

WHAT IS SOUL ?

**HUNDRED
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**
(On the subject)

by
‘ALLĀMAH
NAṢĪR AL-DĪN "NAṢĪR" HUNZĀ’Ī

Published by:
KHĀNAH-I HIKMAT/IDĀRAH-I ‘ĀRIF

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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Preface

The way this profound and useful book "Hundred Questions and Answers" on the most difficult and recondite subject, such as "What is Soul?" has been completed, is by no means the result of the efforts of this insignificant servant. Rather, this book, which I consider to be a miracle of knowledge of the Divine favours, is the result of the sincere prayers of many pure and purified hearts of far and near. It is among my fundamental beliefs that the sincere and cordial prayers of the mu'mins are the means of spiritual aid (tā'yid).

It is incumbent upon this insignificant slave of the exalted Imam that, he should thank his benevolent lord for his magnanimous favours, placing his forehead in prostration with thousandfold humility and submission with all the particles of his humble soul and body. However, even if this most humble slave succeeds in attaining such a harmony of the countless particles of his soul and body, still the wisdom-filled bounties of his lord are so numerous, so precious and so magnanimous that, by no means is he able to thank him as he ought to be thanked.

As always in this season of merciful rain also, the way the heaven of Imam has poured the blessed rain upon us all and the way the prime spring of the spiritual delights and hopes, has come in the gardens and meadows of the hearts of friends, we are definitely filled with the ecstasy of the feelings of appreciation and gratitude, but, in gratitude to all these favours what can we present to our heavenly king? Even if we sacrifice our humble lives in his path, it cannot be a worthy deed. For, after all, it is he to whom belong our very souls!

The discussion of "What is Soul?", is highly interesting and extremely useful. This

most exalted subject is so necessary that whatever attention the people of wisdom may pay it, is not enough. A friend might ask: How can it (the discussion of the soul) be so important? I would say: Is the recognition of the soul not the recognition of God? As Mawlā 'Alī (a.s.) says: "Man 'arafa nafsahu fa-qad 'arafa rabbahu" (He who recognises his soul, indeed recognises his Lord)". So he has to definitely accept this blessed farmān.

It is universally accepted that the greatest treasure of the recognition of God can be obtained in the very recognition of one's self, i.e. soul. This means that this treasure of God and Godhead is full of the secrets of soul and the symbols of spirituality. This treasure contains the intellect and the soul of the Qur'ān and Islam, as well as the radiant light of Prophethood and Imamāt. When this precious treasure of the great and cherished secrets of God, in which lie all realities and gnosés of the pre-eternity (azal) and the post-eternity (abad) is in spirituality, why should the subject of soul not be so important and necessary?

Now let us say a few words regarding how the questions in this precious book have been prepared. The story is such that, on the one hand, a systematic answer has been given to all those questions on the spirit and spirituality, which were being discussed in general terms for a long time. On the other hand, here are those questions which were prepared by "Khānah-i Hikmat" at the request and desire of our very beloved president, Fateḥ 'Alī Ḥabīb and other office bearers and members. It should be remembered that an ordinary and illogical question can be asked by anyone, but such a question cannot touch the heights of the real and spiritual knowledge, nor can it encompass the realities and gnosés. However, a correct question is like the proper design of a building upon which can be erected a beautiful edifice of a wisdom-filled answer.

At this point, I would like to give important advice to my brethern in faith, friends and students, that, in order to gain more and more benefit of knowledge

from this book, they should also study the other books of "Khānah-i Hikmat", particularly, those related to the spirit and spirituality, so that, by this vast study on the one hand, the contents of this book will be clear to the reader and on the other hand, there will be a considerable increase in his treasure of knowledge.

This darwīsh, who is worn out by the various difficulties of this world, continues his humble work under the shadow of the tree of "Khānah-i Hikmat". May God, the Exalted, keep this shady and fruitful tree and its thriving branches evergreen and exalted in both the worlds! May He bless its tasty, dainty and fragrant fruits more than expectation and may it receive every morning and evening, a share from the good prayers of the mu'min men and women living on the surface of the earth.

There is no doubt that "Khānah-i Hikmat" is a small organisation of a private nature, but when, upholding truthfulness and cherishing knowledge, you look at its importance and usefulness, you will be surprised at how the expedience, wisdom and luminous guidance of the Imam of the time continue their work externally and internally, for the progress and strength of his beloved jamā'at. Praise be to Allāh! We, all the members of the jamā'at are convinced of the fact, that our holy faith is esoteric and spiritual and therefore, in addition to the external means, we also believe in the internal means of the fountainhead of the light of guidance (i.e. Imam of the time). Hence, we constantly pray for internal grace and spiritual success and help.

The office bearers and members of "Khānah-i Hikmat" are blessed with the merciful glance of the kind lord; therefore they are adorned with the ornament of ethics and faith. They possess all the virtues of humility, submission, zeal for selflessness, sacrifice and piety. Their most cherished desire and greatest happiness lie in serving, in one way or another, the followers of their holy and

pure Imam, by imparting to them the true knowledge. In order to achieve this supreme goal, they think and struggle practically.

On this occasion, how can we forget the organisation of "ĀRIF"? This is a very dear organisation. The deeds which it has accomplished in the west to spread knowledge in the Ismaili jamā'at, are greatly satisfactory and bear far-reaching benefits. Its workers have high ambition and courage. Fortunately, they have obtained the wisdom-filled permission and holy blessings of the Imam of the time for this, their selfless service.

How dear is this beautiful name "ĀRIF". Lo! it gives the fragrance of ma'rifat, for this word implies the concept of ma'rifat and is linked with the blessed farmān of Mawlā 'Alī, namely, it is based on "Man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabbahu (He who recognises his soul, indeed recognises his Lord)". Therefore, it is hoped that, in future, this organisation will prove to be very useful.

"Khānah-i Hikmat" and "ĀRIF", in reality, are two sister organisations. Rather, they are two names of the one and the same existence of knowledge. Both there and here, the office bearers and members have always desired that the glory of religious knowledge should be spread more and more. For, when there is the fountainhead of the light of guidance in this ṭarīqah, why should there be left the darkness of any kind of ignorance?

By the grace and favour of the living and present Imam, "Khānah-i Hikmat" and "ĀRIF" at this time, possess altogether a hundred books. Approximately half of them have been published. All these books are on the Ismaili faith and are based on the most important topics, such as the concept of tawḥīd (unity), monorealism, the wisdom and ta'wīl of the Qur'ān, the Supreme Name (ism-i aẓam), dhikr-ū bandagī (remembrance and slavery of God), the gnosés of Islam, the realities of Prophethood, the secrets of Imāmat, the doctrine of the Resurrection, the

recognition of the spirit and spirituality, the philosophy of self, religion and science, the service of jamā'at, the reality of light, the proofs of Imāmat, the nature of ascent, etc. etc. These books, God willing, can be very helpful for the people of knowledge in the present and in the future.

Finally, I humbly pray that the Sustainer of the world, in His infinite mercy, may always grant the fortunate office bearers and members of "Khānah-i Hikmat" and "'ĀRIF", the luminous favour and high ambition to serve the faith and nation in spreading and imparting knowledge! May He grant them success and exaltedness in this world and in the next! May the True Lord enrich the entire jama at with the everlasting wealth of the spiritual knowledge and luminous ma'rifat! Āmīn!

The most humble slave of the Imam of the time,

Naṣīr al-Dīn Naṣīr Hunzāī

Tuesday, 20 Sha'bān 1401 A.H./23rd June 1981 A.D., Year of the Cock.

Institute for
Spiritual Wisdom
and
Luminous Science
Knowledge for a united humanity

CHAPTER I

Vegetative Soul

Q. 1. What is the name given to the soul which exists in trees, brake, bramble and all kinds of vegetation? Is there only one soul in vegetation?

A. The soul which exists in every growing thing is called the vegetative soul. It is also called the growing soul. Yes, there is only one soul in vegetation.

(Note: Regarding the vegetative soul, it is said: "And Allāh has caused you to grow as a vegetable from the earth" (71:17)).

Further, regarding the benevolent function of the vegetative soul, which was in the pure personality of Hazrat Maryam, God says: "He made her grow a goodly growth" (3:37).

Animal Soul

Q. 2. How many souls are there in a non-speaking animal and where are their centres? Please tell us their names and functions.

A. There are two souls in the animals - the vegetative and the animal souls. The centre of the vegetative soul, through which the body grows, is the liver. The centre of the animal soul, on which depends feeling and movement, is the heart. The animal soul is also called the sensory soul (rūḥ-i ḥissī).

Human Soul

- Q. 3. On how many souls does human life depend? What are these souls and in which part of the body do they reside and work?
- A. Human life depends on three souls, which are the vegetative soul, the animal soul and the rational soul, respectively. The centre of the vegetative soul is the liver; that of the animal soul is the heart and that of the rational soul is the cerebrum or the front part of the brain. The vegetative soul causes the body to grow; the animal soul is the source of feeling and movement and the rational soul is the treasure of speech and discernment.

Holy Spirit

- Q. 4. It is obvious that an ordinary person apart, even a man of rank is inferior to the Perfect Man. What is the cause of this spiritual difference? Is there only more purity of the rational soul in the Perfect Man, or is there a higher, special and a pure soul also?
- A. The distinction and unique position of the Perfect Man in the world of humanity is due to the Holy Spirit given to him, by which the soul necessarily remains pure. For, the Holy Spirit has all the meanings of being pure and purifying. This Holy Spirit rests on the human or rational soul and therefore its centre is above the centre of the rational soul, i.e. the forehead, which is the highest place in the human personality and is the place of the manifestation of spiritual miracles.

Problem of the Divisibility of Soul

- Q. 5. Is the human soul and other small or big souls constituted of atoms and particles, or do they each have a unity due to which they are indivisible?
- A. No soul can, in itself, be divisible. But by the mediation of the subtle body, the soul of every degree can be divided into innumerable spiritual particles and in this case, every particle is a living soul of its own kind. For instance, even in an extremely small plant, there are innumerable particles of the vegetative soul. But since all of them are approximately alike and their work also is similar, therefore, it is said that the vegetative soul is one. Or, in other words, the unity of these particles is called the vegetative soul. The same is true of the animal soul and the human soul.

Soul and Light

- Q. 6. Is it the same Supreme and Holy Spirit in the Perfect Man (i.e. the Prophet and the Imam), which is called the light, or is the light additional to this? Where does such a magnificent soul come from?
- A. The same Holy Spirit, which is in the Perfect Man, is also the light, for, God, the Knowing, the Wise, has made the Supreme Soul the light of knowledge, wisdom, rectitude and guidance. This light is always transferred from the Precursor (sābiq) to the Successor (lāḥiq).

Note: Sābiq means every previous Perfect Man and lāḥiq, the succeeding one. The chain of sābiq and lāḥiq continued before Ḥaẓrat Ādam also. For, there is no change in the fundamental matters of religion. They, in accordance with the Divine Law, are unchangeable. (17:77).

Spirit of the Holy Qur'ān

Q. 7. Does the Holy Qur'ān have a great and miraculous soul? If so, where is it? In the Qur'ān or somewhere else?

A. Yes, the Holy Qur'ān has a soul which is living and luminous, namely, it is a light. You can see proof of this in the Qur'ān (42:52), that God revealed the Qur'ān to the Prophet in the form of a magnificent living soul and then He made it a light. It is this same light which is also called the Holy Spirit, which as we have mentioned earlier, is preserved in the succession of the pure Imams, after the Holy Prophet.

Divine Spirit

Q. 8. Is it true that God also has a pure, higher and all-encompassing soul? Please also tell us in what sense was Ḥaẓrat 'Īsá the Spirit of God? Was this status a prerogative of Ḥaẓrat 'Īsá or is it common to all the Prophets?

A. Yes, it is true that God also has a soul which is the Supreme Soul and is in the form of perpetual light. However, it is not in the sense that the existence of God depends on it, for the Divine Essence (dhāt-i subhān) is free from and above every thing. Rather, in the sense that, in many respects, the status of the soul and light of God belong to the Prophets and Imams. Since every Prophet and every Imam holds the status of the soul and light of God, therefore, Ḥaẓrat 'Īsá is just one example of this reality.

Universal Soul

Q. 9. It is said that this universe has a soul which surrounds it. What is its name? Is it true that we live in the ocean of this soul as fish live in water?

A. Yes, it is universally accepted that the earth and the heavens have a soul. It has several names: the Universal Soul (nafs-i kullī), the Soul of Souls (rūḥ-i arwāḥ), the Pedestal of God (kursī-i khudā), the Guarded Tablet (lawḥ-i maḥfūz) etc. There is no doubt that we are immersed in the deep ocean of the Universal Soul. However, the question of spiritual union is different from this.

Soul in Everything

Q. 10. It is said that nothing is without a soul. Could you kindly tell us whether such things as stone and dust also have a soul? If so, what is that soul?

A. It is true that every inanimate thing also has a soul. However, such a soul remains silent and dormant in these things. Divine expedience and wisdom have caused the soul below the vegetative soul to remain in the sleep of death, until it revives in the form of vegetation. This is called the generative (takwīnī) and mineral soul.

Soul of Īmān (Faith)

Q. 11. What is the soul of Islām (submission) and Iman (faith)? Where does it reside? Is it speaking or silent?

A. The soul of Islām and Īmān is the same soul of the Qur'ān. It dwells in

the True Guide. For, it is his Holy Spirit which is full of luminosity (42:52).

Dreams and Soul

Q. 12. Where is a man's soul when he sleeps? Where does the dream which he sees occur? In the body or the soul? In other words, where is the world of dreams?

A. When man sleeps, the soul does not leave the body completely, rather, its grip over some of the senses is loosened and it remains attending to itself. Thus, in a dream man does not go anywhere, rather, he sees it within his own soul. (See: "Studies in Spiritualism and Dreams").

