فهو ظالم ومن نظر بقلبه الى الآخرة فهو مقتصد ومن نظر بروحه الى الحق فهو سابق .

« يس » . قال جعفر الصادق رضي الله عنه في قوله « يس » اي يا سيد ، مخاطباً¹ لتيه صلعم . لذلك قال النبي عليه السلام : انا سيدكم⁴ ولم يمدح بذلك نفسه ولكنه اخبر عن معنى مخاطبة الحق اياه بقوله « يس » .

« فلما اسلما » . قال جعفر : اخرج ابراهيم من قلبه محبة ابنه⁵ واخرج اسمعيل من^{103,xxxvii} قلبه محبة الحياة .

« وما منا الا له مقام معلوم » . قال جعفر : الخلق مع الله على مقامات شتى . من^{164,xxxviii} يتجاوز حدّه هلك . فللانبياء مقام المشاهدة وللرسول⁶ مقام العيان وللملائكة مقام الهيبة وللمؤمنين مقام الدنو والخدمة وللعصاة مقام التوبة وللكفار مقام الطرد والغفلة . هذا بمعنى قوله تعالى « وما منا الا له مقام معلوم » .

« وآتيناه الحكمة وفصل الخطاب » . قال جعفر : صدق القول وصحة العقد والثبات^{20,xxxviii} في الامور .

« وظن داود انما فتناه فاستغفر ربه » . قال جعفر : ومن ذلك ما ذكره الله تعالى^{25,xxxviii} من فتنه داود وبلواه ومحنته⁷ وما اخرج اليه من عظيم التنصّل⁸ والاعتذار ودوام البكاء

(1) YB : معاملتهم || (2) B : وان || (3) B : - وقال ايضاً || (4) Y : انا سيد ولد آدم ولا فخر || (5) Y : + اسمعيل || (6) YB : ورسول || (7) B : ومحبته || (8) B : التنصّل ||

- 17, xxx « فسيحان الله حين تمسون وحين تصبحون ». قال جعفر : بالله فابدأ في صباحك وبه فاختم مساءك . فمن كان به ابتداؤه واليه انتهاؤه لا يشقى فيما بينهما .
- 40, xxx « الله الذي خلقكم ثم رزقكم... ». قال جعفر : « خلقكم ثم رزقكم » . حرككم الى اظهار اثار الربوبية فيكم « ثم يميتكم ثم يحييكم » بالاستتار والتجلي¹ .
- 53, xxx « وما انت بهادي العمى ». قال جعفر : اظهار آيات رسالاتك على من أظهر الحق عليه في الازل آيات السعادة وحلاه بحلية الاختصاص فيكون دعاؤك له دعاء تذكير وموعظة لا دعاء ابتداء . لانه من لم تجر له السعادة في الازل لم يمكنك ان توصله الى محل السعادة . انت الداعي والمنذر والله الهادي . الا تراه يقول : « وما انت بهادي العمى » .
- 16, xl « يدعون ربهم خوفاً وطمعاً ». قال جعفر : خوفاً منه وطمعاً فيه .
- 35, xxxiii « ... والصادقين والصادقات... ». قال جعفر : الصادق من يصف لك خير آخرة لا خير الدنيا ويدلك على حسن الاخلاق لا على سيئها ويعطيك قلبه لا جوارحه .
- 46, xxxiii « وداعياً الى الله باذنه وسراجاً منيراً ». قال جعفر : داعياً الى الله لا الى نفسه افتخر بالعبودية ولم يفتخر بالنبوة ليصح له بذلك الدعاء الى سيده . فمن اجاب دعوته صارت الدعوة له سراجاً منيراً يدلّه على سبيل الرشد ويبصره عيوب النفس وغيبتها² .
- 10, xxxiv « ولقد آتينا داود منا فضلاً ». قال جعفر : « فضلاً » ، ثقة بالله تعالى³ وتوكلاً عليه .
- 1, xxxv « يزيد في الخلق ما يشاء ». قال جعفر : صحة التحيزة وقوة البصيرة .
- 28, xxxv « انما يخشى الله من عباده العلماء ». قال جعفر : خشية العلماء من ترك الحرمة في العبادات وترك الحرمة في الاخبار عن الحق وترك الحرمة في متابعة الرسول صعب وترك الحرمة في خدمة الاولياء والصدّيقين .
- 32, xxxv قال جعفر في قوله تعالى « فمنهم ظالم لنفسه ومنهم مقتصد ومنهم سابق بالخيرات » قال : فرق الله تعالى المؤمنين ثلاث فرق سماهم مومنين اولاً ثم سماهم عبادنا فاضافهم

(1) B : - قال... والتجلي || (2) B : وغيرها || (3) B : تقريباً الى الله ||

- 22, xxviii « فلما توجه تلقاء مدين ». قال جعفر : توجه بوجهه الى ناحية مدين وتوجه بقلبه الى ربه طالباً منه سبيل الهداية فأكرمه الله تعالى بالكلام . وكل من اقبل على الله تعالى بالكلية فان الله تعالى يبلغه¹ مأموله .
- 24, xxviii « اني لما انزلت الي من خير فقير ». قال جعفر : فقير اليك طالب منك زيادة الفقر اليك² لاني لم استغن عنك بشي³ سواك .
وقال ايضاً : فقير في جميع الاوقات غير راجع الى الكرامات والآيات دون الفقر اليك والاقبال عليك .
- 29, xxviii « أنس من جانب الطور ناراً ». قال جعفر : ابصر ناراً دالة على الانوار لانه رأى النور على هيئة النار . فلما دنا منها شملته انوار القدس واحاطت به جلايب الانس فخطوب بالطف خطاب وأستدعي منه احسن⁴ جواب . فصار بذلك ملكاً شريفاً مقرباً . اعطي ما سأل وامن⁵ مما خاف . وكذلك قوله « انس من جانب الطور ناراً » .
- 35, xxviii « ونجعل لكما سلطاناً ». قال جعفر : هيبة⁶ في قلوب الاعداء ومحبة في قلوب الاولياء .
- 21, xxix « يعذب من يشاء ويرحم من يشاء ». قال جعفر : يعذب من يشاء بشتات الهن ويرحم من يشاء بجمعها له .
- 45, xxx « ان الصلاة تنهى عن الفحشاء والمنكر ». قال جعفر : الصلاة اذا كانت مقبولة فانها تنهى عن مطالعات⁷ الاعمال وطلب الاعواض .
- 69, xxx « والذين جاهدوا فينا ». قال جعفر : المجاهدة صدق الافتقار وهو انفصال العبد من نفسه واتصاله بربه . والمجاهدة تبري العبد من جميع ما اتصل به⁸ والمجاهدة بذل الروح في رضاء الحق .
وقال ايضاً : من جاهد بنفسه لنفسه وصل الى كرامة ربه ومن جاهد بنفسه لربه وصل الى ربه .

(1) Y : + الى (2) F : - اليك (3) Y : وأمن (4) B : مطالعة (5) B :
- والمجاهدة تبري... اتصل به (6) (7) (8)

- 127, xxvi « وما أسألكم عليه من أجر » . قال جعفر : أزيلت الاطباع عن الرسل اجمع لدناءتها .
 فاخبر كل رسول عن نفسه بقوله : « وما أسألكم عليه من أجر » .
- 212, xxvi « انهم عن السمع لمعزولون » . قال جعفر : هو ان يسمع المواعظ ولا يتعظ بها .
- 220, xxvi « انه هو السميع العليم » . قال جعفر¹ : السميع من يسمع مناجات الاسرار والعليم من يعلم ارادات الضماير .
- 21, xxvii « لاعدبته عذاباً شديداً » . قال جعفر : لابلينه بشتات السر .
- 34, xxvii « ان الملوك اذا دخلوا قرية افسدوها » . قال جعفر² : اشار الى قلوب المؤمنين .
 ان المعرفة اذا دخلت القلوب زال عنها الاماني والمرادات اجمع . فلا يكون في القلب محل لغير الله تعالى .
- 36, xxvii « بل انتم بهديتكم تفرحون » . قال جعفر : الدنيا اصغر عند الله وعند انبيائه واوليائه من ان يفرحوا بها او يحزنوا عليها .
- 50, xxvii « ومكروا مكراً ومكرنا مكراً » . قال جعفر³ : مكر الله اخفى من ديب النمل على الصخرة السوداء في الليلة الظلماء .
- 61, xxvii قال جعفر في قوله « أم من جعل الارض قراراً » اي من جعل قلوب اوليائه مستقر معرفته وجعل فيها انهار الزوايد من بره في كل نفس واثبتها بجمال التوكل وزينها بانوار الاخلاص واليقين والمحبة « وجعل بين البحرين حاجزاً » اي بين القلب والنفس لثلا تغلب النفس القلب بظلماتها فتظلمها (sic) فجعل الحاجز بينهما التوفيق والعقل .
- 88, xx « وترى الجبال تحسبها جامدة » . قال جعفر : ترى النفس جامدة عند خروج الروح .
 والروح تسري في الفردوس⁴ لتأوى الى مكانها من تحت العرش .
 وقال جعفر : نور قلوب الموحدين وانزعاج انين المشتاقين تمرّ مرّ السحاب حتى يشاهدوا الحق فيسكنون .
- 10, xxviii « واصبح فؤاد ام موسى فارغاً... لولا ان ربطنا على قلبها » .
- قال جعفر⁵ : الصلبر معدن التسليم والقلب معدن اليقين والفؤاد معدن النظر والضمير معدن السر والنفس مأوى كل حسنة وسيئة .

(1) B : + الصادق || (2) B : + الصادق || (3) B : + الصادق || (4) Y : + قرار ||
 (5) YB : القدس || (6) B : + الصادق ||

صلاح القلب كما ان الاتني عشر برجاً من الحمل والثور الى آخر العدد بها صلاح الدار الفانية¹ واهلها .