Dhikr (Remembrance) and Soul

Q. 13. What is the cause of the pleasant effects upon the soul during 'ibādat-u bandagī' and what is the cause of the sadness of the heart due to negligence and disobedience?

A. The pure and sincere remembrance of God and His sacred slavery and obedience are the paradise of hope and certainty for the soul of a mu'min. Contrary to this, negligence and disobedience are the hell of fear and ignorance. This sheds light on the two opposite states of why there can be attained happiness in the former state and why sadness befalls in the latter.

Entrance of the (Animal) Soul

- Q. 14. Through which path does the animal soul enter the foetus of an animal or a human being and once the child is born and starts to suckle the milk of its mother, how does the animal soul come into it? Does this become complete in a few days or a few months, or is it a long process?
- A. When an animal or human child is in the womb of the mother, the blood of the mother enters it through the navel as nourishment and with it also comes the animal soul. But, when it is born, the navel cord is cut off and it starts to suck the milk, so the animal soul starts to enter through the mouth. The process of nourishment which continues throughout the life, is for the completion and repair of the animal soul.

Fountainhead of Speaking (Rational) Soul

- Q. 15. From which source does the speaking soul, which is the human soul, come into the child? How does it enter the brain? Does it come all at once (as a complete soul) or does it become complete gradually?
- A. Members of the household who converse with the child, such as its mother, sister, father, brother etc., are the source of the speaking soul for the child. Thus with this conversation, the speaking soul continues to enter the brain of the child through the ears and becomes complete gradually.

Order of Souls

- Q. 16. What is the order of the souls entering the human being? That is to say, which soul comes first, the higher or the lower? Tell us which

comes first, the intellect or the speaking soul?

- A. Basically, in a human being, first comes the vegetative soul, which exists in a drop of sperm, then the animal soul, then the human soul and finally comes the intellect. From this, the order is clear that, first comes the lower soul and then the higher. It is also evident that first comes the speaking soul and then the intellect.

Nafs (Soul) or Rūḥ (Spirit)?

- Q. 17. What is the difference between nafs (soul) and rūḥ (spirit)? How many ranks of the human soul are there in the Qur'ān?

- A. The custom of the people is different from the reality. So, in reality, nafs and rūḥ mean the same thing. Thus, when we say "nafs-i ammārah (the carnal soul)", its meaning indicates a lower level and when we say "nafs-i mutma'innah (the satisfied soul)", its meaning indicates the higher level of the soul. And the same is true of the "rūḥ-i ḥaywānī (animal soul)" and the "rūḥ-i insānī (human soul)". This shows that whether it is nafs or rūḥ, it has levels. In the Holy Qur'ān, there are three stages of the human soul: nafs-i ammārah (the carnal soul) (22:53), nafs-i lawwāmah (the censoring soul) (75:2) and nafs-i mutma'innah (the satisfied soul) (89:27).

Soul and the Gift of Blood

- Q. 18. When a person gives blood to a sick person, which souls are transferred into him with that blood?

- A. With this blood are transferred only some particles of the vegetative soul

and the animal soul, but no part of the human soul. For, the human soul is not transferred through blood, but through conversation. Thus, it should be remembered that, within a mu'min, the higher soul, which is the Holy Spirit, is formed through the discourse of knowledge and wisdom.

Levels of Souls

Q. 19. Minerals, vegetables, animals and mankind are major levels or major divisions of creatures. However, we would like to ask, does each of them have sub-levels also? If so, this means that the vegetative soul, the animal soul and the human soul each has numerous levels. Please explain this.

A. Yes, there are various levels or grades amongst minerals, vegetables and animals. Also human beings, with respect to ethics and piety and righteousness, are on many levels. This reveals the reality that there are innumerable levels or grades in each of the vegetative, animal and human souls.

Soul of Ma'rifat (Recognition)

Q. 20. If the recognition of the soul is the recognition (ma'rifat) of God, tell us which is this soul?

A. The recognition of God is impossible without the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in this connection, first of all, one has to attain and adopt the Holy Spirit. For, it is this soul whose recognition is the recognition of God. And this soul can be attained through the Perfect Man. This means that the Perfect Man can perfect others also.

CHAPTER II

Innumerable Souls

- Q. 21. When does the animal soul enter the foetus? Does it not exist from the very beginning at the starting point of the creation of the body, when according to modern research in medical science, the particles of animal soul, in every drop of sperm, as a whole, exceed billions even?
- A. The discovery of medical science is absolutely true and correct. It confirms and supports the spiritual observations, in the light of which, it was said earlier that there are innumerable spiritual particles in the soul of every degree, which live in conformity with that soul. It should be known for certain that in such a sub-division, multiplicity and abundance of every soul, there are many Divine wisdoms and blessings also. However, since movement in the foetus becomes visible after four months, in this respect, it is said that the animal soul comes to the foetus at the end of the fourth month.

How many Times is the Word "Rūḥ" (mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān)?

- Q. 22. How many times is the word "rūḥ" (spirit) mentioned in the Qur'ān? Which is the key verse among the verses related to the subject of "rūḥ"? Please explain, with proofs.
- A. If we look into the Qur'ān deeply, from the beginning to the end, it is full of the mention of rūḥ. In addition, apparently rūḥ has numerous synonyms also. However, since here the question is only about the word rūḥ, it is sufficient to say that the word rūḥ is mentioned 24 times in the Qur'ān and the basic and key verse regarding it is: "(O Prophet!)

they are asking you concerning the Spirit (ar-rūh). Say: the Spirit is from (the world of) command (amr) of my Lord, and you have been vouchsafed very little knowledge" (17:85). Thus it should be known that concerning the rūh, this Qur'anic teaching is of fundamental and key importance. For, whatever the mode of this question, it is understood in the sense of the Supreme rūh, because the word "ar-rūh" (the spirit) is mentioned in it. Further, in order to indicate its realities and gnosés, the word "Be (kun)" and the world of command are alluded to, so that, the people of wisdom may have recourse to these means of the recognition of soul spiritually.

Special Form of Soul

Q. 23. Is it true that the forms of the soul are as different and as numerous as those of the creatures in the entire universe? Among all these forms, is there any specific form of the soul also? If so, which one is it?

A. Yes, it is absolutely true that the Universal Soul, with all its beauties, resembles the form of the universe and this is mentioned in the description of paradise (57:21). Further, particular souls also have the shape and form of the parts of the universe and creatures. But the most special form of the soul is the human form, more specially that of the Perfect Man, which is the Form or Image of God (ṣūrat-i raḥmān).

Spiritual Observation

Q. 24. Are the particles of the soul, which you have been mentioning quite often, related to spiritual observation and ma'rifat also, or to the

Qur'anic knowledge only? If the observation or vision (dīdār) of the soul is possible, through which eye is it possible, the external or the internal eye?

- A. It is not possible to describe the particles of soul without the spiritual observation, ma'rifat and the Qur'anic wisdom, nor is it possible to obtain spirituality and the Qur'anic wisdom without the spiritual help (tā'yīd) of the Imam of the time. The vision of the soul is related to the inner eye. However, later on, there also comes a time when the external and internal senses join together and become one.

Exchange of Soul

- Q. 25. According to what you say, the same one soul, for instance the human or rational soul, is a compendium of innumerable souls. If so, tell us: Do all these souls, during one's entire life, remain captive and imprisoned in the human body, or is there an exchange of souls and do they come and go?

- A. There is no doubt that under the name of the same one soul, innumerable souls dwell in the human body. However, on various occasions, there is an exchange in them and they come and go, in such a way that, except for the people of spirituality, nobody knows about this. For instance, during sleep, some souls leave the body and some new souls enter it (39:42).

Renewal and Freshness (of Soul)

- Q. 26. If this is so, we would like renewal and freshness in our total spirituality. That is to say, we would like the polluted and outmoded particles to leave and the fresh ones to take their place. What should we do to achieve this?

- A. This can be achieved through successful 'ibādat-u bandagī in obedience to the lord of the command (ṣāhib-i amr), the service of mu'mins and the adoption of humility. God has created this system of exchange for the spiritual progress of the people of faith.

Since when does the Soul exist?

- Q. 27. Since when does the soul exist and how long will it be able to last? In other words, when did God create the soul and for how long?

- A. According to the Qur'anic verse (17:85), which has already been explained, the soul is from the world of command (i.e. it is not from the world of creation). This means that the soul has always been there and will remain forever. This is the supreme attribute of God that, in His kingdom, there are things which are eternal. For, whatever belongs to the world of command is eternal and whatever to the world of creation, is contingent.

Single Soul

- Q. 28. It is absolutely true that the Supreme Soul, according to one example, is the "ocean of the souls" and according to another example, "the soul of souls". Further, we would like to know if it has a Qur'anic name also, so that its understanding may be clearer. Can you tell us something from the Wise Qur'an in this connection?

- A. There are many names of the Supreme or Universal Soul mentioned in the Qur'an. One of them is "nafs-i wāḥidah (the Single Soul)" (31:28), in which all souls are gathered together. In the nafs-i wāḥidah, from one aspect, all people were created simultaneously and they will be

resurrected in the same way.

Supreme Name

Q. 29. The study of the Qur'ān (4:171), reveals that Ḥaẓrat 'Īsá was the Word of God, which was inspired in Ḥaẓrat Maryam and was a special Soul (rūḥ) from God. The question here is, how was he the Word (of God) and which Word was he? Further, what is the relation between the Word and the soul and which was this soul?

A. The wisdom of this is such that, Ḥaẓrat 'Īsá was the Word of God, which is the Supreme Name in spirituality, both before and after his physical birth, which was given to Ḥaẓrat Maryam. The relation between the Word and the Soul is that the Supreme Soul, which is the Holy Spirit, is hidden in the Supreme Name (Word). This Supreme Name or the Word was given to Ḥaẓrat Maryam and it is in this sense that God breathed the Holy Spirit into her.

Breathing of Divine Spirit

Q. 30. It is said in the Qur'ān (32:9), that God breathed His Holy Spirit into Ḥaẓrat Ādam. Was the breathing of the Spirit of God in the same way as the teaching of the Supreme Name, or was it breathed in a different way?

A. We have discussed this in detail in the book "Ḥaẓrat Nāṣir Khusraw and Spirituality" that God, the Lord of Honour, breathed His Spirit into Ḥaẓrat Ādam through teaching him the Supreme Name, in which is also hidden the knowledge of all other names.

Why is the Word "Arwāh" not mentioned (in the Qur'ān)?

Q. 31. Wherever rūḥ (spirit) is mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān, it is mentioned in the singular, i.e. rūḥ, but nowhere is it mentioned in the plural, i.e. arwāḥ. What is the secret in this? For instance, in the verse: "The angels and the Spirit (ar-rūḥ) descend therein" (97:4) apparently it requires that, as many angels descend on the occasion of the night of "power", similarly, many souls should descend, not only one.

A. The expedience, wisdom and the secret in not mentioning the rūḥ in plural is that, in one great and chief rūḥ are gathered countless souls. Therefore, the very descent of one great rūḥ is the descent of many souls, and its mention is the mention of all of them. As it is said: "The angels and the Spirit ascend unto Him in a day which is equal to fifty thousand years" (70:4). It would be very strange if we were to think that in the lengthy period of fifty thousand years, only one soul is able to reach the sacred presence of God. This is not so. The fact is that the chief rūḥ or spirit (such as the Holy Spirit of the Perfect Man) is only one, but the souls of the entire universe are contained in it.

Army and Chief of Angels for a united humanity

In addition to having understood many realities in what has been explained from the beginning until now, concerning the soul, we have also learnt the principle that there are numerous souls within a soul of every level. We would also like to know if angels too work in the same way under a chief angel?

A. Yes, this principle is also true of angels. There is a chief angel for every task and under that angel, there are many other angels who do that work

with him, according to the Divine command. As it is said about Ḥaẓrat 'Izrā'īl: "Say (O Prophet): The angel of death (malaku'l-mawt = 'Izrā'īl), put in charge of you, will take your souls" (32:11), and about the angels under Ḥaẓrat 'Izrā'īl, it is said: "Those whose lives the angels take in a state in which they are pure. They say: Peace upon you" (16:32). This clearly shows that many subordinate angels work under each of the Archangels: Jibrā'īl, Mikā'īl, Isrāfīl and 'Izrā'īl.

Soul and Angel

Q. 33. What is the relation between the soul (rūḥ) and the angel, and what is the relation of an angel to light? Can there be many separate lights or is it only one?

A. Sometimes the soul is called an angel and an angel is called the soul. In this case there is no difference between them. Nonetheless, there is also a difference between the two, which is that among the souls there are good ones and bad ones, but the angels are all good, that is to say, they are obedient to their Lord (16:50). Thus, the souls who have reached the apex of perfection in obedience have become angels. For, it is the souls of the mu'min men and women from which the angels come into being. As for the relation of the angel to light, if the angel is a great one, he is light, as a great soul is also called light. The moons and stars of the light (of religion) can be separate, but they are one, not only in the fountainhead of the light, i.e. the sun of the religion, but also in the light which is spread through them.

Developed Soul

Q. 34. It is extremely important to say that certain souls who obey God, the

Prophet and the ṣāhib-i amr (the one who is the custodian of the Divine command), are in the position of angels, or they are going to become angels. The statement that "every developed soul is an angel" needs more elaboration, so that it may be understood more clearly.

- A. Nobody can doubt that Ḥaṣrat Jibrā'il is an angel (firishtah in Persian and malak in Arabic). You can see in the Qur'ān that, Jibrā'il is an angel (42:51) and you can also see that Jibrā'il is the Holy Spirit (16:102) and the Trustworthy Spirit (26:193). Not only in these, but in many other Qur'anic verses, the word rūḥ (soul) is used in the sense of an angel. Take this verse, for instance: "Then We sent unto her Our Spirit (Jibrā'il) and it assumed for her the likeness of a Perfect Man" (19:17). From this it is clearly evident that every developed soul is an angel. In addition to this, we would also like to mention that the verses (such as 16:2) in which a special spirit (ar-rūḥ) is mentioned with many angels (al-malā'ikah), there are two aspects of the reality in it: one, by angels (al-malā'ikah) are meant angels and by the Spirit (ar-rūḥ), the great angel. Secondly, by angels are meant souls and by the Spirit, the chief soul. It should always be noted that the more facets the pearl of reality (gawhar-i ḥaḥiqat) has, the more value it has.

Knowledge for a united humanity

Special Soul

- Q. 35. It is true that the word rūḥ is mentioned in the Wise Qur'ān 24 times in total. By reflecting on all these places, it appears that in all of them, is mentioned a special soul and not an ordinary one. Special in the sense that mostly, the noun rūḥ is mentioned in the definite form, "ar-rūḥ" and very rarely is it used in the indefinite form, "rūḥ". Moreover, even where it is mentioned in the indefinite form, by attributing it to God, in reality it has been made special, such as: "Wa ayyadnahum bi-rūḥin

minhu (and has helped them with a spirit from Him)" (58:22). In this verse, bi-rūhin (with a spirit) is used as a common noun, but minhu (from Him) has, in a sense, made it special. Nonetheless, in saying "rūhin (a soul)", there is also some sort of literal and metaphorical generality. Is there any wisdom hidden in this?

- A. Yes, there is a great wisdom hidden in "rūh" being used as a proper noun on the one side and a common noun, on the other. That is that, every rank in religion, whether it is that of Jibrā'īl or of any other, it is in two positions: in one it is a pre-eternal and post-eternal rank and in the other, in every age, a great personality and a Holy Spirit succeeds to this lofty rank. Thus, where the eternal position is meant, there, proper nouns such as ar-rūh (the Spirit) or rūh al-quḍus (the Holy Spirit) are used. And where it is intended to indicate the personality or the spirit which holds that rank, there, are used common nouns such as, "rūhin or rūhan (a soul)" and then they are attributed to God, so that the requirement of the wisdom may be fulfilled.

Wisdom of the Word "Dhurriyyat"

- Q. 36. We would like to have some deeper knowledge about the word "dhurriyyat", as it is mentioned in the verse (36:41). There are two different translations of the word in this verse. Could you tell us which one is correct? (a) "And a sign for them is that We bore their children (dhurriyyat) in the laden ship" (36:41); and (b) "And a sign for them is that We bore their ancestors (dhurriyyat) in the laden ship (of Nūh)" (36:41).

- A. Dhurriyyat here means neither children nor ancestors, for the ship which is mentioned here is the Ark of Ḥazrat Nūḥ. Thus, how could the children

of the people of the time of the Prophet be carried there? Again, it is also not true to say that dhurriyyat means ancestors. Rather, in reality dhurriyyat here means dharrāt-i rūḥ, i.e. the particles or atoms of the soul. That is to say that, the spiritual particles of these people were contained in the loins of the mu'mins carried in the Ark of Ḥaẓrat Nūḥ. It is a sign, i.e. miracle of God, that these people were there (i.e. in the Ark) in the form of particles and were observing the dreadful scene of the deluge. For further elaboration on spiritual particles, see Recognition of Imam, Part One, under the heading "The Imam of the righteous".

Nūḥ's Ark and the Particles of Soul

- Q. 37. You have said that the spiritual particles in the loins of the mu'mins carried in Nūḥ's Ark had seen the scene of the deluge. Here the question arises, how did it become possible for them to do so while they had no consciousness?
- A. Today all the people living on the planet earth were, before now, spiritual particles in the loins of the children of Ādam. The Lord of the world took them from there and brought them in the spirituality of a personality, where the Divine light was illumining the realities and gnosés. Then, God asked those particles: "Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes, verily" (7:172). This shows that where the Divine light illumines things, not only do the spiritual particles receive consciousness, but also all the inanimate particles speak out. As the Qur'ān says: "They will say: Allāh gave us speech, Who gave speech to all things" (41:21). Thus, the light of Prophethood and Imāmat was illumining the spiritual particles in Nūḥ's Ark and all souls, in a way, were observing this great deluge.

Were we before Ādam or was he before us?

Q. 38. From the order in the description of this blessed verse: "And We created (khalaqnākum) you, then (thumma) shaped (ṣawwarnākum) you, then told the angels: Prostrate yourselves to Ādam" (7:11), it appears that there is a great secret hidden in it. Otherwise, if we look at it literally, many difficult questions arise. The question in this verse is that the contextual links in the Qur'anic verses are in their respective order. That is to say that, the event which is prior in the order of context is also prior in the order of time. This is particularly so when "thumma (then)" comes after the description of a thing, in order that it may be known that the thing which has been described first in the context, is really first in the order of existence. Also tell us: Did the people exist before Adam? Further explain: Does not "khalaqnākum (We created you)" fulfill all the meanings of creation, or does not it contain all the meanings of creation, due to which, it was necessary to add "thumma ṣawwarnākum (then We shaped you)?"

A. Indeed, a great secret is hidden in this blessed verse. Here, by the grace of God, we will try to explain its wisdoms so that, by the command of God, all the related questions of our students may be solved and their knowledge may increase considerably. The great wisdom is as follows:
"Wa laqad khalaqnākum - And We created you (before the Ādam of this period as should be created physically)". "Thumma ṣawwarnākum - then We shaped you spiritually, (that is to say, a spiritual period passed over you)". "Thumma qulnā lil-malā'ikati'sjudū li-Ādam - Then We told the angels to prostrate themselves to Ādam (i.e. at that time you were also in the form of the particles of the soul and in the position of the jamālī or potential angels)". It should be known that in "khalaqnākum (We created)" are contained all the meanings of the physical creation and in

"ṣawwarnākum (We shaped you)" is mentioned the spiritual perfection. For, the physical body of man is related to the world of creation, which is this world, and his subtle form (i.e. the soul) to the world of command, which is the spiritual world, in which man reaches the apogee of perfection in shape and form, in beauty, lustre and in luminosity. For he, in reality, is the Form or Image of God (ṣūrat-i rahmān).

People before Ādam

- Q. 39. In this series of questions on the recognition of the soul, you have presented a very revolutionary concept that there were people even before Ādam. Would it not be more appropriate if you were to kindly cite one more Qur'anic verse on this subject?
- A. God says: "(Previously, all) people were one community, then God sent (unto them) Prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and revealed with them the Scriptures" (2:213). This shows that there were people before the period of prophecy and they had the same one path. Then began the period of prophecy in which God conferred the crown of vicegerency and prophecy, first of all, on Ḥazrat Ādam.

Ṣūr (Trumpet) of Resurrection

- Q. 40. In the verse (36:51), God says: "And (when) the ṣūr will be blown they will (come out) from their graves and will hie unto their Lord". Several questions arise from this verse. First, what is the nature and reality of ṣūr-i Isrāfīl and what is the wisdom in it? Secondly, is the soul buried in the physical grave or is there a ta'wīl of this? Thirdly, when people will be rushing unto their Lord, what will be the state of their existence? Will they be in a physical state or a spiritual one? Fourthly and lastly,

since these souls have to be in the presence of God, where will He manifest Himself, Who is free from and above time and place?

- A. a) Ṣūr-i Isrāfīl is a magnificent event and a highly mysterious voice of the place of spirituality. It is neither a horn nor a bugle, rather, it resembles a unique, melodious, extremely touching and fascinating hautbois (shah-nāy) and a flute. This is the da'wat-i haqq (the true mission) of the final stage. This is the melody of true love from which, the Prophets and friends of God can duly benefit. On the one side of it, there is fanā (annihilation) and on the other, there is baqā (lasting life). This angelic melody is extremely soul-nourishing and highly soothing, so that the people who are infatuated with this world, by listening to it, may finally be sure of the realities and gnosés of spirituality. Thus, there are so many wisdoms in the ṣūr-i Isrāfīl, that it is impossible to describe them.
- b) It is an irrefutable reality that souls are not buried in the physical grave, hence, there are ta'wīlī (esoteric) wisdoms hidden in the teachings of the Qur'ān and Tradition, related to the physical grave. Thus, according to ta'wīl, the grave and graveyard are the live body of man, in which are buried so many souls that, except God, nobody knows their number. Is it not true that man is the microcosm, i.e. the world of spirituality? If you accept this, then it means that all that exists materially in the macrocosm, exists spiritually in the microcosm. Thus, in the microcosm, there are certainly graves also. For, when death occurs to a person and the soul leaves the body, it is buried in the physical grave and the soul becomes buried in a spiritual grave, which is a living personality. In Chapter 19 of Wajh-i Dīn is mentioned the Prophetic Tradition: "Between my grave and pulpit there is a garden from among the gardens of paradise". Thus the blessed grave of the Prophet was his legatee, namely Mawlā 'Alī, his pulpit the qā'imu'l-qiyāmat and the garden, the da'wat-i haqq (the true mission).

- c) When the ṣūr-i Isrāfīl is blown and the people hie unto their Lord, they will not be in this present body; rather, they will be in a spiritual state and attached to the particles of the subtle body which, in addition to this series of questions and answers, has been mentioned in our other writings also.
- d) There is no doubt that God is free from and above space and spacelessness, but His holy light is everpresent in this world and it is this light which is His presence. Thus, it is obvious that, Isrāfīl will blow the ṣūr where there is the Divine light and the people will hie unto this voice and this exalted court, flying in the form of spiritual particles.

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CHAPTER III

Portrayal of Soul

- Q. 41. In one of your works "Panj Maqālah" IV, under the heading of "An important part of a reply to a letter", you have written excellent points regarding the soul, the main part of which is as follows:

"Soul is a reality, a simple substance, a subtle life, a great world, an inner awareness, a real awakening, an unprecedented thing, a hidden treasure, an everlasting kingdom, a luminous existence, a Divine reflection, an eternal essence, a unity of attributes, a pattern of life, a subtle universe, a mirror of miracles, a fountainhead of blessings, a compriiser of (the Divine) signs, a compendium of states, a centre of favours, an expanse of paradises, an exaltation of ranks, etc., etc."

In these 22 phrases, the attributes of the soul have been portrayed in the most excellent way. However, we would like to have further elaboration of the last eight phrases, so that it would facilitate the recognition of soul more and more.

- A. Indeed soul is a subtle universe, in which each and everything exists in a subtle form; it is a mirror in which all the pre-eternal, post-eternal, spatial and non-spatial miracles of God, the Lord of Honour, are observed. It is the fountainhead of the Divine blessings, in which all the Divine signs are gathered; it is the compendium of the states and events of the past and the future. God has made the soul the centre of His favours. By the grace of God, the soul itself is the paradise. The expanse of the paradise, which is mentioned in the Qur'ān (57:21) is, in fact, the expanse of the soul and it is the soul in which there are all the ranks

and grades of honour from the beginning to the end.

Is Soul Perceptible or Intelligible?

Q. 42. Please tell us whether the soul is among the perceptibles or the intelligibles? Please explain your view concerning this in the light of proofs.

A. Soul, as such, is intelligible. That is to say, it cannot be recognised by the external senses, rather, only by the intellect. However, when it is linked with the subtle or the dense body, then in a sense, it can also be called perceptible, particularly in the form of the subtle body. That is to say that, when our soul is dressed in the attire of the celestial body, we can see it with the physical eye with all its beauties, we can hear its conversation, we can smell its fragrances, etc.

When the Holy Spirit appeared before Hazrat Maryam, it was in the form of a Perfect and Complete Man (19:17). Sometimes, by the command of God, angels also appear dressed in the human attire (11:69-81). In short, whereas the small souls appear in the form of particles, the great souls, which are angels, appear in perfect human form.

Rawḥ and Rūḥ

Q. 43. You have mentioned earlier that the word rūḥ (soul) is mentioned in the Qur'ān 24 times. However, we see that in this number, the word rawḥ is also included three times. Does this mean that rawḥ also has the same literal meaning of rūḥ, or is it a ta'wīl of it?

A. First of all, rawḥ and rūḥ are, in reality, one, namely, they are the same

word. Secondly, even if we consider rawḥ a separate word from rūḥ and then look for its ta'wīl, we come again to the same conclusion. In any case, the word rawḥ is used for the rūḥ, for their root and meaning are the same. For instance, reflect upon this blessed verse carefully (according to which) those who are nearest (to God) receive rūḥ (spirit) and rūḥāniyyat (spirituality) from God in the very life of this world, in which there are all kinds of spiritual flowers and fruits: "fa-ammā in kāna minā'l muqarrabīna fa-rawḥun wa rayḥānun wa jannatu-na 'īmin (Thus if he is of those nearest (to Allāh) then there is (for him even in this life, the real) spirit (rūḥ) and the fragrant flowers and a garden of favours)" (56:88-89).

In another place, the word rawḥ is used in this way: wa lā tay'asū min rawḥi'llāh ... (And despair not of the Spirit of Allāh. Lo! none despairs of the Spirit of Allāh save the disbelievers)" (12:87). In this verse, it is also possible to read rūḥ, (instead of rawḥ), for these Divine words: "Despair not of the rūḥ (Spirit i.e. mercy) of Allāh" were uttered by the tongue of Ḥaẓrat Ya'qūb, about Ḥaẓrat Yūsuf, who was the Spirit of Allāh, a Prophet and Imam.