- 63, xxv قال جعفر : « الذين يمشون على الارض هوناً » بلا فخر ولا خيلاء ولا تبختر بل بتواضع وسكينة ووقار وطمانينة وحسن خلق وبشر وجه كما وصف النبي صلعم المؤمنين فقال : « هينون لينون كالجمل الانف ان قيد انقاد وان انيخ على صخرة استناخ » . وذلك لما طالعوا من تعظيم الحق وهيبته وشاهدوا من كبريائه وجلاله خشعت لذلك ارواحهم وخضعت نفوسهم فالزمهم ذلك التواضع والتخشع .
- 71, xxv « يتوب الى الله متاباً » . قال جعفر : لم يرجع الى الحق من له مرجع الى سواه . حتى يكون رجوعه ظاهراً وباطناً اليه دون غيره حينئذ يكون تائباً اليه .
- 72, xxv « الذين لا يشهدون الزور » . قال جعفر : الزور امانى النفس ومتابعة هواها .
- 74, xxv « هب لنا من ازواجنا وذرياتنا قرة أعين » . قال جعفر : هب لنا من ازواجنا معاونة على طاعتك ومن اولادنا برهم حتى تقر اعيننا بهم .
- 50, xxvi « قالوا لا ضير انا الى ربنا منقلبون » . قال جعفر : من احسّ بالبلاء في المحبة لم يكن محباً بل من شاهد البلاء فيه لم يكن محباً² . بل من لم يتلذذ بالبلاء في المحبة لم يكن محباً . الا ترى السحرة لما وردت عليهم شواهد اوائل المحبة كيف زالت عنهم حظوظهم وهانت عليهم بذل ارواحهم في مشاهدة محبوبهم فقالوا « لا ضير » .
- 62, xxvi « قال كلا ان معي ربي سيهيني » . قال جعفر³ : من كان في رعاية الحق وكلايته لا يؤثر عليه شيء من الاسباب ولا يهوله مخوفات الموارد لانه في وقاية الحق وقبضته . ومن كان في المشاهدة والحضرة كيف يؤثر عليه ما منه يصدر واليه يرد . الا ترى كيف حكى الله تعالى عن الكليم قوله « ان معي ربي سيهيني » .
- 80, xxvi « واذا مرضت فهو يشفيني » . قال جعفر : اذا مرضت بروية افعالي واحوالي شفاني بتذكار الفضل والكرم .
- 114, xxvi « وما انا بطارد المؤمنين » . قال جعفر : ما انا بمكذب الصادقين .

(1) B : دار الفناء || (2) Y - بل من شاهد... محباً || (3) B : + رحمه الله ||

39, xxiv « والذين كفروا اعمالهم كسراب ». قال جعفر : اظلمت ظلم صحبة الاغيار فكانت على قلوبهم مثل السراب لم تغن عنهم شيئاً ولم تدلم على حق . ولو وجدوا السبيل الى الله تعالى لأضاعت سرايرهم فكانت كما قال الله تعالى « نور على نور » .

63, xxv « لا تجعلوا دعاء الرسول بينكم كدعاء بعضكم بعضاً » . قال جعفر : الحرمات تتبع بعضها بعضاً . من ضيع حرمة الخلق فقد ضيع حرمة المؤمنين . ومن ضيع حرمة المؤمنين فقد ضيع حرمة الاولياء . ومن ضيع حرمة الاولياء فقد ضيع حرمة الرسول . ومن ضيع حرمة الرسول فقد ضيع حرمة الله . ومن ضيع حرمة الله تعالى فقد دخل في ديوان الاشقياء . وافضل الاخلاق حفظ الحرمات . ومن اسقط عن قلبه الحرمات تهاون بالفرائض والسنن .

7, xxv « ما لهذا الرسول يأكل الطعام ويمشي في الاسواق » . قال جعفر : عيروا الرسل بالتواضع والانبساط ولم يعلموا ان ذلك اتم لهيبتهم واشد في بيان الاحترام لهم . وذلك انهم لم يشاهدوا منهم الا ظاهر الخلق . ولو شاهدوا منهم خصائص الاختصاص لآهأهم ذلك عن قلوبهم « ما لهذا الرسول... » .

20, xxv « وما ارسلنا قبلك من المرسلين الا انهم لياتيآكلون الطعام... » . قال جعفر : ذلك ان الله تعالى لم يبعث رسولاً الا اباح ظاهره للخلق بالكون معهم على شرط البشرية ومنع سره عن ملاحظاتهم والاشتغال بهم لان اسرار الانبياء في القبضة لا تفارق المشاهدة بحال .

61, xxv عن جعفر بن محمد في قوله عز وجل « تبارك الذي جعل في السماء بروجاً » قال : سمى السماء سماء لرفعها والقلب سماء لانه يسمو بالايمان والمعرفة بلا حد ولا نهاية . كما ان المعروف لا حد له كذلك المعرفة به لا حد لها . وبروج السماء مجاري الشمس والقمر وهم الحمل والثور والجوزاء والسرطان والاسد والسنبلة والميزان والعقرب والقوس والجدى والدلو والحوت . وفي القلب بروج وهو برج الايمان وبرج المعرفة وبرج العقل وبرج اليقين وبرج الاسلام وبرج الاحسان وبرج التوكل وبرج الخوف وبرج الرجاء وبرج المحبة وبرج الشوق وبرج الوله . فهذه اثنا عشر برجاً بها دوام

الاحاطة ثم نور الهيبة ثم نور الحيرة ثم نور الحياة ثم نور الانس ثم نور الاستقامة
 ثم نور الاستكانة ثم نور الطمأنينة ثم نور العظمة ثم نور الجلال ثم نور القدرة¹
 ثم نور الجلال² ثم نور الالوهية ثم نور الوجدانية ثم نور الفردانية ثم نور الابدية
 ثم نور السرمدية ثم نور الديمومية ثم نور الازلية ثم نور البقاء³ ثم نور الكلية ثم نور
 الهوية . ولكل واحد من هذه الانوار اهل وله حال ومحل وكلها من انوار الحق التي
 ذكر الله تعالى في قوله « الله نور السموات والارض » ولكل عبد من عبيده مشرب
 من نور⁴ هذه الانوار وربما كان له حظ من نورين ومن ثلاثة . ولن تتم هذه الانوار
 لاحد الا للمصطفى صلوات الله عليه وسلامه لانه القائم مع الله تعالى بشرط تصحيح
 العبودية والمحبة . فهو نور وهو من ربه على نور .

عن جعفر بن محمد الصادق في هذه الآية قال : نور السموات بنور الكواكب
 والشمس والقمر ونور الارضين بنور النبات الاحمر والابيض والاصفر وغير ذلك
 ونور قلب المؤمن بنور الايمان والاسلام . ونور الطرق الى الله بنور ابي بكر وعمر
 وعثمان وعلي رضي الله عنهم . فمن اجل ذلك قال النبي صلعم : اصحابي كالنجوم
 بايتهم اقتديتم اهتديتم .

وقال ايضاً في هذه الآية : نور السموات بأربع : بجبرئيل وميكائيل واسرافيل وعزرائيل
 عليهم السلام . ونور الارض بابي بكر وعمر وعثمان وعلي رضوان الله عليهم اجمعين .

35, xxiv « لا شرقية ولا غربية » . قال جعفر في هذه الآية : لا خوف يوجب القنوط ولا رجاء
 يجلب الانبساط . فيكون واقفاً بين الخوف والرجاء .

37, xxiv « رجال لا تلهيهم تجارة ... » . قال جعفر : هم الرجال من بين الرجال على الحقيقة
 لان الله تعالى حفظ اسرارهم⁵ عن الرجوع الى ما سواه وملاحظات غيره⁶ . فلا
 تشغلهم تجارات الدنيا ونعيمها وزهرتها ولا الآخرة وثوابها عن الله تعالى⁷ لانهم في بساتين
 الانس ورياض الذكر .

(1) Y : ثم نور الحول || (2) Y : ثم نور القوة || (3) Y : البقائية || (4) Y : - نور ||

(5) B : - الله نور ... اجمعين || (6) Y : سرائرهم || (7) B : - وملاحظات غيره ||

(8) B : عن الذكر ||

26, xxxi عن جعفر بن محمد في قوله « وطهرت بيتي للطائفين » قال : طهرت نفسك عن مخالطة المخالفين والاختلاط بغير الحق « والقائمين » مع فؤاد العارفين المقيمين معه على بساط الانس والخدمة « والرکم السجود »¹ الأئمة السادة الذين رجعوا الى البداية عن تناهي النهاية . .

28, xxxii « ليشهدوا منافع لهم » . قال جعفر : هو ما يشهدونه في ذلك المشهد من برّ الحق بان وفقهم لشهود ذلك المشهد العظيم . ثم منافعهم ما وعد لهم عليه من الزيادات والبركات والاجابات .

34, xxxiii عن جعفر بن محمد في قوله « وبشر المحبتين » قال : من اطاعني ثم خافني في طاعته وتواضع لاجلي وبشر من اضطرب قلبه شوقاً الى لقائي وبشر من ذكرني بالزول في جواربي وبشر من دمعت عيناه خوفاً من هجري . بشرهم ان رحمتي سبقت غضبي . وقال ايضاً : الملك بالشفاعة .

وقال ايضاً : بشر المشتاقين الى النظر الى وجهي .

وقال ايضاً : المحبت في التواضع كالارض تحمل كل قدر وتوارى كل نجس وخبث .

78, xxxiv « فنعم المولى ونعم النصير » . قال جعفر : نعم المعين (sic) لمن استعان به « ونعم النصير » لمن استنصره .

30, xxxv « قل للمؤمنين يغضوا من ابصارهم » . قال جعفر الصادق في هذه الآية : الغض عن المحارم وعمّا لا يليق بالحق فرض على العباد . وفرض الفرض غض خاطر عن كل ما يستحله² العبد ومعناه حفظ القلب وخواطره عن النظر الى الكون لئلا يكون به طريداً غافلاً محجوباً وان كان ذلك مباحاً في الظاهر .

35, xxxv « الله نور السموات والارض ... » . قال جعفر بن محمد : الانوار مختلفة اولها نور حفظ القلب ثم نور الخوف ثم نور الرجاء³ ثم نور التذكر ثم النظر بنور العلم ثم نور الحياء ثم نور حلاوة الايمان ثم نور الاسلام ثم نور الاحسان ثم نور النعمة ثم نور الفضل ثم نور الآلاء ثم نور الكرم ثم نور العطف ثم نور القلب ثم نور

(1) B : + م || (2) B : يستحله || (3) Y : + ثم نور الحب ثم نور التفكير ثم نور اليقين ||

في حال فنسينا واشتغل بالجنة فابتلي بارتكاب النهي وذاك انه اياه النعيم عن المنعم فوقع من النعمة بالبلية فاخرج من النعيم والجنة ليعلم ان النعيم هو مجاورة المنعم لا الالتذاذ بالاكل والشرب .

121, xx «وعصى آدم ربه فغوى» . قال جعفر : طالع الجنان ونعيمها بعينه فنودي عليه الى يوم القيامة «وعصى آدم ربه» . ولو طالعها بقلبه لنودي عليه بالهجران ابد الابد . ثم عطف عليه ورحمه بقوله «ثم اجتباه ربه فتاب عليه وهدى» (122,XX) .

124, xx «ومن اعرض عن ذكري» . قال جعفر في هذه الآية : لو عرفوني ما اعرضوا عني ومن اعرض عني رددته الى الاقبال على ما يليق به من الاجناس والاكوان .

83, xxx «وايوب اذ نادى ربه انى مسني الضر وانت ارحم الراحمين» . قال جعفر : خرج منه هذا القول على المناجاة مستدعياً للجواب من الحق ليسكن اليه لا على حد الشكوى . وقال جعفر : لما سلط الله البلاء على ايوب وطال به الامر اتاه الشيطان فقال : ان اردت ان تتخلص من هذا البلاء فاسجد لي سجدة . فلما سمع ذلك قال مسني الشيطان بنصب و «مسني الضر» حين¹ طمع الشيطان في ان أسجد له .

وقال ايضاً : لما تنهى ايوب في البلاء واستعذبه صار البلاء وطناً له . فلما إطمأنت اليه نفسه وسكن عند البلاء شكره الناس على صبره ومدحوه . فقال «مسني الضر» لفقد الصبر .

عن جعفر في قوله «مسني الضر» قال : حبس الوحي عنه اربعون يوماً فغشي الهجران من ربه والقطيعة فقال «مسني الضر»² .

89, xxxi «وزكريا اذ نادى ربه رب لا تدرني فرداً» . قال جعفر : لا تجعلني ممن لا سبيل له الى مناجاتك والتزين بزينة خدمتك .

وقال جعفر : «فرداً» عنك لا يكون لي سبيل اليك .

2, xxxii «وترى الناس سكارى» . قال جعفر : اسكرهم ما شهدوا من بساط العز وسلطان الجبروت وسرادق الكبرياء حتى ألبأ النبيين الى ان قالوا نفسي نفسي .

(1) B : حتى || (2) B : - عن جعفر... مسني الضر ||

12-11, xx « فلما أتاها نودي يا موسى اني انا ربك ». قال جعفر : قيل لموسى عليه السلام كيف عرفت ان النداء هو نداء الحق ؟ فقال : لانه افناني وشملي وكان كل شعرة مني كانت مخاطباً بنداء من جميع الجهات وكأنها تعبر من نفسها بجواب . فلما شملني انوار الهية واحاطت بي انوار العزة والجبروت علمت اني مخاطب من جهة الحق . ولما كان اول الخطاب « اني » ثم بعده « انا » علمت انه ليس لاحد ان يخبر عن نفسه باللفظتين جميعاً متتابعاً الا الحق . فادهشتُ وهو كان محل الفناء . فقلت انت انت الذي لم تزل ولا تزال ليس لموسى معك مقام ولا له جرأة الكلام الا ان تبقيه ببقائك وتنتعه بنعتك فتكون انت المخاطب والمخاطب جميعاً . فقال : لا يحمل خطابي غيري ولا يجيبني سواي وانا المتكلم وانا المتكلم وانت في الوسط شبح يقع بك محل الخطاب .

1٤. « فاخلع نعليك ». قال جعفر : اقطع عنك العلائق فانك باعيننا .

18, xx « ولي فيها مآرب اخرى ». قال جعفر : منافع شتى واكبر منفعة لي فيها خطابك اياي بقولك « وما تلك بيمينك يا موسى » (17,XX) .

27, xx « واحلل عقدة من لساني ». قال جعفر : لما كلم الله موسى عقد لسان موسى عن مكالمة غيره . فلما امره بالذهاب الى فرعون ناجاه بصره فقال « واحلل عقدة من لساني » لاكون قائماً بالامر على اتم مقام .

33, xx « كي نسبحك كثيراً ». قال جعفر : قيل لموسى استكثرت تسبيحك وتهليلك وتكبيرك ونسيت بدايات فضلنا عليك في حفظك في اليم وردك الى امك وتربيتك في حجر عدوك . واكثر من هذا كله خطابنا معك وكلامنا اياك . واكثر منه اخبارنا باصطناعنا لك .

82, xx قال جعفر : « واني غفار لمن تاب » لمن رجع الي في مهاته ولم يرجع الى غيري « وآمن » وشاهدني ولم يشهد معي سواي « وعمل صالحاً » واخلص قلبه لي « ثم اهتدى » ثم لم يخالف سنة النبي صلعم .

115, xx « ولقد عهدنا الى آدم من قبل فنسي ». قال جعفر : عهدنا الى آدم ان لا ينسانا

- 101, xviii « وكانوا لا يستطيعون سمعاً ». قال جعفر الصادق : لا يستطيعون سماع كلام الحق ولا سماع سنن المصطفى صلعم ولا سماع سير¹ الهداة الصالحين من الانبياء والصدّيقين لانهم لم يجعلوا² من اهل القبول للحق فمنعوا عن سماع خطاب الحق .
- 110, xviii « ولا يشرك بعبادة ربه احداً ». قال جعفر : لا يرى في وقت وقوفه بين يدي ربه غيره ولا يكون في همه وهمته غيره .
- 6, xix « واجعله ربّ رضيعاً ». قال جعفر : رضيعاً اي راضياً بما يبدو له وعليه .
- 8, xix « قال ربّ انى يكون لي غلام ». قال جعفر : استقبل النعمة بالشكر قبل حلولها « انى يكون لي غلام » وبأى بر واي عمل واي طاعة استوجب منك هذه الاجابة وهذا التفضل والكرم الا بسابق تفضلك³ ونعمك على عبادك في جميع الاحوال فاني ان ايست من عملي فلا آيس من فضلك .
- 23, xix « يا ليتني متّ قبل هذا ». قال جعفر : لما لم ترّ في قومها موقفاً ولا رشيداً ولا صاحب فراسة يبريها من قولهم قالت « يا ليتني متّ قبل » ان ارى في قومي ما ارى . وقال جعفر : « يا ليتني متّ قبل » ان ارى لقلبي متعلقاً دون الله .
- 52, xix « وقربناه نجياً ». قال جعفر : للمقرّب من الله تعالى ثلاث علامات : اذا افاده الله علماً رزقه العمل به واذا رفعه الله للعمل به اعطاه الاخلاص في عمله واذا اقامه لصحبة⁴ المسلمين رزقه في قلبه حرمة لهم ويعلم ان حرمة المؤمنين من حرمة الله تعالى .
- 85, xix « يوم نحشر المتقين ». قال جعفر : المتقي الذي اتقى كل شيء سوى الله والمتقي الذي اتقى متابعة هواه . فن كان بهذا الوصف فان الله يحمله الى حضرة المشاهدة على تجانب⁵ النور ليعرف اهل المشهد محله فيهم .
- 93, xix « الا اتى الرحمن عبداً ». عن جعفر بن محمد في قوله « الا اتى الرحمن عبداً » قال : فقيراً ذليلاً باوصافه او عزيزاً دالاً باوصاف الحق .
- 3, xx « الا تذكرة لمن يخشى ». قال جعفر : انزل الله القرآن موعظة للخائفين ورحمة للمؤمنين وأنساً للمحبين فقال « ما انزلنا عليك القرآن لتشقى الا تذكرة لمن يخشى » .

(1) B : سنن الهداية || (2) B : - لم يجعلوا || (3) Y : فضلك || (4) B : نصيحة || (5) B : جنائب ||

17, xviii « ذات اليمين... ذات الشمال » . قال جعفر : يمين المرء قلبه وشماله نفسه . والرعاية تدور عليها ولولا ذلك لهلك .

18, xviii « لو اطلعت عليهم لوليت منهم فراراً » . قال جعفر : لو اطلعت عليهم من حيث انت لوليت منهم فراراً ولو اطلعت عليهم من حيث الحق لشاهدت فيهم معاني الوجدانية والربانية .

وقال جعفر : لو اطلعت على ما بهم من اثار قدرتنا ورعايتنا لهم وتولية حياتهم لوليت منهم فراراً اي ما قدرت على الثبات لمشاهدة ما بهم من هيبتنا . فيكون حقيقة الفرار منا لا منهم لان ما بدا عليهم منا .

وقال ايضاً : لو اطلعت عليهم من حيث انت لفررت ولو اطلعت عليهم من حيث انا لوقفت . وذلك ان الولي له مع الله احوال لا يقدر على مشاهدته من نظر اليه من عند نفسه من ضعف البشرية يفر من رؤيته . وقد فر النبي صلعم من الكفار . « واذكر ربك اذا نسيت » . قال جعفر : اذا نسيت الاغيار فتقرب الي بالاذكار . 24, xviii

30, xviii « انا لا نضيع اجر من احسن عملاً » . قال جعفر : ان الذين صدقوا الله في الارزاق والكفایات² وطلبوا الرزق من وجهه الذي اباح الله طلبه ، فان الله لا يضيع سعيهم في طلب مرضاته ويسهل عليهم سبيل التوكل ليستغنوا بذلك عن الطلب والحركة ويخرجهم من ضيق الطلب الى فسحة التوكل .

قال جعفر الصادق : « الباقيات الصالحات » هو تفريد التوحيد فانه باق ببقاء الموحد . 46, xviii

67, xviii « قال انك لن تستطيع معي صبراً » . قال جعفر³ : لن تصبر مع من هو دونك فكيف تصبر مع من هو فوقك .

84, xviii « وآتيناه من كل شيء سبباً » . قال جعفر : ان الله تعالى جعل لكل شيء سبباً وجعل الاسباب معاني الوجود⁴ . فن شهد السبب انقطع عن المسبب ومن شهد صنع المسبب امتلاً قلبه من ريب الاسباب . واذا امتلاً قلبه من الريبة حال بينه وبين الملاحظة وحجبه عن المشاهدة .