"Ar-Rūḥ" as the Name of the Imam

- Q. 44. Although the Imam has numerous names, what is his name in the language of the science of spirituality. And what is its proof?
- A. One blessed name of the holy and pure Imam (in the language of spirituality) is "ar-rūḥ (the Spirit)" or the Spirit of Allāh (rūḥu'llāh). One of its proofs is that when the Imam is light (nūr) then he is the Spirit, for the light is in the form of a living spirit. Thus the Light of Allāh and the Spirit of Allāh have the same meaning and there is not the

slightest difference in their meaning. The second proof is that Mawlā 'Alī has said: "Anā amru'llāhi wa'r-rūḥu (I am the command of God and the Spirit, i.e. His Spirit)", and the Qur'an says: "Ouli'r-rūḥu min amri rabbī (Tell (O Muḥammad) that Spirit is from the command of my Lord)". The third proof is also based on the farmān of Mawlā 'Alī: "Man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabbahu (He who recognises his soul (Imam) indeed recognises his Lord)". As mentioned earlier, there are many souls in man: vegetative, animal and rational, but, unless the fourth soul, namely, the Holy Spirit, is attained and recognised, the recognition of the Lord is impossible. It is obvious that the fourth soul is the light of the Prophet and the Imam, which is also the real soul of man. Thus the Imam is our real soul - namely, the Holy Spirit and this is the purport of the above-mentioned saying of Mawlā 'Alī.

Lovers of the Soul

- Q. 45. Ḥazrat Mawlānā Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh has said about certain dignitaries of religion (buzurgān-i dīn): "They were the lovers of their own souls". Which soul is meant by this soul? Please explain clearly.
- A. What is the point of being a lover of the soul which is generally found in all human beings! One should adore the soul which is in the True Guide (i.e. the Prophet and the Imam). It is the soul which is common between the beloved and the lover and therefore unites them both. Thus, in the past, the soul which the dignitaries of religion adored, was the soul of the True Guide, which in turn was their own soul, containing within itself, the world of theophanies. How could they resist being the lovers of such a soul!

Holy Spirit

Q. 46. The above explanation appears to be a matter of belief which we accept. However, it requires such a proof which should have more rational weight. Can you furnish such a proof which would draw the attention of the intelligentsia?

A. God, may He be exalted, through His perfect power and consummate wisdom has placed the soul of elevation and development of the minerals in the vegetation. Thus whatever particles of the soil are dissolved and annihilated in the vegetation, the Divine Law necessarily grants them the vegetative soul, namely, the soul of growth.

Similarly, the soul of the development of vegetables is placed in the animals. And the pre-requisite of attaining it, is that the vegetables should sacrifice themselves for the sake of the nourishment of the animals, so that the animals would eat and assimilate them with their animal soul.

Then comes the turn of the animals. The destination of the elevation and the higher soul of the animals, which are lawful (ḥalāl), are placed in man. And the one and only way of attaining this higher soul is that they should sacrifice their lives to help human beings to attain the purpose of their lives and at the same time, in a way they would be revived in the human soul.

This chain does not discontinue here, it goes further. Among human beings those who are fortunate, submit themselves to the Imam of the time, in a religious and spiritual sense and annihilate their nafs-i ammārah or the carnal soul, in their complete devotion to sincere

obedience and perfect love for him. As a result, the Imam unites such devoted servants to his Holy Spirit. Thus, in the light of this Divine Law, it becomes evident that the Perfect Man is the highest and ultimate soul of mankind.

Celestial Body

Q. 47. In many places of your writings, you have mentioned the names, such as, jism-i falakī (celestial body), jism-i latīf (subtle body), juththah-i ibdā'iyah (ibdā'ī body), astral body, etc. etc. What do you mean by this body? Is such a thing mentioned in the Qur'ān, or is it confined to secular knowledge? If such a thing does really exist, please explain how?

A. By celestial body is meant a body whose substance is different from the elements of the planet earth, for it is celestial substance. The subtle body also is the same celestial body, which is distinguished from the terrestrial or physical body, owing to its subtlety and purity. Astral body is also the same thing. As for the juththah-i ibdā'iyah, essentially it is the same thing, but its meaning is greater and higher. For juththah means body and ibdā'iyah means pertaining to ibdā' (instantaneous manifestation), which is the result of the word "kun (Be)!" Thus, by the juththah-i ibdā'iyah is meant such a miraculous body, in which there is the rule of "kun fa-yakūn (Be! and it is)" and the kingdom of the world of command. It is the throne of paradise and is everything.

Yes, it is mentioned in the Qur'ān in many ways. The Qur'ān says that, for the survival of man, in addition to this body, there are some other bodies also. For instance, let us reflect on this Qur'anic verse carefully: "And He made for you shirts which protect you from the heat and shirts which protect you from the attack of weapons" (16:81). These are

certainly not the shirts of this world, which are made by man of cloth or of any other material. It is also absolutely impossible that such external material shirts would protect us from all kinds of heat and from the consequences of all kinds of war, except the subtle bodies, which are spiritual shirts and which God, may He be exalted, has made with His powerful Hand.

Faculty of Jibrā'īl (Quwwat-i Jibrīliyyah)

Q. 48. What is the faculty of Jibrā'īl and in which rank of man is this faculty found? Does this faculty itself perform the duty of the angel Jibrā'īl or does Jibrā'īl work through it? Have you written anything regarding it? If so, in which book?

A. Quwwat-i Jibrīliyyah or the faculty of Jibrā'īl is the name of the human intellect which, in the most perfect form, is found in the Perfect Man. From one side Jibrā'īl is linked to it and from the other, the soul of a real mu'min. For details, see the article "Three Questions from India" in one of my books called "Panj Maqālah, III".

Resemblance of Soul and Body

Q. 49. You have said in answer to question 42 that, "when our soul is dressed in the attire of the celestial body we can see it with all its perfect beauties with the physical eye, can hear its conversation and can smell its fragrances, etc." Here the question is, whether every individual and his soul resemble each other in shape and form, or do they differ? In which language does the soul speak? Do all souls have a common language? What is the fragrance of the soul like?

- A. Yes, in the lower stages, the soul of every person is as his spiritual picture, but in the final stages, where there is the pre-eternal and post-eternal unity of many realities, it is not so. There the soul appears in the form of the Perfect Man. The language of every individual and that of his soul is the same. That is to say that, the mother tongue of each individual is the tongue of his soul also. Souls do not have a common language. In spirit and spirituality, indeed, fragrances have great importance, to the extent that in spirituality, even the nourishment is given in the form of various kinds of fragrances. The usual food, which is taken in morsels and chewed, does not exist there.

Ta'wīl of Bird and Fruit

- Q. 50. We have attained tremendous pleasure and happiness in reading one of your books "Pearls of Knowledge". May God preserve you! In this book, you have written about the ta'wīls of Higher Reality. For instance, the ta'wīl of birds and fruits is unique and extremely soul-nourishing. Would you add any other interesting and important point to it?

- A. The ta'wīl of the verse (27:16), according to which, Ḥazrat Sulaymān knew the language of the birds, is that he used to converse with all souls which comprised the souls of jinns, mankind, beasts and birds. The soul is called bird, in the sense that it comes and goes freely, flying over us in the form of subtle particles.

If there is meat in paradise, it is only of the birds. Why? Because the soul is compared to a bird. And the ta'wīl of eating the meat of birds in paradise is to adopt a fine, pleasant and a higher soul and to make it a part of one's existence. The purpose of eating the worldly good things is also the same that, by eating them, the physical existence may continue.

The Holy Qur'ān repeatedly says that, in paradise, the food will be given in the form of fruits. In this also, an allusion is made to the souls. For, in the universe and existents, the soul of everything is called its fruit. As all the characteristics, beauties, faculties and tastes of the tree are gathered in its fruit, similarly, all the sweetness and happiness of knowledge and wisdom are contained in the soul of things. It should be well remembered that paradise abounds in intellectual and spiritual bounties.

Seeing of this World by the Deceased

Q.51. When a person dies, this world becomes invisible to his eyes, because he no longer has the eye with which he used to see this world. Nevertheless, if he wants to see this world or at least the members of his family and wants to help them in some way, is it possible or not, for him to do so?

A. First, we have to see whether the deceased person is in paradise or in hell? For, the question of the paradise is different from that of the hell. That is to say, in paradise, the fulfillment of every desire is possible. See the Qur'anic verse (50:35): "In it (paradise) they have all that they desire and there is more (than that) with Us", (whereas in hell it is not so).

The mu'mins in paradise will be able to see this world in many ways. For instance, in the illumination of the Divine light, with the spiritual eye; attending towards the external world in ibdā'ī body etc. As for the question of helping someone, it is somewhat different from this; for this is an interference in the law of free will and trial. However, if it is approved by God, it is also possible to help, provided the soul is on the

angelic level. Regarding the help of angels to the mu'min, it is said: "We are your friends (helpers) in the life of this world and in the Hereafter" (41:31). Here it should also be remembered that, by the command of God, whatever help the angels can give, is related only to the soul, knowledge and religion and never related to worldly things.

Dhū'l-Qarnayn and Gog and Magog

- Q. 52. What was Dhū'l-Qarnayn's rank? What was the nature of his journey? What type of creatures are Gog and Magog and what is the reality of the Alexandrian Wall? Please explain some important realities in this connection.
- A. Dhū'l-Qarnayn was the Imam of his time. His journey, as mentioned in the Qur'ān (18:83-98), was spiritual. Thus he had traversed all spiritual stages within himself. (On his journey), by the place where the sun sets (maghrib al-shams) is meant the two physical principles (aṣl-i jismānī), namely, Nāṭiq and Asās, who are the setting place (maghrib) of the light of knowledge and wisdom. By ʿaynun ḥami'ah (muddy spring), is meant the personalities of the physical ḥudūd (ranks), namely, the Imam, ḥujjat and dā'ī, who are attached to the Nāṭiq and Asās and their chain continues like a fountain.

At this place Ḥazrat Imam Dhū'l-Qarnayn saw the souls of all the people of the world and God told him about the authority which He had given him over the people of the world.

By the place where the sun was rising (maṭlī' al-shams), is meant the two spiritual principles (aṣl-i rūḥānī), namely, the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul, who are the rising place of the light of knowledge

and wisdom. At this place, the exalted Imam saw the huge gathering of the souls and angels upon whom the sun of light was shining without any veil. These were the souls of the people of tawhīd (unity).

Gog and Magog have several ta'wīls. See also one of my books "Recognition of Imam", Part Three, Keys 14 and 15. Gog and Magog are a kind of souls which spiritually cause harm as well as benefit. However, the harm is temporary and the benefit permanent.

The great cycles, in one respect, are three. One, which has passed long ago, the other is the present one, which is extended to the Resurrection and the third is going to begin after the Resurrection. Thus, Ḥazrat Imam Dhū'l-Qarnayn saw the souls of three levels related to these three great cycles. The souls of the first level were in the east of the light, who belonged to the cycle which had passed and they had attained the eternal salvation. The souls of the second level belonged to the present period, which he had already seen in the setting place of the sun. And the souls of the third level or Gog and Magog, he saw in a valley which was between the east and the west. The ta'wīl of this is that they were receiving guidance neither from the spiritual hudūd nor from the physical hudūd. And this was the reason they did not know the language of religion. So, their nature compelled them to come out from their valley and start a great revolution, so that the third great cycle, which belonged to them, may begin in the world. But no work is appropriate before its time, therefore, Ḥazrat Dhū'l-Qarnayn barred them (from coming out), by erecting a strong wall of spirituality, which is called the Alexandrian Wall.

Spiritual Nourishment

Q. 53. It is said in the verse (5:66): "If they had observed the Torah and the Gospel and that which was revealed unto them from their Lord, they would surely have been nourished from above them and from beneath their feet". Does this verse contain any spiritual wisdom or does it only have this literal meaning? Is it possible that the obedient ones may have more worldly nourishment and the disobedient ones may die of hunger?

A. Here the spiritual nourishment is mentioned. Even though apparently, it seems to be the mention of the physical food, but, if we look into it with insight, we will come to know that, in reality, it is the spiritual nourishment which is mentioned here.

It should be known that man has many examples. One of them is that of a tree. For man also has the soul of the tree (namely, vegetative soul). The nourishment of the tree is in two ways: through the roots and through the branches. Similarly, at the higher stages of spirituality, the heavenly souls enter (man) through the head and the earthly souls through the feet. In this is also alluded that the vegetative souls of dietary strength and energy enter through the feet and the animal and human souls through the head.

Further, the subtle or spiritual nourishments which are received through the head are again of two kinds. One goes down through the throat, and is not chewed, for it is subtle and extremely minute. This should be considered as part of the animal soul. And there are many others which are given in the form of fragrances. These should be considered as part of the human soul.

Manifestation of Soul

Q. 54. When a fortunate mu'min reaches the stages of the manifestation of the spirit and spirituality, in the light of the true guidance and teachings of the religion of Islām and the True Guide, in what forms do the soul or souls appear before him? Please tell us some essential points in this regard.

A. First of all, the spirit appears before the eye of the heart in the form of a luminous silent world based on moving pictures. After some time, by the mercy and favour of God, the door of complete spirituality opens. Then the perfect manifestations of the spirit begin to take place and the spirit comes in the form of subtle particles with voice and without voice, in names and words, in voice and sound, in subtle images, in dreams, imagination and wakefulness, etc. etc.

Purpose of the Manifestations of Soul

Q. 55. What is the main purpose of so many manifestations of the spirit and in order to attain this purpose, what should be done, or what are its conditions?

A. The supreme purpose of the spiritual manifestations is knowledge and gnosis and in order to attain this there are two conditions: the knowledge of certainty and good deeds. That is to say, such a knowledge which makes certain every teaching of religion and such a deed, which comprises all deeds in religion.

Transference of Light

Q. 56. How was the Spirit or Light transferred from the Prophet to Mawlā 'Alī? How does the Light go from the Imam to his successor? Can any light from the light of the Imam come to the murīd (follower)? If so, how does it come?

A. In this regard, first of all, it is necessary to know that the term "kalimah (Word)" is the key to all realities and gnosés. Kalimah has four letters: kāf, lām, mīm and hā'. Similarly, it implies four kinds of meaning, namely, command (amr), spirit (rūh), Supreme Name (ism-i aẓam) and teaching (ta'jīm). For instance, the Holy Qur'ān says that Allāh breathed His Spirit into Ḥazrat Maryam (66:12). Its ta'wīl is that the Prophet or the Imam gave the Supreme Name to Ḥazrat Maryam. Also you can see in the Wise Qur'ān, that Ḥazrat 'Īsá, as the Word of God and His Spirit, is sent into the forehead of his revered mother. For, the place of light is the forehead (4:171).