(1) B : - اقه || (2) F : + الذين || (3) B : ابو حفص || (4) B : الرجوه ||

- 65, xvii « وكفى بربك وكياً ». قال جعفر : كفى بربك وكياً لمن توكل عليه وفوض امره اليه .
- 70, xvii « ولقد كرمنا بني آدم ». قال جعفر : كرمنا بني آدم بالمعرفة .
- 80, xvii عن جعفر بن محمد¹ في قوله « ادخلني مدخل صدق » قال : ادخلني فيها على حد الرضا « واخرجني » عنها وانت عني راض .
- وقال ايضاً : واخرجني من القبر² الى الوقوف بين يديك على طريق الصدق مع الصادقين .
- وقال جعفر : طلب التولية ان يكون هو المتولي له اي ادخلني³ ميسدان معرفتك واخرجني من مشاهدة المعرفة الى مشاهدة الذات .
- 80, xvii « واجعل لي من لدنك سلطاناً » قال جعفر : قوة لي في الدين يوجب لي بها المحبة .
- 101, xvii « ولقد آتينا موسى تسع آيات » قال جعفر : من الآيات التي خصه الله بها الاصطناع والفاء المحبة عليه والكلام والثبات في محل الخطاب والحفظ في اليم واليد البيضاء واعطاء الالواح .
- 105, xvii « وبالحق انزلناه وبالحق نزل » قال جعفر : الحق انزل على قلوب خواصه من مكنون فوايده وعجائب بره ولطائف صنعه ما نور به اسرارهم وطهر به قلوبهم وزين به خوارجهم وبالحق نزل عليهم هذه اللطائف .
- 14, xviii « وربطنا على قلوبهم اذ قاموا » قال جعفر : اذ قاموا اي قاموا واخلصوا في دعائنا . وقال جعفر : قاموا الى الحق بالحق قيام ادب ونادوه نداء صدق واظهروا له صحة الفقر ولجأوا اليه احسن لجاء وقالوا « ربنا رب السموات والارض » افتخاراً به وتعظيماً له فكافأهم الحق على قيامهم⁴ الاجابة عن نداءهم بأحسن جواب وألطف خطاب واظهر عليهم من الآيات ما تعجب منه الرسل حين⁵ قال : « لو أطلعت عليهم لوليت منهم فراراً » (18, XVIII).

(1) B : + الصادق || (2) B : النفس || (3) B : + ني || (4) B : فنائم || (5) F : حتى ||

87, xv « ولقد آتيناك سبعاً من المثاني ». عن جعفر¹ في هذه الآية قال : اكرمناك وانزلنا اليك² وارسلناك والهمناك وهديناك وسلطانك ثم اكرمناك بسبع كرامات اوها الهدى والثاني النبوة والثالث الرحمة والرابع الشفقة والخامس المودة والالفسة والسادس النعيم والسابع السكينة والقرآن العظيم وفيه اسم الله الاعظم .

12, xvi « وسخر لكم الليل والنهار والشمس والقمر ». قال جعفر الصادق رضي الله عنه : سخر لك ما في السموات من الامطار وما في الارض من النبات وما في الليل والنهار من انواع الدواب وسخر لك الملائكة يسبحون لك وما في الارض من الانعام والبهائم³ والفلك والخلق . سخر لك الكل لئلا يشغلك عنه شيء وتكون مسخراً لمن سخر لك هذه الاشياء . فانه سخر لك كل شيء وسخر قلبك لمحبه ومعرفته وهو حظ العبد من ربه .

96, xv « ما عندكم ينفد وما عند الله باق ». قال جعفر : ما عندكم ينفد يعني الافعال من الفرائض والتوافل وما عند الله باق من اوصافه ونعوته لان الحدث يفنى والتقديم يبقى .

97, xvi « فلنحيينه حياة طيبة ». قال جعفر : الحياة الطيبة المعرفة بالله وصدق المقام مع الله وصدق الوقوف مع الله .

وقال جعفر : الحياة الطيبة ان يطيب له بان كل ذلك من الله واليه .

125, xvi « ادع الى سبيل ربك بالحكمة والموعظة ». قال جعفر : الدعاء بالحكمة ان يدعوه من الله الى الله بالله والموعظة الحسنة ان يرى الخلق في أسر القدرة فيشكر من اصاب ويعذر من أبي .

127, xvi « واصبر وما صبرك الا بالله ». قال جعفر : امر الله أنبياءه بالصبر وجعل الحظ الاعلى منه للنبي صلعم حيث جعل امر صبره بالله لا بنفسه .

1, xvii قيل : جاء رجل الى جعفر بن محمد⁴ فقال : صف لي المعراج ! فقال : كيف اصف لك مقاماً لم يسع فيه جبرئيل مع عظم محله !

(1) B : قال جعفر || (2) B : + القرآن || (3) F : - من النبات ... الارض || (4) B : قال ... واليه || (5) B : + الصادق ||

- 26, xiv « ومثل كلمة خبيثة كشجرة خبيثة ». قال جعفر : الشجرة الخبيثة الشهوات وارضها النفوس وماعها الامل واوراقها الكسل وثمارها المعاصي وغايتها النار .
- 32, xiv « ويختر لكم الفلك لتجري في البحر بأمره ». قال الصادق : يختر لكم السموات بالامطار والارض بالنبات والبحران¹ سبيلاً ومتجرّاً ويختر لكم الشمس والقمر يدوران عليك ويوصلان اليك² منافع الثمار والزررع . ويختر قلب المؤمن محبته ومعرفته . وحظ الله من العباد القلوب لا غير لانه موضع نظره ومستودع امانته ومعرفة³ اسراره .
- 35, xiv عن جعفر بن محمد⁴ قال في قوله : « اجعل هذا البلد آمناً » يعني افئدة العارفين : اجعلهم امناء سرّك وآمنين من قطيعتك .
- 35, xiv « واجنبي وبنّي ان نعبد الاصنام ». قال جعفر : لا تردني الى مشاهدتي الخلة ولا ترد اولادي الى مشاهدة النبوة .
- 37, xiv قال جعفر : « اجعل افئدة من الناس تهوى اليهم » لان افئدتهم تهوى اليك .
- 52, xiv « هذا بلاغ للناس ». قال جعفر : موعظة للخلق وانذار لهم ليجتنبوا قرناء السوء ومجالسة المخالفين . فان القلوب اذا تعودت مجالسة الاضداد تنعكس وتنتكس⁵ .
- 9, xv « انا نحن نزلنا الذكر وانا له لحافظون ». قال جعفر : « وانا له لحافظون » على من اردنا به خيراً وذاهبون به عن اردنا به شراً .
- 28, xv « اني خالق بشرّاً من صلصال ». قال جعفر : امتحنهم [الملائكة] ليحتمهم على طلب الاستفهام فيزدادوا علماً بعجائب قدرته وتتلاشى عندهم نفوسهم .
- 42, xv « ان عبادي ليس لك عليهم سلطان ». عن جعفر الصادق في قوله « عباد الرحمن » (63,XXV) قال : جملة الخلق من جهة الخلق لا من جهة المعرفة . و « عبادي » تخصيص في العبودية والمعرفة .
- 72, xv قال جعفر في قوله « لعمرك انهم لفي سكرتهم يعمهون » قال : بحياتك يا محمد ان الكل في سكرة الغفلة وحجاب البعد الا من كنت وسيلته ودليله الينا .

(1) B : + تتخذوه || (2) B : عليكم... اليك || (3) B : ومدن || (4) B : جعفر الصادق || (5) B : وتنتكس

لتغيير اسرارهم ولا يغير عليهم احوالهم ولو وفقهم لتغيير الاسرار ومشاهدة البلوى لذلك وافتقروا فقالوا به النجاة .

14, XIII « وما دعاء الكافرين الا في ضلال » . قال جعفر² : من دعا بنفسه فالى نفسه دعا وهو الكفر والضلال وذلك محل الخيانة والاسقاط من درجات اهل الامانة . فان الدواعي تختلف : داعٍ بالحق وداعٍ الى الحق وداعٍ الى طريق الحق . كل هؤلاء دعاة يدعون الخلق الى هذه الطرق لا بانفسهم . فهذه طرق الحق . وداعٍ يدعو بنفسه³ ، فالى اي شيء دعا فهو ضلال .

2. « ان الله يضل من يشاء ويهدي اليه من اناب » . قال جعفر : يضل عن ادراكه وجوده من قصده بنفسه ويهدي اي يوصل الى حقايقه من طلبه به .

38, XIII « ولكل اجل كتاب » . قال جعفر الصادق : للرؤية وقت .

39, XIII عن جعفر بن محمد⁴ في قوله « يحمو الله ما يشاء ويثبت » قال : يحمو الكفر ويثبت الايمان⁵ ويحمو النكرة ويثبت المعرفة ويحمو الغفلة ويثبت الذكر ويحمو البغض ويثبت المحبة ويحمو الضعف ويثبت القوة ويحمو الجهل ويثبت العلم ويحمو الشك ويثبت اليقين ويحمو الهوى ويثبت العقل على هذا النسق . ودليله « كل يوم هو في شأن » (29.LV) محوًا وإثباتًا .

39, XIII « وعنده ام الكتاب » . قال جعفر : الكتاب الذي قدر فيه الشقاوة والسعادة . فلا يزداد فيه ولا ينقص منه « وما يبدل القول لدي » (29,I) والاعمال اعلام . فمن قدر له بالسعادة ختم⁶ له بالسعادة ومن قدر له بالشقاوة ختم له بها .

1, XIV « كتاب انزلناه اليك لتخرج الناس من الظلمات الى النور » . قال جعفر : عهد خصصت به فيه بيان هلاك⁷ سالف الامم ونجاة امتك انزلناه اليك لتخرجهم به من ظلمات الكفر الى نور الايمان ومن ظلمات البدعة الى انوار السنة ومن ظلمات النفوس الى انوار القلوب .

(1) B : قيل || (2) Y : لنفسه || (3) B : قال جعفر الصادق || (4) B : - يحمو ...
الايمان || (5) B : حكم || (6) B : - هلاك ||

- 93, XII « اذهبوا بقميصي هذا ». عن جعفر¹ قال : كان المراد في² القميص أنه اتاه الهم³ من قبل⁴ القميص بقوله « وجاءوا على قميصه بدم كذب » (18, XII) فاحب أن يدخل السرور عليه من الجهة الذي⁵ دخل الهم به عليه .
- 94, XII « قال ابوهم اني لا اجد ريح يوسف ». قال جعفر الصادق : يقول⁶ ان ريح الصبا سأل الله تعالى فقال خصني بان ابشره بابنه . فاذن الله له في ذلك . وكان يعقوب ساجداً فرفع رأسه وقال « اني لا اجد ريح يوسف ». فقالت له اولاده « انك لفي ضلالك القديم » (95, XII) اي في محبتك القديمة . وكان⁷ الريح ممزوجاً بالعناية والشفقة والرحمة والاخبار بزوال المحنة . وكذلك المومن المتحقق يجد ريح نسيم الايمان في قلبه وروح المعرفة من العناية التي سبقت له من الله في سره .
- 100, XII « وقد احسن بي اذ اخرجني من السجن ». قال جعفر الصادق : قال يوسف « احسن بي اذ اخرجني من السجن » ولم يقل اخرجني من الجب وهو اصعب . قال : لانه لم يرد مواجهة اخوته بانكم جفوتوني وألقيتوني في الجب بعد ان قال « لا تريب عليكم اليوم » .
- 100, XII « ان ربي لطيف لما يشاء ». قال جعفر⁸ الصادق : اوقف عباده تحت مشيئته ان شاء عذبهم وان شاء عفا عنهم وان شاء قربهم وان شاء بعدهم لتكون المشيئة والقدرة له لا لغيره ثم اظهر لطفه لعباده المخصوصين بالمحبة والمعرفة⁹ والايمان وذلك قوله : « ان ربي لطيف لما يشاء » لعباده الذين سبقت لهم منه العناية والولاية .
- 111, XII « عبرة لاولي الالباب ». قال جعفر الصادق ؛ لاولي الاسرار مع الله .
- 9, XIII « الكبير المتعال ». قال جعفر : كبر في قلوب العارفين محله فصغر عندهم سواء وتعالى عن¹⁰ ان يتقرب اليه الا بصرف كرمه .
- 11, XIII « ان الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتى يغيروا ما بانفسهم ». قال جعفر الصادق : لا يوقفهم

(1 B : قال جعفر الصادق || (2 B : من || (3 Y : الحزن || (4 B : جهة ||
 (5 YB : التي || (6 B : يقال || (7 Y : فكان || (8 Y : - جعفر || (9 Y : المنفرة ||
 (10 YB : - عن ||

وقال جعفر : كان لله في يوسف سر مغطى عليهم ، مودع فيه حين اخرجوه من الجب فبيع بالثمن البخس . ولو شهدوا فيه ودائع اسرار الحق عنده لما اتوا اجمعين في النظر¹ اليه ولم تطاوعهم² الالسنة بقولهم « هذا غلام » . فهو عندهم غلام وعند الحق علم من الاعلام .

30, xii « قد شغفها حباً » . قال جعفر : الشغاف مثل الغين³ اظلم قلبه⁴ عن التفكير في غيره والاشتغال بسواه .

30, xii « انا لنها في ضلال مبين » . سئل جعفر بن محمد⁵ عن العشق فقال : ضلال .

ثم قرأ « انا لنها في ضلال مبين » . قال : معناه في عشق ظاهر .

31, xii « فلما رأينه واكبرنه » . قال جعفر : سترت هيبة النبوة عليهن مواضع ارادتهن منه فاكبرنه .

67, xii « لا تدخلوا من باب واحد » . قال جعفر⁶ : نسي يعقوب اعتماده على العصمة والقوة وان القضاء يغلب التدبير بقوله « لا تدخلوا من باب واحد » ثم استدرك عن قريب وساعده التوفيق فقال : « ما اغنى عنكم من الله من شيء » .

70, xi « ايها العير انكم لسارقون » . قال جعفر : اضر يوسف في امره مناديه اياهم بالسرقة ما كان منهم في قصته مع ابيهم : ان فعلكم الذي فعلتم مع ابيكم يشبه فعل السراق .

76, xii « كذلك كدنا ليوسف » . قال جعفر : اظهرنا عليه عامة بركات آبائه الصادقين بما عصمناه به في وقت المهم .

81, xii « ان ابنك سرق » . قال جعفر : معناه⁷ ان ابنك ما⁸ سرق وكيف يجوز هذه اللفظة على نبي بن نبي . وهذا من مشكلات القرآن وهو كقوله في قصة داود « خصمان بغى بعضنا على بعض » (22, XXXVIII) وما كانا خصمين وما بغيا .

92, xii « لا تريب عليكم » . قال جعفر : لا عيب عليكم فيما عملتم لانكم كنتم مجبورين عليه وذلك في سابق القضاء عليكم .

|| (1) B : حين نظروا || (2) B : ولما طارعتهم || (3) B : النيم || (4) B : قلبها ||
|| (5) B : جعفر الصادق || (6) B : جعفر الصادق || (7) B : - معناه || (8) B : - ما ||

وقال ايضاً : عملت الدعوة في السراير فتحللت بها وركنت اليها¹.

« وشفاء لما في الصدور » . قال جعفر : شفاء لما في الصدور اي راحة لما² في السراير . 57, x

وقال جعفر : لبعضهم شفاء المعرفة والصفاء وبعضهم شفاء التسليم والرضا وبعضهم شفاء التوبة والوفاء وبعضهم شفاء المشاهدة واللقاء .

« قل بفضل الله وبرحمته فبذلك فليفرحوا » . قال جعفر في هذه الآية : انه انتباه 58, x من غفلة او انقطاع عن ذلة والمباينة من دواعي الشهوات³ .

وقال جعفر : فضل الله معرفته ورحمته توفيقه .

« وان يمسسك الله بضرٍ . . . وان يردك بخير » . قال جعفر : جعل الله مسّ الضر منوطاً بصفتك وارادة الخير لك منوطاً بصفته ليكون رجائك اغاب من خوفك . 107, x

« ولقد ارسلنا موسى بآياتنا وسلطان مبين » . قال جعفر : الآيات هو التواضع عند اولياء الله والسلطان التكبر على اعداء الله . 96, xi

« فاستقم كما امرت » . قال جعفر الصادق : افتقر الى الله بصحة العزم⁴ . 112, xi

« قال يا بشرى هذا غلام وأسروه بضعة » . قال جعفر : كان لله تعالى في يوسف سر فغطى عليهم موضع سره ولو كشف لهم عن حقيقة ما اودع فيه لامتوا . الا تراهم كيف قالوا « هذا غلام » ولو علموا اثار القدرة فيه لقالوا هذا نبي وصديق . ولما كشف للنسوة بعض الامر قلن « ما هذا بشراً ان هذا الا ملك كريم » (31, XII)

« وشروه بثمن بخس » . قال جعفر : باعوه بالبخس من الثمن لجهلهم بما اودع الله فيه من لطائف العلوم وبدابيع الآيات . 20, xii

وقال جعفر : انت تتوجب من بيع اخوة يوسف يوسف بالبخس من الثمن وما تفعله اعجب منه لانك تباع حظك من الآخرة بشهوة نظرة او خطرة من الدنيا . وربما باع الرجل معرفته باخس ثمن وربما فاته حظه من ربه باقل القليل .

(1) B - قال... اليها || (2) B - لما || (3) B - قال... الشهوات || (4) Y :
مي || (5) B - قال... العزم ||

- 46, IX « ولكن كره الله انبعائهم ». قال جعفر : طالب عباده بالحق ولم يجعلهم لذلك اهلاً ثم لم يعذرهم ولا مهم على ذلك . الا تراه يقول : « وقالوا لا تنفردوا في الحر »¹ (IX, 81) .
- « ولو ارادوا الخروج لاعدوا له عدة ». قال جعفر : لو عرفوا الله لاستحيوا منه ولخرجوا له عن انفسهم وارواحهم² واموالهم بدلاً من³ واحد من اوامره .
- 91, IX « ما على المحسنين من سبيل ». قال جعفر : المحسن الذي يحسن اداب خدمة سيده .
- 100, IX « رضي الله عنهم ورضوا عنه ». قال جعفر : رضي الله عنهم بما كان سبق لهم من الله⁴ من عناية وتوفيق ورضوا عنه بما من عليهم بمتابعتهم لرسوله صلعم وقبول ما جاء به وانفاقهم الاموال وبذل المهج .
- 111, قال جعفر في قوله : « ان الله اشترى من المؤمنين انفسهم واموالهم ». قال : يكرمهم على لسان الحقيقة وعلى لسان المعاملة : اشترى منهم الاجساد لمواضع وقوع المحبة من قلوبهم فأحياهم بالوصلة .
- 116, IX « ان الله له ملك السموات والارض ». قال جعفر : الاكوان كلها له فلا يشغلنك ما له عنه .
- 128, IX « لقد جاءكم رسول » : قال جعفر الصادق : علم الله عجز خلقه عن طاعته فعرفهم ذلك لكي يعلموا انهم لا ينالون الصفوة من خدمته فاقام بينه وبينهم مخلوقاً من جنسهم في الصورة فقال : « لقد جاءكم رسول من انفسكم عزيز عليه ما عندهم ... » فألبسه من نعمة الرأفة والرحمة واخرجه الى الخلق سفيراً صادقاً وجعل طاعته طاعته وموافقته موافقته وقال : « من يطع الرسول فقد اطاع الله » (IV, 80) .
- 13, X « لما ظلموا ». قال جعفر : لما قابلوا نعمنا بالكفران .
- 25, X « والله يدعو الى دار السلام ». قال جعفر : الدعوة عامة والهداية خاصة .
- وقال ايضاً : ما طابت الجنة الا بالسلام وانما اختارك بهذه الخصائص لكي لا تختار عليه احداً .