Similarly, the Prophet gave Mawlā 'Alī the Word of God, which is the Command of God, His Spirit, the Supreme Name and the heavenly teaching at the same time. Thus, every Imam transfers his light to his successor in this way.

The followers can receive the light from the holy light of the Imam in general as well as in a special way. The way of giving light to the followers by the Imam, is not different from the law of giving light to his successors. The followers are the spiritual children of the Imam and in this spiritual relationship, lies their well-being in both the worlds.

End of Kinships

Q. 57. "And when the ṣūr is blown there will be no kinships among them that day, nor will they ask of one another" (23:101). The question here is, why will the kinships come to an end on the Day of Resurrection and particularly when the ṣūr is blown?

A. In this verse is hidden a great revolutionary secret of the religion and spirituality. If I divulge it, it is difficult, if not, again it is difficult. Nevertheless, it is necessary to allude that the answer to this question lies in a verse in which the blowing of the ṣūr is mentioned and also in it, in addition to other words, there is a word whose root is nūn, sīn and lām. In addition to this (allusion), I may also talk to you privately.

When mentioning the three great cycles, earlier in this book, we have alluded to this great secret. The wise mu'mins can understand these special secrets. May the Lord of the world grant success and high ambition to all mu'mins! Āmīn!!

Speech of Birds or the Language of Angels?

Q. 58. According to the Qur'ān (27:16), Ḥaḏrat Sulaymān knew the speech of the birds. In its ta'wīl, in answer to Q. 50, you have said that Ḥaḏrat Sulaymān knew the language of souls, for by birds are meant souls. Indeed, we accept this ta'wīl, but in it the sub-question arises, whether Ḥaḏrat Sulaymān did know the speech of physical birds also? Further, here we would like to ask regarding the verse: "Allāh ... gave speech to everything" (41:21). When and where did this miracle take place, while we see that creatures other than man are always speechless and incapable of speaking?

A. There is no doubt that Ḥazrat Sulaymān knew, not only the language of souls, but also the speech of external and physical birds. And in this miraculous and spiritual knowledge, all the noble Prophets and pure Imams are equal. For the attachment of the Perfect Men to the Divine light results in the same kind of knowledge and ma'rifat. It is obvious that you are neither a Prophet nor an Imam. But suppose God, in His infinite mercy, grants you the light of ma'rifat and you follow the Messenger of God and the Imam of the time on the path of spirituality, then there will be a new world of marvels and wonders and miracles of the light of Prophethood and Imāmat in front of you at every step. At that time you will observe and study innumerable supernatural events and during these experiences, you would also converse with the souls of the living and the dead and be able to understand the speech of the birds. Without such a spirituality, there is neither complete ma'rifat, nor is there any path other than this.

Yes, Allah gave speech to everything. That is to say that, He, by His Perfect Power, showed the miracle of the speech of everything, the practical proof of which is always at the place of spirituality. In short, every inanimate and speechless thing speaks miraculously in two ways: In one way, it is the soul of the thing which converses and in the other, although the thing (i.e. animal etc.) is physically before the viewer, it is, in reality, the Holy Spirit which manipulates it. Therefore, at the place of your spirituality, if an inanimate or animate thing says something, it is not necessary that it should be aware and conscious of its own speech.

Spiritual Hoopoe

Q. 59. According to your statement, we accept that Ḥazrat Sulaymān knew the

language of both the spiritual and physical birds. However, from this arises another question: Was the Hoopoe, which is mentioned in connection with the Qur'anic story of Ḥaḏrat Sulaymān and the Queen of Saba (Bilqīs), in spiritual and ta'wīlī (esoteric) sense or in the material sense? Whatever work the Hoopoe did, such as bringing the news of the Queen of Saba to Ḥaḏrat Sulaymān or conveying his letter to her and other events in this regard, are they spiritual matters or external miracles?

- A. It should be known that this Hoopoe was not in a physical, rather, in a spiritual sense and its entire work was esoteric and spiritual. The story of the Queen of Saba has two aspects: One is exoteric and the other is esoteric and related to ta'wīl. Ta'wīl also is of many kinds. One of them is that in this story, the enquiring soul (rūḥ-i tajassus) is called the "Hoopoe". For Sulaymān's kingdom, in reality, is a spiritual kingdom, in which all the administrations of the Divine kingdom are at hand.

The army of Ḥaḏrat Sulaymān, which consisted of jinns, men and birds, was in the form of the spirits (27:17); wind, which was subjugated to him, is also a matter of a spiritual miracle (34:12). In spirituality, the jinns, in addition to many other works, also used to do spiritual painting (34:13). The ta'wīl of throne ('arsh) here is the subtle form and spiritual existence of man (27:23), for the "I" or "self" of man is on the throne of his soul and the soul, in reality, is a subtle luminous picture. On this occasion, it would be better if we mention here (the ta'wīl) of the Divine Throne also. The Divine Throne also is in human form. Thus, when you observe the luminous existence of the holy and pure Imam with the eye of heart on the highest level of your spirituality, this will be the place of the Divine Throne. In the Wise Qur'ān, where, in the verse (27:23), the throne of the Queen of Saba is mentioned, there in the verse (27:26), the

Supreme Throne (al-‘arsh al-‘azīm), namely the Throne of the Divine King is also mentioned, so that the wise people may reflect on this.

What Characteristics belong to which Soul?

- Q. 60. When the vegetative soul, animal soul and rational soul are together in man, in such a mixed and compound existence, how would one know which characteristic and which act belongs to which soul?
- A. The principle of knowing such matters is that, first of all, we should see the difference and distinction among the tree, animal and man. Or, in other words, we should think about the respective characteristics of the tree and animal, so that, by doing so, we would be able to recognise the characteristics of the vegetative soul and animal soul in man. Now, whatever characteristics are left in man, they obviously belong to the human or rational soul.

Spiritual Wisdom
and
Luminous Science
Knowledge for a united humanity.

CHAPTER IV

Lamp and the Flame of the Lamp

Q. 61. You have already explained to us that the Spirit of Allāh and the Light of Allāh are the one and the same reality, as is said in the Qur'ān (42:52), which implies that the spirit which was revealed to the Prophet was made a light. As a result, can we say that Ḥaẓrat 'Īsá, who was the Spirit of Allāh, was also the Light of Allah, even in the womb of Ḥaẓrat Maryam? Further, is it true to say that when Ḥaẓrat 'Īsá was born, Ḥaẓrat Maryam became devoid of the Light of Allāh, since the Spirit of Allāh was only Ḥaẓrat 'Īsá? Please elaborate in this regard.

A. Allah has compared His Holy Light with a lamp. The lamp consists of two things: one is the vessel, which contains oil and wick and the other is the flame, which radiates light, rising from the edge of the vessel. Similarly, even though Ḥaẓrat 'Īsá was attaining his physical perfection in the womb of his mother, his light was shining from the forehead of Ḥaẓrat Maryam. Further, light has many dimensions, hence, it is also true to say that the light belonged to both holy personalities. When Ḥaẓrat 'Īsá was born, only a body separated from body, but the light (spirit) is simple, therefore, it was not possible for it to be separated. So, even though the centre of light was Ḥaẓrat 'Īsá, a perfect copy of it was left in the blessed forehead of Ḥaẓrat Maryam.

Ḥaẓrat Mūsá's Mother

Q. 62. Did the mother of Ḥaẓrat Mūsá have any Prophetic position? If not, how did she receive revelation, as mentioned in the Qur'ān (18:7)? Was her spirituality the same as that of Ḥaẓrat Maryam? Further, was Ḥaẓrat

Mūsá also the Spirit of Allāh in his own time?

- A. The mother of Ḥazrat Mūsá was neither a Prophet nor an Imam, for it is not the expedience of God that a woman should be a Prophet or an Imam. But, esoterically and spiritually, both man and woman can merge with the light. The revelation which the mother of Ḥazrat Mūsá received, was not a revelation of a Prophetic nature, but was a revelation of a personal nature, which is also called spirituality or inspiration (ilhām), which is the result of the closeness to the Prophet and the Imam.

Yes, the mother of Ḥazrat Mūsá and Ḥazrat Maryam seem to be alike with respect to the spiritual virtues, for, the radiation of the heavenly guidance is alike in both of them. Even though there is no open commendation of the mother of Ḥazrat Mūsá in the Qur'ān, such as that of Ḥazrat Maryam, nonetheless, her entire commendation lies in her receiving revelation. Yes, Ḥazrat Mūsá was also the Spirit of Allāh in his time.

Subordinate Angels

- Q. 63. We believe in the principle of spirituality that, there are innumerable souls in the soul of every rank, including the Holy Spirit. In this connection, we would like to ask: if, during the time of Prophethood, the Holy Spirit (Jibrā'īl) used to come in the form of Salmān-i Fārsī, in what forms did those innumerable angels, who accompanied Jibrā'īl come?

- A. It is the law of spirituality that, whereas the soul of an exalted mu'min performs the duty of Ḥazrat Jibrā'īl, the souls of many other mu'mins (whether dead or alive) work as subordinate angels. The form of the soul is the same as the one to whom it belongs.

Flight of Mu'min

Q. 64. "I saw Ja'far (bin Abī Tālib) in the Paradise flying with angels" (Prophetic Tradition). Is this higher honour confined only to Ḥaẓrat Ja'far or is it common to all mu'mins? Do angels fly like birds or in any other state?

A. The honour of flying with angels in the Paradise, is not confined only to Ḥaẓrat Ja'far-i Ṭayyār. But, it is certain that in this honour, he is an example and a model for all mu'mins and this honour is for everyone to attain.

The flight of angels is entirely different from that of birds. This is spiritual flight, which is possible only on the wings of the remembrance of God. As it is said in the Qur'ān: "The maker of angels as (His) messengers having wings two, three and four" (35:1). This means that the dhikr of two, three or four names continues in the angels simultaneously.

'Ibādat in Paradise

Q. 65. Is there 'ibadat-u bandagī' in the Paradise? If not, how is the flight of angels possible with the remembrance of God? Is 'ibādat' not enjoined until death comes, according to the Qur'ān (15:99)?

A. There is no 'ibādat' of hardship in the Paradise, such as we do today, considering it the slavery of God. Nor is there the 'ibādat' which is done out of fear of hell or to covet Paradise. Nonetheless, there is certainly special and higher 'ibādat' in the Paradise, which is done without any hardship, with extreme happiness, love and friendship of the Lord. Such

an 'ibādat or dhikr-i ilāhī (remembrance of God) takes place in the Paradise on the height of spirituality. It is the gnostic ('ārifānah) and angelic dhikr, which starts automatically by will and indication (ishārah) only and contains spiritual and intellectual pleasures, delights and joys. It is like the food of intellect and soul. This kind of 'ibādat is to see the treasures of knowledge and gnosis hidden in the Names and Words and the marvels and wonders in spirituality. As the Prophet says: "Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi'llāhī'l-ʿalīyyī'l-ʿazīm (There is no power and strength except in Allāh, the High, the Great) is a treasure among the treasures of the Paradise". This means that the other treasures of the Paradise are also Names and Words such as these.

'Ibādat is not enjoined until death comes, for the purpose of it is not that death should come and one should die; its purpose is the final level of certainty, i.e. ḥaqq al-yaqīn (the truth of certainty), which is the highest certainty. Thus, in the above-mentioned verse (15:99), it is the certainty (yaqīn) which is mentioned and not the death.

How is the Flight in Paradise

Q. 66. If it is accepted that the Paradise, which is in the next world, is in non-spatial state and in which there are no material distances such as of this world, how is it possible for there to be the flight of birds?

A. It is true that the Paradise is in spiritual and non-spatial state and there are no material and spatial distances. Therefore, the flight of angels and spiritual entities is entirely different from the physical and worldly flight. In spiritual flight, the infinite chain of the marvels and wonders, manifestations and epiphanies of Paradise is linked with the remembrance of God. Thus the varying manifestations and various types of the favours

of Paradise continue to appear automatically with the remembrance of God and with the mention of the Names.

The other aspect of our answer is that in the world of dreams, although it is non-spatial, we sometimes fly from one place to another. This shows that in the non-spatial world there are the subtle and non-material examples (such as flying) of the spatial world also.

Further, this point should also be remembered here that, when the angel or the spirit is with subtle body, or the subtle particle, then certainly, it also flies physically as a flying saucer flies mysteriously.

Flying Saucer

Q. 67. What type of a creature is a flying saucer? Is it developed man from another planet, or an angel, or a jinn? What is the purpose of its coming to the earth? Please furnish us with some useful information in this connection.

A. Nowadays in the west, a flying saucer is called UFO, namely, Unidentified Flying Object, which means a flying object which has not yet been recognised. Whatever we have written in answer to Q. 47 can furnish you with enough information in this connection. Also see one of my books "Balance of Realities" pp. 43-46.

I believe that flying saucers are the same supernatural living shirts to subjugate the world, which are mentioned in the Qur'ān (16:81): "And Allah made for you shade out of the things He created and made for you caves from the mountains and made for you shirts to protect you from heat and (also such) shirts which protect you from (the damage of the

weapons of) war. Thus He perfects His favour unto you in order that you may surrender (unto Him)".

We can also call this mysterious living shirt, celestial body, subtle body, juththah-i ibdā'iyah, astral body and also a developed man from another planet, angel, jinn etc., for this is the place of ibdā'. They come to the earth by the command of God, to bring about a spiritual revolution in the world and to unite the nations of the world.

Throne or Soul

Q. 68. Before bringing this world into existence, when the Divine Throne was upon an unfathomable ocean (wa kāna 'arshuhu 'alā'l-mā') (11:7), where was the human soul?