(1) B - قال... الحر || (2) Y : وازواجهم || (3) Y : + أمر || (4) B - : كان ||
 (5) B - : من الله || (6) Y : المفرد ||

- 24, viii « استجيبوا لله وللرسول ». قال جعفر : اجابوه الى الطاعة لتحيا بها قلوبكم¹ . « اذا دعاكم لما يحييكم » قال جعفر : الحياة هي الحياة بالله وهو المعرفة . كما قال الله تعالى : « فلنحيينه حياة طيبة » (97,XVI)² .
- 44, viii « ليقضي الله امرًا كان مفعولاً ». قال جعفر : ما قضاه في الازل يظهره في الحين بعد الحين والوقت بعد الوقت .
- 53, viii « ذلك بان الله لم يكن مغيرًا نعمة... ». قال جعفر : ما دام العبد يعرف نعم الله عنده فان الله لا ينزع منه نعمة حتى اذا جهل النعمة ولم يشكر الله عليها اذ ذاك حريّ ان³ ينزع منه .
- 67, viii « تريدون عرض الدنيا والله يريد الآخرة ». قال جعفر : تريدون الدنيا والله يريد لكم الآخرة وما يريد الله لكم خير مما تريدونه لانفسكم .
- 69, viii « فكلوا مما غنمتم حلالاً طيباً ». قال جعفر : الحلال ما لا يعصى الله فيه والطيب ما لا ينسى الله فيه .
- 25, ix « لقد نصركم الله في مواطن كثيرة ». قال جعفر : استجلاب النصر⁴ في شيء واحد وهو الذلة والافتقار والعجز لقوله « لقد نصركم الله في مواطن كثيرة » لم تقوموا فيها بانفسكم ولم تشهدوا قوتكم وكثرتكم وعلمتم ان النصر لا يوجد بالقوة وان الله هو الناصر والمعين . ومتى علم العبد حقيقة ضعفه نصره الله . وحلول الخذلان بشيء واحد وهو العجب . قال الله « ويوم نحين اذ أعجبتكم كثرتكم فلم تغن عنكم شيئاً » . فلما عاينوا القوة من انفسهم دون الله رماهم الله بالهزيمة وضيق الارض عليهم . قال الله « ثم وليتم مدبرين » موكلين الى حولكم وقوتكم وكثرتكم .
- 37, ix سئل جعفر الصادق عن قوله « زين لهم سوء اعمالهم » قال : هو الرياء .
- 40, ix قال جعفر في قوله « وايداه يجنود لم تروها » قال : ذلك جنود اليقين والثقة بالله والتوكل على الله .

(1) B : - قال ... قلوبكم || (2) B : + وقال جعفر رضي الله عنه : حياة القلوب في الماشرة وحياة الارواح في المحبة وحياة النفوس في المتابعة || (3) B : - اذ ... ان || (4) Y : النصر ||

ولا قلب يصل اليه ولا عقل يعرفه . لان اصل المعرفة من الفطرة واصل المواصلة من المسافة واصل المشاهدة من المباشرة .

قال جعفر في قوله « لن تراني ولكن انظر الى الجبل » : اشغله بالجبل ثم تجلّى ولولا ما كان من اشغاله بالجبل لمات موسى صعقاً بلا افاقة¹ . 143, vii

ال جعفر في قوله « سبحانهك تبت اليك » قال : نزّه ربه واعترف اليه بالعجز وتبرأ ن عقله . « تبت اليك » ، رجعت اليك من نفسي ولا اميل الى علمي . فالعلم ما علمتني والعقل ما اكرمتني به « وانا اول المؤمنين » انك لا ترى في الدنيا² .

« ويضع عنهم اصرهم والاغلال » . قال جعفر : انقال الشرك وذل المخالفات وغل³ الاهمال³ . 157, vii

« فانبجست منه اثنا عشرة عيناً » . عن جعفر بن محمد في هذه الآية قال : 160, vii

انبجست من المعرفة اثنا عشر (sic) عيناً يشرب كل اهل مرتبة في مقام من عين من تلك العيون على قدرها . فاول عين منها عين التوحيد . والثاني عين العبودية والسرور بها . والثالث عين الاخلاص . والرابع عين الصدق . والخامس عين التواضع . والسادس عين الرضا والتفويض . والسابع عين السكينة والوقار . والثامن عين السخاء والثقة بالله . والتاسع عين اليقين . والعاشر عين العقل . والحادي عشر عين المحبة . والثاني عشر عين الانس والحلوة وهي عين المعرفة بنفسها ومنها تنفجر هذه العيون . فمن شرب من عين منها يجد حلاوتها ويطمع في العين التي هي ارفع منها⁴ ، من عين الى عين حتى يصل الى الاصل . فاذا وصل الى الاصل تحقق⁵ بالحق .

سئل جعفر عن الحكمة في قوله « وهو يتولى الصالحين » ونحن نعلم انه يتولى العالمين ، فقال : التولية على وجهين : تولية اقامة وابداء وتولية عناية ورعاية لاقامة الحق . 196, vii

« وليبلى المؤمنين منه بلاء حسناً » . قال جعفر : ان يفنيهم عن نفوسهم . فاذا افناهم عن نفوسهم كان هو عوضاً لهم عن نفوسهم⁶ . 17, viii

(1) B : - وقال ... افاقة || (2) B : - قال ... الدنيا || (3) Y : الانهالك || (4) B : + فلم يزل يشرب || (5) B : + هناك || (6) F : - فاذا ... نفوسهم ||

- 120, VII « والقي السحرة ساجدين ». قال جعفر¹ : وجدوا نسيم رياح العناية القديمة بهم فالتجوا الى السجود شكراً وقالوا « آمنا برب العالمين » (121, VII) .
- 142, VII « واعدنا موسى ثلاثين ليلة ». قال جعفر : كان وعده ثلاثين ليلة فاليوم² على ميعاد ربه وانتهى الاجل لقدمه فاخرجه عن حده ورسمه واكرم موسى بكلامه وبان عليه شرفه خارجاً عن رسوم البشرية حتى سمع ما سمع من ربه من غير نفسه وعلمه وغير وقته الذي وقت لقومه دليلاً بذلك على ان منازل الربوبية خارج عن رسوم البشرية .
- 143, VII « ولما جاء موسى لميقاتنا وكلمه ربه ». قال جعفر : الميقات طلب الروية³ . وقال جعفر⁴ : سمع كلاماً⁵ خارجاً عن بشريته واضاف الكلام اليه وكلمه⁶ من نفسية موسى وعبوديته فغاب موسى عن نفسه وفي موسى عن صفاته⁷ وكلمه ربه من حقائق معانيه فسمع موسى صفة موسى من ربه⁸ ومحمد سمع من ربه صفة⁹ ربه فكان احمد المحمودين عند ربه . ومن هنا كان مقام محمد صلعم سدره¹⁰ المنتهى ومقام موسى الطور . ومنذ كلم الله¹⁰ موسى على الطور افنى صفتها فلم يظهر فيها النبات ولا تمكن لاحد عليها¹¹ .
- 143, VII « قال رب انظر اليك ». قال جعفر : انبسط الى ربه في معنى رويته لانه راي¹² خيال كلامه على قلبه . فبه¹³ انبسط اليه . فقال له : « لن تراني » اي لا تقدر ان تراني لانك انت الفاني فكيف السبيل لفان الى باق . « ولكن انظر الى الجبل ». فقال¹⁴ : وقع على الجبل علم الاطلاع فصار دكاً متفرقاً ، زال الجبل من ذكر اطلاق ربه وصنع موسى من روية تذكدك الجبل . فكيف له بروية ربه عياناً ، معاينة روية الله لعبده والعبد فان روية العبد لربه والعبد بربه باق . وقال¹⁵ : ثلاث من العبيد الى ربهم محال : التجلي والوصلة والمعرفة . فلا عين تراه
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- (1) B : + رحه الله || (2) B : فالتزم (?) || (3) B : - قال ... الروية || (4) B : بعضهم || (5) YB : كلامه || (6) B : فلما كلم موسى غيب عن صفاته ونفسه || (7) B : + فكان من غير موسى || (8) B : صفات || (9) YB : - سدره || (10) B : - الله || (11) B : ولا يمكن لاحد عليها المكث || (12) B : + في || (13) B : فيه || (14) B : - فقال || (15) Y : ثم قال ||

رضى حكمه¹ استراح وهُدِي لسبيل رشدِه ومن منخِطِه فان حكمه ماض عليه² وله فيه السخِط والهوان .

3, v « اليوم اكلت لكم دينكم » . قال جعفر بن محمد³ : اليوم اشارة الى يوم بعث محمد رسول الله صلعم ويوم رسالته .

18, v « يغفر لمن يشاء ويعذب من يشاء » . قال جعفر : يغفر لمن يشاء فضلاً ويعذب من يشاء عدلاً .

35, v « وابتغوا اليه الوسيلة » . قال جعفر : اطلبوا منه القربة .

59, vi قال جعفر في قوله « وعنده مفاتيح الغيب » قال : يفتح من القلوب الهداية ومن الهموم الرعاية ومن اللسان الرواية⁴ ومن الجوارح السياسة والدلالة .

79 « اني وجهت وجهي » قال جعفر : يعني اسلمت قلبي للذي خلقه وانقطعت اليه من كل شاغل وشغل « للذي فطر السموات والارض » قال : الذي رفع السماء⁵ نير عمد واظهر فيها بدايع صنعه قادر على حفظ قلبي من الخواطر المذمومة والوساوس التي لا تليق بالحق .

قال جعفر في قوله « اومن كان ميتاً فاحييناه » قال : ميتاً عنّا فاحييناه بنا وجعلناه اماماً يهتدي بنوره الاجانب ويرجع اليه الضال « كمن مثله في الظلمات » كمن ترك مع شهوته وهواه فلم يؤيد بروايح القرب وموانسة الحضرة .

قال جعفر : « اومن كان ميتاً » بالاعتماد على الطاعات « فاحييناه » فجعلنا له نور النضرع والاعتذار⁶ .

153, vi « وان هذا صراطي مستقيماً » . قال جعفر بن محمد⁷ : طريق من القلب الى الله بالاعراض عما سواه .

31, vii « خذوا زينتكم عند كل مسجد » . قال جعفر⁸ : ابعد اعضاءك من⁹ ان تمس بها شيئاً بعد ان جعلها الله آلة تؤدي بها فرايض الله¹⁰ .

(1) B : بحكمه || (2) B : - عليه || (3) B : - بن محمد || (4) B : الدراية ||
 (5) B : السموات || (6) B : - قال ... والاعتذار || (7) B : جعفر الصادق || (8) B :
 + رحمه الله || (9) B : عن || (10) B : فرائضه ||

عن طلب دفي المنازل وسمت به الرفعة حتى يكون الحق نهايته « وان الى ربك المنتهى » (42,LIII) وسمو همته مما خص به من الاختصاص من التعريف والالهام .