A. At that time, the human soul was in the shape of the Supreme Throne. This Throne was neither square nor rectangular, nor circular in shape. Nor was it made of rubies and pearls, nor of gold and silver, nor of any other lifeless material. Rather, it was the fountainhead of intellect and soul and an endless treasure of knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, it was also called the Light and the Pen. It was the greatest Angel, but in the form of the Perfect Man. And the ocean upon which the Divine Throne was resting, was not the ocean of material water, but of Divine knowledge.

The teaching of the Wise Qur'ān that: "Divine Throne was upon the water" is full of the wisdoms of ta'wīl. Therefore, it does not necessitate that before that time the universe (with) the existents (in it), was not manifest in its present form. However, there is no doubt that in this concept there is a great examination of knowledge and gnosis by the

Benevolent Lord of the people of religions and the schools of thought, to see if they understand the wisdom of "Throne" and "water", or not.

It should be known that the allusion of the Throne is to the kingdom of God which has neither a beginning nor an end and it is this kingdom, in which there is everything.

The second wisdom is in the word "water". The ta'wīl of water is knowledge ('ilm), which is in the present form and state of the universe ('ālam). And without 'ālam, 'ilm (knowledge) does not come into existence. If we accept water in the literal sense without ta'wīl, the questions arise: What was that throne made of, if with the exception of the water, there was nothing else? Who had made the Throne, while no king makes his own throne, rather, orders someone to make it?

Standing up of Hair (Goose bumps)

Q. 69. Standing up of hair or shivering is also mentioned in the Qur'ān (39:23) and sometimes we also observe it in ourselves or in others. Is there any spiritual cause for it other than the external causes? And if any, please explain it.

A. Yes, the state of standing up of hair also has a spiritual cause. However, first we would like to say a few words about the external or physical causes of it. The hair of a man stands up and he shivers when his skin is caught by a severe cold or he feels an intense fear. The cause of this state is all those innumerable particles of the animal soul with which the entire body is filled. These particles when they face this unbearable and unpleasant condition, become disturbed and restless, therefore, they wake up from their peaceful sleep and move in their own place, resulting in

hair standing up or shivering.

If this event is in spiritual form, the cause of it are all those innumerable particles of the human soul, which are in the entire existence of man. When a fortunate mu'min, in the light of true guidance, performs abundant dhikr-u bandagi, the particles of human soul receive strength and happiness, due to the radiation of the rays of the Holy Spirit, awakening them and creating a yearning for union in them, which result in the standing up of hair or shivering.

Relation of Jinns and Mankind

Q. 70. Would you kindly tell us some basic points regarding jinn, parī (fairy) and Shayṭān (devil)? Do they have any relation with mankind or are they different creatures? What is the difference between Iblīs and Shayṭān?

A. Jinn is an Arabic word and parī is its Persian translation. That is to say, jinn has all those qualities and characteristics which are related to parī. Jinn means hidden creatures. Hidden in the sense that they are subtle or spiritual (latīf) and not dense or physical (kathīf). Jinns are both males and females. It is an injustice that some people have described jinns as being ugly. This is wrong. They are very handsome and beautiful, for they have the subtle body.

The Lord of the world has commanded us to study and think, not only in the Qur'anic verses, but also in His powers and wisdoms in the signs of the physical world and the spiritual world. Thus, in this connection, we come across a small living thing. It is a worm, which after a certain time becomes transformed into a moth and again worms are born from the eggs of this moth. The wisdom-filled allusion in this is that, on the

arrival of the spiritual cycle, the dense creature becomes transformed into a subtle creature. This means that men, who are in a dense body today, will be in a subtle body tomorrow. Subtle body has varying degrees, such as angels, jinns and devils. The angels are all good; the devils are all bad. But among the jinns, there are good as well as bad. Iblīs is the name of the chief of devils. Praise be to Allah, in this description, which is full of allusions, I have furnished a complete answer to your question.

Telepathy

Q. 71. What is your belief regarding telepathy or illumination (ishrāq)? Is it possible that it will progress in the future? Is it related to religion or to science?

A. I have full conviction in telepathy or illumination, for Allāh has endowed man with many higher qualities. If they are developed and used, man can perform many astonishing deeds. In the future, the progress of telepathy is certain. I believe in the mingling of proto religion and proto science. Telepathy is common to both.

Today the wall which stands between religion and science is of words, terms and language. Alas! if only the scientists had known the language of the Qur'ānic wisdom and had understood spirituality! Alas! if we were able to utter what is in our heart! Alas! if all the people knew the secrets of the Perfect Men!

Reflect on this wisdom-filled verse: "He inspired it (soul) with its debauchery and its righteousness" (91:8). But the ta'wīl wisdom of this verse is that God did not do this work Himself, for He is free from and above teaching someone sinfulness and debauchery. Therefore this work

was done by the mudill (misleading Satan) who is the source of evil. Again, God is also free from and above teaching righteousness, standing in opposition to the mudill (misleader). Therefore, He, the Absolute King, gave this power to the True Guide, to be the source of good and to inspire the people with righteousness.

Means of Spirituality

Q. 72. Once you said that spirituality is a means that brings the Speaking Holy Spirit and Light and the living realities of the period of Prophethood to the future and unites the mu'mins of the present and the future with the Prophet. Would you kindly elaborate on this view in the light of the Holy Qur'an?

A. My dears! this view is absolutely true and real. The explanation of this is that the Holy Prophet is that pure light which God has linked forever with the Qur'ān (5:15), so that the mu'mins may continue to act upon the Qur'an in the illumination of this light of guidance. Thus today, the holy light of the Prophet exists and is present in the succession of the Imamāt (silsilah-i imāmat). The Qur'ān has openly said that "Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth, the similitude of His light is like a niche in which is a (luminous) lamp" (24:35). Then it is said that the luminous lamp is the Prophet (33:46). Further, where the light of Allāh has been mentioned, it has also been mentioned that the understandable concept of Divine light is "light upon light" (24:35), which means that the vicegerent and successor of light can be only the one who himself has already become light.

In short, the holy light of God and the Prophet is in the Imam of the time. Now in order to reach this light, we need the means of spirituality,

so that we may enter thereby the city of knowledge and the house of wisdom and observe the miracles of knowledge and gnosis of the light of Prophethood with the inner eye and see the Speaking Holy Spirit and Light and the living realities of the time of the Prophethood.

In future, in a majlis, we will explain to you a marvellous and pleasant wisdom in Sūrah-i Jumu'ah (62), which will assure you that we can recognise the rank of the Prophethood by means of the light of Imamāt. This point contains all allusions.

Importance of "Two"

Q. 73. One day, in your discourses of knowledge, you said that in the Holy Qur'ān, is alluded the importance of "two" after one. We would like to know where this allusion is made in the Qur'ān and how and in what sense?

A. In this connection, first of all, we would like to say that God, may He be exalted, is One and also above the one and then to discuss the two. As for the "two", (it should be known that) whatever exists other than God (dhāt-i subhān) is in pairs (36:36). This world and the next are two (2:201); jinn and man are two creatures for the worship of Allāh, (51:56); good and evil are two means for the trial of man (21:35); also the wisdom in this is that the fruits of Paradise will be given in pairs; spiritual wisdom is taught where two rivers join each other (18:60); east and west are in pairs (55:17).

Heaven and earth are two (24:35); light and darkness are two (35:20); life and death are two (67:2); day and night are two (17:12); the souls of the creatures will be in pairs (81:7), etc.

There are many wisdoms in the number "two": it is between unity (wahdat) and multiplicity (kathrat); it is the means of beginninglessness and endlessness; pairs are contained in it; opposites are made out of it so that there should be recognition of each other; in it lies the wisdom of negation and affirmation; it is the example of the balance of justice. Finally, there is nothing among creatures, which is devoid of the wisdom or the law of "two". Thus the souls of the creatures, as it is said, are also in pairs. That is to say that, the soul has two ends, namely, we have two "I's", the "higher I" and the "lower I".

Note: for details of "higher I" and "lower I", see "Balance of Realities" pp. 47-48.

There is no Past and Future with God

Q. 74. I do not remember exactly whether I read it in Mawlā-i Rūmī's Mathnawī or in one of your books, that there is neither past nor future in the presence of God. There is only the present. Is it a matter of spirituality or that of the Hereafter? How is it possible for there to be neither the past nor the future at a certain place, but only, and only the present?

A. Past is related to someone for whom the events of time and place have elapsed or he has no information of the past at all because of the long duration and the far distance. And future also belongs to such a person to whom the forthcoming events have not reached and he is unable to reach them. But God Who encompasses time and space through His light has no past and no future. In His eye every absent is present and every past and future is present. It is His light which preserves all the events and states of the Universe and the existents in their real form.

By the presence (ḥuzūr) of God is meant spirituality, which is the place where both the past and future are in the form of the present (ḥāl). That is to say that, if you pass through spirituality, you will see the events of Ādam and those of the Resurrection in the very present. Thus, this state is spirituality as well as the Hereafter.

Circle of Subtle and Dense Cycles

Q. 75. The Holy Qur'ān says that before mankind, God created jinns from fire (15:27), but according to your ta'wīl in answer to Q. 70, angels, jinns and devils are created from mankind. Please explain to us how it is possible.

A. In the background of your question, two things are important: One "before" and the other is "fire". So it should be known that in this world, like day and night, there are two great cycles, which rotate one after another. One is the subtle (spiritual) cycle and the other is the dense (physical) cycle. If you want to see the entire circle, then none of them is before or after. But while you are living in the physical cycle, it is correct to say that the spiritual cycle is before the physical cycle.

Knowledge for a united humanity

As for the question of fire, it means subtlety (latāfat). That is to say, when the spiritual cycle comes, then those who are the highest in knowledge and good deeds become angels in varying ranks, those who are in the middle, become jinns in different grades and those who are wicked, become devils.

The example of the creation of jinn and man is as though a sage says: "Worm is created from density (kathāfat) and before worm, moth was created from subtlety (latāfat)". From this, an intelligent person can

understand that this subtlety of the moth emerged from the worm and the density of the worm from the moth.

Hazrat Ādam, Hazrat Hawwā and their innumerable companions were in the dense body before going to Paradise, but in the process of going to Paradise, they became subtle (latīf). Again when they were sent down from Paradise, they were transformed into the dense body and again they became subtle when they returned to Paradise.

A Marvellous Wisdom

Q. 76. At the end of the answer to Q. 72, you had promised to explain to us a marvellous and pleasant wisdom in Sūrah-i Jumu'ah (62), which will assure us that we can recognise the rank of the Prophethood by means of the light of Imāmat. Would you kindly explain that wisdom to us.

A. Yes, this is in continuation of what we have already said in the beginning of Q. 72, that, it is the means of spirituality which unites the mu'mins of the present and the future to the true Prophet. The innumerable mercies and favours of God, which were granted to the mu'mins of the time of Prophethood, are mentioned in the verse (62:2), such as, the recitation of the verses of God to them by the Prophet, to purify them and to teach them the Book and Wisdom. All these, in fact, belong to spirituality.

In the verse (62:3), there is the mention of "the others (ākhirīn)", i.e. the mu'mins who were not yet born in the time of the Prophet will meet the mu'mins of the time of the Prophet, through the light of guidance and spirituality, despite being born in the future. All this is in the language of wisdom; the proof of which, at the end of the verse, is "al-ʿazīzu-l-hakīm (the Mighty, the Wise)". That is to say that, since He is the

Mighty, the Wise, He can do so.

In the verse (62:4), it is alluded that this guidance and spirituality is the bounty of God, Who grants it to whom He likes. God is the Lord of the great bounty.

An Extremely Great Secret

Q. 77. "He created you from a Single Soul, then from it He made its spouse" (39:6). For a long time I have been thinking of this verse, but cannot make sense of it. For, if we consider here "Single Soul" to be Ādam (Universal Intellect), the creation of children from one single person and thereafter the creation of spouse is something impossible. Please kindly explain the secret in it to us.

A. By the favour and help of God and putting my trust in Him, I say that there is really a great secret hidden here. The secret is that in this verse is mentioned the Universal Soul, in whose background is also necessarily mentioned the Universal Intellect. Universal Intellect and Universal Soul, in the language of religious wisdom, are called the "Simple Pair" and the spiritual Adam and Eve. Thus, from the "Single Soul" (i.e. the spiritual spouse of the Universal Intellect) were created all the souls of the previous great cycle and at the end of that cycle, the Universal Soul ascended to the rank of the the Universal Intellect. The ta'wīlī example of this is that since this great angel, who was like the mother in the previous cycle, now became the father of the souls of the coming cycle, hence God made his spouse from him. That is to say, one great ḥadd, from among his ḥudūd, was raised to the rank of Universal Soul, so that a new world of the souls may come into existence by their spiritual marriage.

Souls of Stars

Q. 78. If every small or big thing has a soul and if this great universe has a Universal Soul, does this mean that the planet earth, moon and stars also have souls? If so, please furnish a cogent proof of this?

A. I wonder why this question appears very pleasant and beautiful to me. Hopefully there is some Divine favour in it. My dears! every thing in the universe is immersed in the encircling ocean of the Soul of souls and so are all the planets and stars, externally and internally. Therefore, a spiritual form of each one of them becomes determined. For instance, the spiritual form of the planet earth is exactly like the earth, as if a great angel, by the command of God, has made a wisdom-filled and living film of it. This is a cogent example of the soul of the earth.

The air itself has no fixed form, but if it is in the water-skin, it is like the water-skin; if in a bottle, it is like a bottle and if it is in a tyre, it is like a tyre. The same is the case of the spiritual form of everything and every star. But a very great difference between the two is that the spiritual form is a living and speaking soul, while the air, wherever it may be, is devoid of spiritual qualities.

The Lord of the world, in His Mighty Book, has sworn by the falling of the stars (56:75). These are the souls of the stars, which fall upon a mu'min in individual resurrection and they are only in the form of particles.

Circle of Worm and Moth

Q. 79. The example of the worm and moth which you have presented in order to reflect on the dense creature (present mankind) and the subtle creature (angel etc.) is a living sign of the book of nature. We can understand a lot from it. In addition, we would like to request you to make us understand it further in the light of the Holy Qur'ān.

A. God created the universe in six days. That is to say that, He completed the world of religion in the times of the six great prophets. Similarly, God created and completed the present human body in six stages: quintessence of clay (sulālah), sperm, a clot of congealed blood ('alaqah), a little lump (mudghah), bones, flesh. By this, the man became complete in the dense body and lived the worldly life. God then created "another creation (khalq-i ākhar = subtle body)" (23:12-14). As He says "So blessed be Allah, the Best of creators" (23:14). In this verse, an allusion is made to the reality that "another creation (khalq-i ākhar)" is the supreme creation. It is the creation of juththah-i ibdā'īyyah. Had it not been so, allusion would not have been made here to His numerous blessings and the beauties of His creatorship.

It should be remembered that the principle of the contextual meaning of the Holy Qur'an is extremely wisdom-filled. Therefore, we want to see the explanation of "ansh'nāhu (We created it)" in the verse "thumma ansh'nāhu khalqan ākhar (then We created it another creation)" (23:14) in another verse, which is: "innā ansh'nāhunna inshā'an fa-ja'alnāhunna abkārān" (We created them (hūrīs) as ought to be created. Then We made them virgins" (56:36). That is to say, first We created them in this world and caused them to pass through the different stages of life. Then, We made them virgins, i.e We gave them the subtle body. This shows that the

worldly body remains in this world and for the Hereafter, is the subtle body.

Two Ends of Soul

Q. 80. How are the two ends of our soul and in what sense do the souls have pairs?

A. It should be remembered well that the main source of our soul is in the world of command and paradise. Therefore, we have come to this world not in total, but in a partial sense, as the rays, light and heat of the sun constantly reach the surface of the earth while the sun itself is in its own place. If we, in the light of the sun, place a mirror or a pot containing water in front of us, we will see a dim reflection of the sun in it. This is a beautiful and cogent example of our two-end existence of spirituality and materiality. In this sense, it is said that our soul has two ends or we have two "I's".

The Wise Qur'ān (6:98) implies that when all human beings were created from the Universal Soul by the Divine command, each of them was granted two souls: one mustaqarr (permanent) and the other mustawda' (transitory). The mustaqarr remained in the world of command and the mustawda' came to this world. Thus, in this world, those who obey Allah, the Prophet and the Lord of the command, as it ought to be and attain the recognition of their soul, will meet their permanent soul (rūh-i mustaqarr). The Holy Prophet, in his last time, alluding to this reality, had prayed to meet the "Companion on High (rafiq-i a'la' = rūh-i mustaqarr)". In this statement we have sufficiently answered your question.

CHAPTER V

Physical Body is not Everlasting

Q. 81. God raised Ḥaẓrat Idrīs to paradise with this physical body (19:57), Ḥaẓrat Khidr became everliving in this world with his physical body and God raised Ḥaẓrat ‘Īsá to the heaven with this body. Are these allegories or realities? Whatever may be the case, please explain them clearly.

A. These are the allegories of wisdom and wisdom and reality lie in understanding them. Thus it should be known that God showed Ḥaẓrat Idrīs the paradise of spirituality and made it known to him in the life of this world, just as His Prophets, friends and the righteous servants have always been observing it (in this life) by His mercy (- 7:6). This shows that God had raised Ḥaẓrat Idrīs to the place of spirituality. Then, when the appointed time came, he entered the eternal paradise leaving the physical body in this world. Since numerous difficulties are attached to the physical body, therefore, it cannot remain in the eternal paradise, even though the selected servants of God can observe, experience and recognise the spiritual paradise in this body before death.

Knowledge for a united humanity

If there is any sound tradition or an allegory regarding the everliving state of Ḥaẓrat Khidr, then the ta’wīl of it is that, he had become immortal spiritually (and not physically). For, God does not like His selected servants to carry the burden of the physical body more than the appointed time. This explanation also answers the question regarding Ḥaẓrat ‘Īsá. For details, study the article "Is Ḥaẓrat ‘Īsá Soul or Body?" in "Panj Maqālah, II".

Recognition of Paradise

Q. 82. You have just mentioned about the recognition (ma'rifat) of paradise. Our heart is yearning to hear more about the recognition of paradise. Would you kindly add to our knowledge?

A. Ma'rifat (recognition, gnosis) is the supreme and extremely comprehensive term in the religion of Islam, therefore, all attributes and realities are gathered in its meaning. The first example of it is that all the exoteric commandments of Islam are within the circle of sharī'at; with all these beauties of the sharī'at, tarīqat is its kernel ; ḥaqīqat is the core of the tarīqat and ma'rifat is the spirit and light of the ḥaqīqat. Thus the entire living spirit of religion is contained in the ma'rifat.

The second example is that ma'rifat, in reality, means the recognition of God. This recognition is not possible without the dīdār (vision) of God in the manifestations of His attributes. This supreme felicity and bliss is attained when the mu'min recognises his own soul and the place where the recognition of soul and the Divine vision are attainable, is paradise. The path of paradise is hidden in the excellent example of the Holy Prophet, to which, only the Imam of the time can successfully guide.

May we be sacrificed for the wisdom-filled Qur'anic words! In each wisdom-filled word are gathered numerous wisdoms! Thus all the above mentioned realities and gnosés are gathered in "'arrafahā lahum (He made it (paradise) known to them" (47:6). This explanation shows that ma'rifat, which is paradise, is everything. The condition of attaining it is that, for the sake of the protection and progress of religion, mu'mins should carry out such important sacrifices as those of the martyrs of the past, who laid down their lives for religion.

Reflecting Light (Nūr-i mun‘akis)

Q. 83. Light literally means brightness, but we would like to know what the state and quality of the reflecting light is, when God illumines the souls of the people of ma‘rifat by His Perfect Light? Are the spiritual light and physical light alike or is there a great difference between them?

A. It is true that light literally means brightness, but with respect to mankind, it means the perfect and supreme guidance. Guidance is of three kinds: guidance of intellect, guidance of soul and guidance of body. The guidance of intellect is in the form of knowledge and wisdom and awareness of the secrets of the physical and spiritual worlds; that of the soul is in the form of aptitudes, such as yearning for bandagī, dhikr, religious zeal and success in doing good deeds. The guidance of body is in the form of the demonstration of physical abilities and virtues, such as patience, high ambition, bravery and courage.

Light in the lower stages is full of astonishing colours and in the higher stages, either it is moderate or is free from colour and form. The name of this colourful and colourless state is called "ṣibghatu'llāh (the colour of Allāh)" (2:138).

External light is an allegory (mithāl) and internal light is the object or meaning of it (mamthūl). Therefore, material light in comparison to its meaning is very trivial, lifeless and unreal, while the internal light is adorned with the perfect qualities of intellect and soul. "Chih nisbat khāk rā bā‘ālam-i pāk = So low (it) bears no comparison to the high". Read also "The state and reality of light" in the book "The Ascent of Soul".

‘Izrā’īl and the Seizing of the Soul

Q. 84. When it is time for a person to die, how does his soul leave the body? Does it go out by itself or is it seized by Ḥazrat ‘Izrā’īl, the Angel of death? How? Is there only one ‘Izrā’īl or are there more than one? What is the exit of the soul?

A. At the time of death, the soul does not leave the body by itself, rather, it is seized by Ḥazrat ‘Izrā’īl. The state of seizing the soul is that Ḥazrat ‘Izrā’īl enters the ear of the dying person and continuously recites a great name of Allāh and with his miraculous voice the particles of the soul start to move towards the head. As a result of this, the state of death starts from the feet and the soul gradually leaves the body through the upper part of the head.

Some people think that the soul goes out with the last breath. But this is not so. It is only the sign that the soul has left the chest and is centred in the brain. However, it is a different question how long the soul remains in the head.

‘Izrā’īl, by the command of God, can seize the soul of a person all at once, even with a single cry. With respect to the principal rank, ‘Izrā’īl is one, but in his army there is an ‘Izra’īl for every person.

Spiritual Death and Physical Death

Q. 85. If it is true that the religion also commands: "Mūtū qabla an tamūtū" (Die spiritually before dying physically), does the personal or individual Resurrection occur to a mu’min in accomplishing it? If so, how does he observe the events of the Resurrection which are related to the people of

the entire world? Further, is it true that there are two angels, called Nakīr and Munkar?

- A. Yes, the success of a real mu'min lies in the spiritual death before dying the physical death, through the purification of soul. It is also true that in this spiritual death, his individual Resurrection takes place and despite the fact that it is his individual Resurrection, he can observe all the states and events related to the collective Resurrection. For, with God, there is also a world of particles ('ālam-i dharr), in which, not only do the people of all times exist in the form of particles, but also each and everything of the universe and existents. Thus the mu'min who observes the individual Resurrection passes through all the states and events of the collective Resurrection.

Yes, it is true that there are the two angels called Nakīr and Munkar. However, it should be remembered that in spirituality, one and the same thing has several names and several functions. Therefore, it is not necessary that these angels should come only with these names.

'Ālam-i Dharr (World of Particles)

- Q. 86. What does 'ālam-i dharr mean? Where is it? Is it physical or spiritual? If it is physical, why cannot everybody see it?

- A. 'Ālam-i dharr means the world of particles, which means the particles of the souls. It exists in this world and is a compound of the subtle body and soul. There is a great wisdom hidden in its being so. It can be seen only after the eye of the heart opens, therefore, everybody cannot see it.

It was the ‘ālam-i dharr in which God had asked the souls of the people to confess His Lordship (rubūbiyyat): "Am I not your Lord?" and the souls said: "Yes, verily". (7:172).

Spiritual War

Q. 87. The Qur’anic verse (2:112) implies that devils are not only from the jinns but also from among the mankind. They whisper in the hearts of one another, plausible discourse through guile, so that, by deceiving people through such discourses, they may cause them to go astray. The gist of the same subject is also in the verses (114:4-6) that, khannās (sneaking whisperer) who is from among jinns as well as human beings can whisper directly in the hearts of the people. The question which arises here is: Cannot the mu’mins, who are in the opposite side in this spiritual war, do anything? If not, does this mean that in the spiritual war, the hands of evil are free, but those of the good tied tightly?

A. Yes, the physical and spiritual devils can do all this, but despite all this there is not the slightest despondency about the spiritual abilities of the mu’mins. For they are the army of Allāh (hizbu’llāh) and it is the army of Allāh which eventually becomes victorious (5:56).

This Qur’anic example that, the mu’mins are the army of Allāh, is full of spiritual wisdoms. The most important wisdom which it implies is that, by the grace of Allāh, the spiritual forces of the mu’mins are greater than the satanic forces of the devils. This is why the army of Allāh always becomes victorious in spirit and spirituality. Reflect also on how the army of Satan (hizbu’sh-shaytān) in the verse (58:19), are the losers.

Army of God

Q. 88. The example of the army of Allāh is certainly very faith-illuminating and soul-nourishing. Now, God willing, we will reflect on all those verses related to the army of Allāh. Yet, please tell us, since the mu'mins are the army of Allāh, what is their relation to the army of Allāh as mentioned in Sūrah-i Fath (48)?

A. In this connection, the first verse of Sūrah-i Fath is: "He (God) it is Who sent down peace (of spirituality) into the hearts of the mu'mins that they may add faith to their faith; and to Allāh belong the armies of the heavens and the earth, and Allāh is Knower and Wise." (48:4). In this verse, by heaven, is meant the spiritual world and the plural of heaven "(heavens)" signifies the spiritual ranks; by the earth, is meant the physical world. Thus in this verse, are mentioned the spiritual and physical armies of God (i.e. the souls of mu'mins and their persons), because of the fact that, by the command of God, it is the chief of the army of God (i.e. the Prophet and Imam) and the army who are the means, through which the spiritual peace descends upon every mu'min, according to his knowledge and practice. As we have mentioned earlier, at the place of wahy (revelation), the Holy Spirit does not come alone, rather with its entire army, which consists of angels as well as souls. Thus, here the way the armies (the spiritual and physical) of God are mentioned, their relation to the mu'mins is that, it is the mu'mins who are the armies of God in their souls and bodies. For, it is they, who, spiritually, are in the heavens of spirituality, and physically on the earth of corporeality.

The second mention in this connection is in the verse (48:7), the blessed words and implications of which are also the same as mentioned above,

that Allāh uses the hosts of the mu'mins as His army spiritually and physically.

What Weapon is the Satan afraid of?

Q. 89. One important question in connection with spiritual war is: What is the best weapon, among the weapons of the mu'mins, of which the Satan is afraid and what tricks does he use to overcome him?

A. The best and the most powerful weapon of a mu'min of which the Satan is in constant fear is the remembrance of God, therefore, he is always trying to cause the mu'min to forget God's remembrance, so that he may attack him (58:19).

The ta'wīl wisdom of this verse is that the Name of God and His remembrance are the Imam of the time, who is the fountainhead of all physical and spiritual forces of mu'mins. Therefore, the physical and spiritual devils (6:112) always chase those mu'mins who are weak in faith and knowledge, to cause them to loosen their grip of the blessed hem (dāman) of the pure and holy Imam.

Knowledge for a united humanity

This is the greatest weapon of spirituality and knowledge of a mu'min and this is the ta'wīl of forgetting the remembrance of God, because of the Satan.

Barren Day

Q.90. There are hundreds of names of the Resurrection in the Qur'ān (which can be estimated from a Qur'anic Index) and in every name there can be hidden several wisdoms. However, here we would like to know only what

is the ta'wīl of "Barren Day (yawmin 'aqīmīn)", which is used for the Day of Resurrection?