- 9, iv « فليتقوا الله وليقولوا قولاً سديداً » . قال جعفر بن محمد¹ : الصدق والتقوى يزيدان في الرزق ويوسعان² المعيشة .
- 59, iv « اطيعوا الله واطيعوا الرسول واولي الامر منكم » . قال جعفر الصادق : لا بد للعبد المؤمن من ثلاث سنن : سنة الله وسنة الانبياء وسنة الاولياء . فسنة الله كتابان السر . قال الله : « عالم الغيب فلا يظهر على غيبه احداً » (26,LXXII) . وسنة الرسول صلعم مداراة الخلق وسنة الاوليا الوفاء بالعهد والصبر في البأساء والضراء .
- 64, iv « ولو انهم اذ ظلموا انفسهم جاءوك » . قال جعفر : من لم يجعل قصده لنا على سبيلك وسننك وهديك ضل الطريق واخطأ الرشداً³ .
- 80, iv « من يطع الرسول فقد اطاع الله » . قال جعفر بن محمد : من عرفك بالرسالة والتبوة فقد عرفني بالربوبية والالهية⁴ .
- 125, iv عن جعفر بن محمد⁵ في قوله « اتخذ الله ابراهيم خليلاً » قال : اظهر اسم الخلة لابراهيم لان الخليل ظاهر في المعنى واخفى اسم المحبة لمحمد صلعم لتمام حاله . اذ لا يجب الحبيب اظهار حال حبيبه بل يجب اخفائه وستره لئلا يطلع عليه سواه ولا يدخل احد فيما بينهما . وقال لنيته وصفية محمد صلعم لما اظهر له حال المحبة « قل ان كنتم تحبون الله فاتبعوني » (31,III) اي ليس الطريق الى محبة الله الا باتباع حبيبه ولا يتوسل الى الحبيب بشيء احسن من مبايعة⁶ حبيبه وطلب رضائه⁷ .
- 1, v قال جعفر بن محمد في قوله « يا ايها الذين آمنوا » قال : فيه اربع خصال : نداء وكناية واشارة وشهادة : يا نداء واي خصوص نداء - وها كناية - والذين اشارة - وآمنوا شهادة .
- 1, v « ان الله يحكم ما يريد » . قال جعفر : حكم بما اراد وامضى ارادته ومشيئته . فمن

(1 B : جعفر الصادق || (2 B : + في || (3 B : الرشيد || (4 B : - قال ... والالهية || (5 B : جعفر الصادق || (6 V : متابعة || (7 B : - ولا يتوسل... رضائه ||

- وقال جعفر : لن يصلوا الى الحق حتى ينفصلوا عما دونه¹.
- 97, III قال جعفر في قوله « من دخله كان آمناً » قال : من دخل الايمان قلبه كان آمناً من الكفر².
- 101, III « ومن يعتصم بالله فقد هدي الى صراط مستقيم » . قال جعفر³ في هذه الآية : من عرفه استغنى به عن جميع الانام .
- 102, III « اتقوا الله حق تقاته » . قال جعفر : التقوى ان لا ترى في قلبك شيئاً سواه .
- 110, III قال جعفر الصادق : « يأمرون بالمعروف » والمعروف هو موافقة الكتاب والسنة⁴.
- 138, III « هذا بيان للناس » . قال جعفر : أظهر البيان للناس ولكن لا يتبينه الا من أيد منه⁵ بنور اليقين⁶ وطهارة السر . الا تراه يقول : « وهدى وموعظة للمتقين » . ألا⁷ ان الاهتداء بهدى البيان والاتعاظ به للمتقين الذين اتقوا كل شيء سواه .
- 150, III « بل الله مولاكم » . قال جعفر : متولي اموركم بدناً وعاقبة⁸.
- 159, III « فاذا عزمت فتوكل على الله » . قال جعفر : أمر باستقامة الظاهر مع الخلق وبتجريد باطنه للحق . الا تراه يقول : « فاذا عزمت... »
- 191, III « الذين يذكرون الله قياماً وقعوداً وعلى جنوبهم » . قال جعفر : يذكرون الله قياماً في مشاهدات الربوبية وقعوداً في اقامة الخدمة وعلى جنوبهم في روية الزلف⁹.
- 200, III « اصبروا وصابروا ورابطوا واتقوا الله لعلكم تفلحون » . قال جعفر : اصبروا عن المعاصي وصابروا على الطاعات ورابطوا الارواح بالمشاهدة واتقوا الله اي تجنبوا¹⁰ الانبساط مع الحق « لعلكم تفلحون » ، تبلغون مواقف اهل الصدق فانه محل الفلاح.
- 1, I قال جعفر في قوله « يا ايها الناس » اي كونوا من الناس الذين هم الناس ولا تغفلوا عن الله . فمن عرف انه من الانسان الذي خص خلقته بما خص به كبرت همته

1. B : لن يتلوا الحق حتى ينفصلوا عن الخلق || 2 B : - قال... الكفر || 3 B : أبو جعفر (?) || 4 B : - قال... والسنة || 5 Y : - منه || 6 B : التوفيق || 7 B : اي || 8 B : - قال... وعاقبة || 9 B : الزلفي ؛ Y : الزلغة || 10 B : اجتنبوا ||

- 35, III « اني نذرت لك ما في بطني محرراً » قال جعفر : عتيقاً من رق الدنيا واهلها¹ . وقال جعفر : « محرراً » اي عبداً لك خالصاً لا يستعبده شيء من الاكوان .
- 37, III « فتقبلها ربها » قال جعفر : تقبلها حتى يعجب الانبياء مع علو اقدارهم في عظم شأنها عند الله . الا ترى ان زكريا قال لها « انى لك هذا ؟ قالت هو من عند الله » اي من عند من تقبلني .
- 39, III « وسيداً وحضوراً » . قال جعفر : السيد المبين عن الخلق وصفاً وحالاً وخلقاً .
- 61, III « فن حاجتك فيه من بعد ما جاءك من العلم » . قال جعفر : هذه اشارة في اظهار المدعين لاهل الحقائق ليفتضحوا في دعاويهم عند اظهار اثار انوار التحقيق وبطلان ظلمات الدعاوي الكاذبة .
- 68, III « ان اولى الناس بابراهيم لتلذين اتبعوه وهذا النبي » . قال جعفر : لتلذين اتبعوه في شرايعهم ومناسكهم « وهذا النبي » لتقرب حال ابراهيم من حال النبي صلى الله عليهما وشريعته من شريعته دون ساير الانبياء وساير الشرايع ، « والذين آمنوا » لتقرب حالهم من حال ابراهيم . « والله ولي المؤمنين » في تشريفهم² الى بلوغ مقام الخليل عليه السلام اذ³ القرب منه من⁴ درجة المحبة بقوله : « ويحبهم ويحبونه » (54, V) .
- 76, III « بلى من اوفى بعهده واتقى فان الله يحب المتقين » . قال جعفر : من اوفى بالعهد الجاري عليه في الميثاق الاول « واتقى » وطهر ذلك العهد وذلك الميثاق من تدنسه بباطل . والوفاء بالعهد الكون⁵ معه بقطع ما سواه . لذلك قال النبي صلعم : « اصدق كلمة تكلم بها العرب قول لبيد : الاكل شيء ما خلا الله باطل » . ومن وفى بالعهد سمي محباً⁶ والله يحب المتقين .
- 79, III قال جعفر « كونوا ربانيين » قال : مستمعين بسمع القلوب ناظرين باعين الغيوب .
- 92, III قال جعفر : بانفاق المهج يصل العبد⁷ الى بر حبيبه وقرب مولاه . قال الله : « لن تنالوا البر حتى تنفقوا مما تحبون » .

1 B : - قال جعفر... واهلها || 2 B : تشریکهم || 3 Y : او || 4 YB : في ||

5 Y : ان يكون || 6 Y : متقیاً || 7 B : المحب ||

توكلوا على الله في جميع امورهم ونبذوا تدابيرهم وراء ظهورهم واعرضوا عنها وهم الفقراء الصبر الراضون .

222, II « ان الله يحب التوابين » . قال جعفر : يحب التوابين من سوراتهم ويجب « المتطهرين » من اراداتهم .

284, II قال جعفر : « لله ما في السماوات وما في الارض » : من اشتغل بهما قطعاه عن الله عز وجل ، ومن اقبل على الله وتركها ملكها الله اياه .

« وان تبدوا ما في انفسكم » . قال جعفر : الاسلام . « او تحفوه » الايمان . =

1, III « الم » . قال جعفر : الحروف المقطوعة في القرآن اشارات الى الوجدانية والفردانية والديمومية وقيام الحق بنفسه بالاستغناء عما سواه .

5, III قال جعفر في قوله « ان الله لا يخفى عليه شيء » قال : لا يطلعن عليك فيرى في قلبك سواه فيمقتك .

18, III قال جعفر في قوله « شهد الله » قال : شهد الله بوجدانيته واحديته وصديقته « وشهد الملائكة واولو العلم » له بتصديق ما شهد هو لنفسه .

وسئل جعفر عن حقيقة هذه الشهادة ما هي فقال : هي مبنية على اربعة اركان . اولها اتباع الامر والثاني اجتناب النهي والثالث القناعة والرابع الرضا .

19, III قال جعفر « ان الدين عند الله الاسلام » قال : هو ما سلم عليه صاحبه من وساوس الشيطان وهواجس النفس وعذاب الآخرة .

28, III قال جعفر : « ويحذركم الله نفسه » ان تشهد لنفسك بالصلاح لان من كانت له سابقة ظهرت سابقته في خاتمته⁵ .

31, III قال جعفر في قوله « قل ان كنتم تحبون الله فاتبعوني » قال : قيد اسرار الصديقين بمتابعة محمد صلعم لكي يعلموا انهم وان علت احوالهم وارتفعت مراتبهم لا يقلدون مجاوزته ولا اللحق به .