- A. My dear! Resurrection is called Barren Day (22:55) because, at that time, the generations of all people will be terminated, except that of the progeny of the Prophet, who are the Face of God on the earth, as mentioned in the Qur'ān (55:26-27). See also the answers to the questions 52 and 57 in this book and pp. 38-39 of "Hundred Questions", Part I.

Four Birds of Hazrat Ibrāhīm

- Q. 91. If the ta'wīl of bird is soul, as you have explained in the answer to Q. 50, what is the ta'wīl of the four birds of Hazrat Ibrāhīm (2:260)? Further, what is the importance of the number four?

- A. The four birds of Hazrat Ibrahim, which came to life and came to him, are the souls of his four closest hujjats (hujjatān-i muqarrab). The same four souls were his Jibrā'īl, Mikā'īl, Isrāfīl and 'Izrā'īl, as we have already said, bird in the language of ta'wīl, signifies soul or angel. The importance of the number four is because of the fact that the closest angels are four, as well as the huzūrī hujjats (the ones who are in the spiritual presence of the Imam) are also four, as mentioned above.

Whether it is a mustajīb or a ma'dhūn, potentially, he is a bird (soul=angel). Hazrat Ibrāhīm, by the command of God, selected four such ranks and took covenant for special upbringing and giving of spiritual secrets. This is the ta'wīl of the slaughtering of the four birds by Hazrat Ibrāhīm. To cut and to beat means to try in knowledge and spirituality. To place on the mountain symbolises spiritual elevation. After doing all this, when Hazrat Ibrāhīm called them in his spirituality, they presented

themselves, for his spiritual help, in the above mentioned four ranks. This miracle of God, that He resurrects the mu'mins from the death of negligence and ignorance and grants them the life of the closest angels on the heights of spirituality, is far greater than to resurrect someone after physical death.

Salmān - the Gate of Paradise

- Q. 92. "As-Salmānu bābun min abwābi'l-jannah (Salmān is a gate from among the gates of paradise)". Please tell us some wisdoms of this blessed Tradition.
- A. It should be known that (in the time of Salmān), the living paradise of spirituality and luminosity in human attire on earth were Nāṭiq and Asās. This is why the blessed gates of paradise were also in the form of living and speaking persons. One of these blessed gates was in the form of Salmān-i Fārsī. Otherwise, where are those beauties having the soil of intellect and soul and the elements of knowledge and wisdom, which are evergreen with the flowers and fruits of the delights of the Divine secrets and the fragrances of unity, in the gardens and meadows of this world! But the holy light of Muḥammad (s.a.) and 'Alī (a.s.) in the person of the living and present Imam, is that living garden of paradise which the words fail to duly praise and describe.

Salmān-i Fārsī was a gate of the living paradise of this holy personality in the sense that, he was a means of the da'wat-i ḥaqq (the true mission), a path of light, an example of real love, a treasure of Imam's knowledge, a treasure trove of ma'rifat and a mirror of spirituality.

The Qur'anic verse (29:64) implies that the home of the Hereafter, whether it is in paradise or hell, is living. This implies that some highest

hudūd in the religion, namely, Universal Intellect, Universal Soul, Nāṭiq and Asās, as each of them has two positions, are the eight paradises. The hudūd next to them, hold the position of the gates and the hudūd of the third grade are the people who will enter the paradise through these gates. For details, see "Wajh-i Dīn", Chapter V.

Concept of Creation

Q. 93. If the Islamic concept of creation, as Ḥazrat Mawlānā Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh (a.s.) says, is: "a perpetual and constant event", this implies that the infinite succession of creation continues in the form of a circle. Would you kindly furnish a clear proof from the Holy Qur'ān in this connection?

A. The Holy Qur'ān, after mentioning the constant rising and setting of the sun and the moon and the continuous rotation of day and night, alludes to this greatest secret of the law of nature: "And they all rotate in a circle" (36:40). It should be known that there is also a subject in the Holy Qur'ān, which should be called the "Universal Law (qānūn-i kull)", for, in it, there are mentioned the universals (kulliyāt) of the universe and existents. One general sign of the verses related to this subject is the word "kull (all)" mentioned in them. The above mentioned verse, therefore, is a universal (general rule) of the Universal Law that, according to it, everything, including soul, rotates in a circle. However, it is a different question why and how.

In addition to the Qur'anic verses, the cosmic signs in which the Lord of the world has commanded us to think, also reveal that the infinite journey of everything continues in a circle (2:164), such as, the constant coming and going of the day and night, the repeated passing of the ships

on the river and the sea, the continuation of rain, the revival of the dead earth every year, the revival of the big and small animals from year to year, the constant rotation of the air and constant creation of clouds from the ocean and their continual merging with it, returning in the form of rivers.

Spirituality of the Holy Qur'ān

Q. 94. If the Holy Qur'ān has a great soul, which has a luminous and radiant world of knowledge and awareness, what should we do to attain its favours and blessings? This question is related to what you have said about the spirit of the Qur'ān in Q. 7 and Q. 11.

A. In this connection, see the answer to question 15. From where and how does the rational (speaking) soul come to a baby? It is a clear fact that the rational or speaking soul comes to the child from his parents and members of its family. In the same way, the speaking soul of the Qur'ān is attained from the house of your spiritual father. This means that you should not claim that spiritual knowledge can be acquired from any Tom, Dick or Harry. Rather, you ought to be a baby of the pure, spiritual house of the Prophet, namely, the Imam of the time, so that, by the affectionate conversation of your spiritual parents, the Qur'anic soul will gradually enter you. For, after the Prophet, the Spirit of the Qur'ān can be attained only from the Imam of the time.

Another example in this connection is that, by removing the rust of negligence and the dust of ignorance from your heart, you purify it to such an extent that the light of the Qur'ān may start to shine in it. Verily, this purity of heart also is possible only through the blessed hand of the exalted Imam, just as during the Prophethood, it was only the

Holy Prophet who used to purify the mu'mins, as mentioned in several verses of the Qur'ān.

Hazrat 'Īsá's Miracle

Q. 95. What is the ta'wīl of when Ḥazrat 'Īsá used to make a figure of a bird from clay, then when he used to breathe into it something, it used to become a bird, by the permission of God?

A. Dust and clay, which in Arabic are called turāb and ṭīn respectively, are two ranks of the mu'mins. One is the rank of belief ('aqīdah) or the faith (īmān) of an elementary nature, which has essential importance for the people of da'wah - this has been symbolised by dust. The other is that of the faith with some knowledge, which has been symbolised by clay. Thus the ta'wīl of making a figure of a bird from clay, by Ḥazrat 'Īsá, is that he used to appoint a mu'min with faith and some knowledge, to the rank of ma'dhūn, at which time the latter was nothing but a silent figure of that status. Then when Ḥazrat 'Īsá used to breathe something into this figure, it used to become a bird by the permission of God. This means that, step by step, Ḥazrat 'Īsá used to breathe into this ma'dhūn the soul of knowledge of tā'yīd (spiritual help) and he used to become a spiritual bird, i.e soul or angel.

The Holy Prophet had given Mawlā 'Alī the title of Abū Tūrāb (the father of dust). The ta'wīl of this title is that Mawlā 'Alī was the spiritual father of the faithful men and women. For, by the dust are meant the people of faith, as mentioned above.

Light on the Tree

Q. 96. Is it an allegory or a reality that, as soon as Ḥaẓrat Mūsá went in search of the fire, he found God? Did he observe the light of God with the external eye or with the internal eye? If this event is related to ta'wīl, what is the ta'wīl of the tree (on which was the light)?

A. In this story of Ḥaẓrat Mūsá, the allegorical aspect is conspicuous. Here the fire symbolises the light; and the tree, the Supreme Name (Word=Tree 14:24). As for the observation of the light, it did not happen all of a sudden in one day, rather Ḥaẓrat Mūsá was already travelling on the path of spirituality. He was receiving the spiritual upbringing in Egypt long before his migration. His spiritual mother in Egypt was one of the dā'īs of Ḥaẓrat Shu'ayb. After migration, he was also receiving spiritual training directly from Ḥaẓrat Shu'ayb.

The light of God is observed with the internal or the spiritual eye and not with the external or the physical one. Even when the external and internal senses become one, the external observations are considered as internal events. This means that the internal senses of the Prophets and the friends of God, dominate their external senses.

Heavenly Fire

Q. 97. On page 41 of Panj Maqālah III, it is written that: "Thus Hābīl took a sheep and kept it on the mountain and Qābīl took some ears of corn from a field and kept them there. Then, according to the custom (of that time) a flame of fire descended from the heaven and ate the sacrifice of Hābīl". Was this fire the same material fire which is known to everybody in this world, or a different one? Can there be in spirituality, such a holy and

miraculous fire? Does this sacrifice have a ta'wīl? If so, what is the ta'wīl of sheep? How long did the miracle of this heavenly fire continue?

- A. It should be known that the Qur'anic stories are full of the wisdoms of ta'wīl. Where is the understanding in the worldly fire to accept only the sacrifice of the righteous and to testify to his truthfulness? Thus, it was not a material fire but the holy and miraculous fire of spirituality, which is among the spiritual miracles of the Prophets and friends of God (3:183). The ta'wīl of sheep is the animal soul. Ḥaẓrat Hābīl had offered the sacrifice of the animal soul, which is always done by the friends of God.

A simple example of this great spiritual miracle is that, sometimes you or some other mu'min, burn internally under the pressure of knowledge, 'ibādāt and good thoughts. In such a case, he neither burns intellectually, nor spiritually (i.e. with respect to the rational soul), but only with respect to his animal soul, whereby he is purified. Thus, the spiritual miracle of the heavenly fire has always been and continues forever.

Malakūt - Spirituality

- Q. 98. What does malakūt mean and which world is this? Is it mentioned in the Qur'ān? If so, where and how? We need some essential information in this connection.

- A. Malakūt has several meanings, such as greatness, power, predominance, grandeur, kingdom etc. and by it is meant the world of souls and angels. Malakūt is mentioned in the Qur'ān in the verses (6:75; 7:185; 23:88 and 36:83). It is said: "And thus We showed Ibrāhīm the malakūt (spirituality)

of the heavens and the earth that he may be of those possessing certainty" (6:75). He observed this spirituality with his spiritual eye, within himself. This is the place of 'aynu'l-yaqīn (the vision of certainty), whose goal is ḥaqqu'l-yaqīn (the truth of certainty).

On the one side, there are the internal and spiritual things of the heavens and the earth and on the other, the external and physical things. The Lord of the World has mentioned both these things in the same one verse, so that the wise people may conceive that the malakūt differs from the nāsūt (the world of human beings). Think well also about the verse (7:185)!

The verse (23:88) indicates that the spirituality (malakūt) of everything is in the Hand of God and protection and salvation are only in the recognition of this spirituality.

The wisdom of the verse (36:83) tells us that the One (God=Subḥān) in Whose powerful Hand is preserved the spirituality of everything is Himself free from and above everything. Therefore, in every respect, malakūt or spirituality is only for the mu'mins. All things in their physical form are nāsūt and in their spirituality, they are malakūt.

Worlds

Q. 99. What does nāsūt mean? What are jabarūt and lāhūt? Which is the higher world ('ālam-i 'ulwī) and where is the lower world ('ālam-i siflī)? Please explain some realities regarding the world of command ('ālam-i amr) and the world of creation ('ālam-i khalq).

A. Nāsūt is derived from the word nās (people), which means this world in

which people live. Malakūt is the world of the spirit, spirituality and angels, as mentioned above. Jabarūt is the world of the Divine power and grandeur. Lāhūt means the Godhead of God. Higher world is the spiritual world and the lower world is the physical world.

The world of command, as the kingdom of God, is eternal (qadīm), where all things always exist without any beginning or end. Therefore, there is no room for creation. There the manifestations of things take place in no time with just the command. In other words, there the absent things appear only by will and attention. These matters are with respect to the servants of God and not with respect to God Himself. Because for Him, appearance and concealment, present and absent, are all equal.

The world of creation is opposite to the world of command. It is the external world which is not eternal but contingent and in which nothing can remain forever. Things come into existence and then become extinct at different times. Thus, the workshop of creation is this world.

It should be remembered that the worlds are only two, which are this world and the next. And the numerous words, found in this connection, are either their different names or they show their degrees or levels.

Knowledge for a united humanity

Wisdom of the Hand of Allāh (Yadu'llāh)

- Q. 100. This is the last question and perhaps the most important one, which is: What is the ta'wīl of the "Hand of Allāh"? What does it allude to say that mulk (67:1) malakūt (36:82) and khayr (3:26) are in the Hand of Allāh? Do all things exist in the Guarded Tablet (6:56) or do they exist in the Manifest Imam (36:12)? Is not everything encompassed in a Book (70:29)?

A. The ta'wīl of the Hand of Allāh is the Divine power, authority, control, disposal, i.e. to give and take, to use things for oneself and for others, to gather, provide and keep things ready, etc. The most comprehensive ta'wīl of the Hand of Allāh is the exalted Prophet and the pure Imam. Therefore, all the ta'wīls of the Hand of Allāh are related to these holy personalities, since to do bay'at (oath of allegiance) on their blessed hand, is to do bay'at on the Hand of Allāh (48:10).

The meaning of mulk (sovereignty), malakūt (spirituality) and khayr (good) being in Allāh's Hand, is that they are in the custody of the Prophet of Islām and the true Imam, for these two Supreme Angels in human form are the Hands of Allāh as well as His treasures (15:21).

The Guarded Tablet, the Manifest Imam and the Book are all the same reality. Thus all things are gathered in one place and that is the place of spirituality, which holds the status of the blessed Hand of Allāh. That is the holy light of Muḥammad and 'Alī, in which there is everything, the mulk, as well as the malakūt.

Praises be to Allāh for His favours!

Saturday, 17 Sha'bān 1401 A.H./20th June, 1981.

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