(1) YB : المقطعة || B (2) : + الصادق || B (3) : الشبلي || B (4) : + الصادق ||
(5) B - قال جعفر ... خاتمته ||

- 7, 1 قال جعفر : « آمين » اي قاصدين نحوك وانت اكرم من ان تحيب قاصداً¹ .
- 32, II « سبحانك لا علم لنا » . قال جعفر² : لما باهوا باعمالهم وتسيبهم وتقديسهم ضربهم كلهم بالجهل حتى قالوا « لا علم لنا » .
- 125, II « واذ جعلنا البيت مثابة للناس » . عن جعفر بن محمد³ قال : البيت هاهنا محمد . فمن آمن به وصدق برسالته دخل في ميادين الامن والامان « مقام ابراهيم » مقام القبلة . جعل قلبك مقام المعرفة ولسانك مقام الشهادة وبدنك مقام الطاعة . فمن حفظها فانه مستجاب الدعاء البتة⁴ .
- 128, II « ربنا واجعلنا مسلمين لك » . قال جعفر : اجعلنا مسلمين لك اي احفظني واهل بيتي كي نسلم انفسنا وقلوبنا اليك ولا نتخار الا ما اخترته لنا . وقال ايضاً⁵ : اجعلنا مقيمين معك لك .
- 158, II « ان الصفا والمروة من شعائر الله » : عن جعفر بن محمد⁶ قال : الصفا⁷ الروح لصفائها عن درن المخالقات ، والمروة النفس لاستعمالها المروة في القيام بخدمة سيدها . وقال : الصفا صفاء⁸ المعرفة والمروة مروة العارف .
- 201, II « ربنا آتنا في الدنيا حسنة » . قال جعفر⁹ : صحبة الصالحين .
- 210, II « هل ينظرون الا ان يأتيهم الله في ظلل من الغمام » . قال جعفر : هل ينظرون الا اقبال الله عليهم بالعصمة والتوفيق فيكشف عنهم أستار الغفلة فيشهدون برّه ولطفه بل يشهدون البار اللطيف .
- 210, II « وقضي الامر » . قال جعفر¹⁰ : وقضي الامر¹¹ وكشف عن حقيقة الامر ومغيبه .
- 212, II « زين للذين كفروا الحياة الدنيا » . قال جعفر : زين للذين جحدوا التوكل زينة الحياة الدنيا حتى جمعوها وافتخروا بها « ويسخرون من الذين آمنوا » اي من الذين

(1) Y : قاصدك || (2) B : + الصادق || (3) E : عن الرضا... عن جده ؛ Y - : بن محمد || (4) YB : - مقام ابراهيم... البتة || (5) Y : بعضهم || (6) Y : سمعت منصوراً يقول سمعت ابا القاسم يقول سمعت ابا جعفر عن علي بن موسى الرضا عن ابيه عن جعفر || (7) B : + عبارة عن || (8) Y : - صفاء || (9) B : + الصادق || (10) B : + الصادق || (11) B : + اي ||

1, 1 عن الرضا عن ابيه عن جده¹ في قوله « الرحمن الرحيم » قال : هو واقع على المريرين والمرادين . فاسم الرحمن للمرادين لاستغراقهم في الانوار والحقائق والرحيم للمريدين لبقائهم مع انفسهم واشتغالهم باصلاح الظواهر . والرحمن المنتهي بكرامته الى ما لا غاية له لانه قد اوصل الرحمة بالازل وهو غاية الكرامة ومنتهاه بدءاً وعاقبة . والرحيم وصل رحمته بالياء والميم وهو ما يتصل به من رحمة الدنيا والعوافي والارزاق² .

2, 1 ذكر عن جعفر الصادق في قوله « الحمد لله » قال : من حمده³ بصفاته كما وصف نفسه فقد حمده . لان الحمد حاء وميم ودال . فالحاء من الوجدانية والميم من الملك والدال من الديمومية . فن عرفه بالوجدانية والديمومية والملك فقد عرفه .

2, 1 سئل جعفر بن محمد⁴ عن قوله « الحمد لله رب العالمين » قال : معناه الشكر لله وهو المنعم بجميع نعمائه⁵ على خلقه وحسن صنعه⁶ وجميل بلائه⁷ . وألف⁸ الحمد من آلائه وهو الواحد . فبالآلاء انقذ اهل معرفته من سخطه وسوء قضائه . واللام من لطفه هو الواحد . فبلطفه اذاقهم حلاوة عطفه وسقام كأس بره⁹ . والحاء فن حمده هو السابق بحمد نفسه قبل خلقه . فبسابق حمده استقرت النعم على خلقه وقدروا على حمده . والميم فن مجده . فبجلال مجده زينهم بنور قدسه . والدال من دينه الاسلام . فهو السلام ودينه الاسلام¹⁰ وداره السلام وتحييتهم فيها سلام لاهل الاسلام في دار السلام .

3, 1 عن جعفر بن محمد الصادق¹¹ قال : « الرحمن » الذي يرزق الخلائق¹² ظاهراً وباطناً . فرزق الظاهر الاقوات من المأكولات والمشروبات والعوافي ورزق¹³ الباطن العقل والمعرفة والفهم وما ركب فيه من انواع البدائع كالسمع والبصر والشم والذوق واللمس والظن¹⁴ والهمة .

7, 1 وقال جعفر بن محمد¹⁵ : « صراط الذين انعمت عليهم » بالعلم بك والفهم عنك .

(1) Y : سمعت منصوراً باسناده عن جعفر || (2) B : - عن الرضا... والارزاق || (3) Y :
+ بجميع || (4) B : جعفر الصادق || (5) B : نعماء || (6) YB : صنيمه || (7) B :
آلائه || (8) Y : فألف || (9) F : سره || (10) B : - ودينه الاسلام || (11) Y : - بن
محمد الصادق || (12) YB : الخلق || (13) Y : - ورزق || (14) B : والتطق || (15) B :
+ الصادق ||

« ولم يشتغل احد منهم بجمع فهم خطابه على لسان اهل الحقيقة الا
آيات متفرقة نُسبت الى ابي العباس بن عطاء وآيات ذكر انها عن
جعفر بن محمد الصادق رضي الله عنها على غير ترتيب »
حقائق التفسير للسلمي

1,1 مقدمة : حكى عن جعفر بن محمد¹ انه قال : كتاب الله على اربعة اشياء : العبارة
والاشارة واللطائف والحقائق . فالعبارة للعوام والاشارة للخواص واللطائف للاولياء
والحقائق للانبياء .

1,1 « بسم » . عن جعفر بن محمد² قال : الباء بقاؤه والسين اسماؤه والميم ملكه .
فايمان المؤمن ذكره ببقائه وخدمة المرید ذكره باسمائه والعارف فناؤه عن المملكة
بالمالك لها³ .

1,1 وقال أيضاً⁴ : « بسم » ثلاثة احرف : باء وسين وميم . فالباء باب⁵ النبوة والسين سر⁶
النبوة الذي أسر النبي به الى خواص أمته⁷ والميم مملكة الدين الذي يعم الابيض
والاسود⁸ .

1,1 عن جعفر بن محمد انه سئل عن « بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم » قال : الباء بهاء الله والسين
سناؤه والميم مجده . والله إله كل شيء ، الرحمن لجميع خلقه ، الرحيم بالمؤمنين خاصة⁹ .
عن جعفر⁹ انه قال في قوله¹⁰ « الله » : انه اسم تام لانه اربعة احرف : الالف وهو
عمود التوحيد واللام الاول لوح الفهم واللام الثاني لوح النبوة والهاء النهاية في الاشارة .
والله هو الاسم الفرد¹¹ المتفرد لا يضاف الى شيء بل تضاف الاشياء كلها اليه
وتفسيره المعبود الذي¹² أله الخلق منزه¹³ عن كل¹⁴ درك مائنته¹⁵ والاحاطة بكيفيته
وهو المستور عن الابصار والاوهام¹⁶ واحتجب بجلاله عن الادراك .

(1) B : عن جعفر الصادق || (2) B : عن علي بن موسى الرضا عن ابيه عن جده || (3) B : له ||
(4) B : - وقال أيضاً (فبسم) || (5) B : باء || (6) B : لخواصه || (7) B : والميم ملكته
الذي يعم ؛ Y : الذي انعم به للابيض والاسود || (8) YB : - عن جعفر... خاصة || (9) B :
عن علي... عن جده || (10) B : اسمه || (11) YB : - الفرد || (12) Y : + هو || (13) F :
- منزّه || (14) YB : - كل || (15) B : ماهيته || (16) Y : والافهام ||

Publisher's note

The following is Paul Nwya's edited text, as it appears in "Le Tafsir mystique attribué à Ġa'far Ṣādiq," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 43, 1967 (printed erroneously in 1968): 181-230. Note that the Arabic text placed at the end of the book has been arranged to read from right to left and thus ends where the English text ends (at page 225). The publisher wishes to acknowledge Professor Gerhard Böwering of the Department of Religious Studies at Yale University for his kind help in facilitating our acquisition of a clear copy of Nwya's edition. Also thanks are due to Fr. Salah Aboujaoude, s.j. of the Centre de recherches et de publications pour l'Orient chrétien at Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth, Lebanon, who was kind enough to scan and email these pages.

مة الناشر:

هذا النص الكامل لنشرة الاب بولس نويه للتفسير المنسوب لجعفر الصادق ؑ وقد أُعيد ترتيب صفحات النشرة ليسهل على القاري العربي متابعة النص مع الشكر الخالص لكل من الأيوين جيرهارد بوورينغ وصالح أبو جوده الذين جادوا علينا بهذه الصفحات. ونود ان نشير هنا ان هذا جزء من "المتن" المنسوب لجعفر الصادق ؑ المنقول من حقائق التفسير لمحمد بن الحسين السلمي المتوفي عام ١٠٢١/٤١٢.

طبع في مطابع الفريزنس في كنده في نهايه عام ٢٠١١ للميلاد

This corpus of exegetical comments constitutes arguably the earliest extant mystical commentary on the Qur'an. It was preserved and transmitted by the Sufis of the early centuries of Islam and is found in the compendium compiled by al-Sakani (d. 412/1021), in which Jafar al-Sadiq is one of the most frequently cited authorities.

Spiritual Gems is the first English translation of this important corpus from al-Sadiq. Complete with analytical introduction and scholarly notes, the book contains a detailed exposition of the methods and levels of scriptural interpretation used in this commentary and of the cognate ontological continuity between the levels of the human microcosm.

The spirituality of this text is a deeply mystical encounter with the truths enunciated by philosophy and religion. In addition to surmounting temporal differences, the inner landscape of the commentary rises above formal differences by virtue of its universal message. It is as relevant today as it was in earlier times.

Spiritual Gems is a truly seminal text in the Islamic tradition of esoteric exegesis. It helps to reveal the reason why Jafar al-Sadiq is to be appreciated not only as an Imam within Shi'i Islam, but also as one of the most important masters of Sufi gnosis, and a pivotal figure in the tradition of spiritual commentary on the Holy Qur'an.

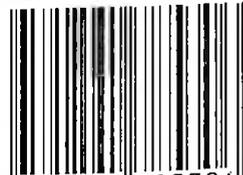
— Reza Shah-Kazemi

Fahana Mayer studied Arabic and Islamic studies, specialising in Qur'anic hermeneutics, at the University of Oxford, where she received her bachelor's and master's degrees. In addition to her independent research on interpretations of the Qur'an, she is currently with the Qur'anic Studies Unit of the Institute of Islamic Studies, London. She is co-translator and editor of volume I of the IIS/OUP Anthology of Qur'anic Commentaries series *On the Nature of the Divine* (2003).



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