AL-GHAZĀLĪ

Kitāb sharḥ ʿajāʾib al-qalb

THE MARVELS OF THE HEART

Book 21 of the Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn

THE REVIVAL OF THE RELIGIOUS SCIENCES

Translated from the Arabic

with an Introduction and Notes

by Walter James Skellie

with a Foreword by T. J. Winter

AhleSunnah Library (nmusba.wordpress.com)
Verily in the remembrance of God do hearts find tranquility

Qur'an 13:28

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Fons Vitae
2010
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That the “heart” is the center of all our deeper forms of knowing appears to be a truism in the major world religions. In the Islamic universe, the principle that the Qurʾān itself was revealed not to the Prophet’s mind but to his heart (2:97; 26:194) led to a permanent division between merely ratiocinative and inspirational forms of religious knowledge. Islamic civilization came to be characterized by the concurrent flow of two rivers, of rationalist and mystical disciplines of knowledge, and most of the time this coexistence was a peaceful one. Formal systematic theologians (mutakallimūn) cultivated their sciences in the world of the exoteric madrasa, speculating about a God of supreme otherness (tanzīḥ); while the Sufis met in separate lodges (khanqāh, tekke, zāwiya, daotang), encountering, in love, the God who may, in a mysterious way, be likened (tashbīḥ) to what we know.

The greatest thinkers of the civilization were often those who theorized about this tension, and sought to produce a universal theology of Islam that could reconcile tanzih with tashbih. This required mastery of all the relevant disciplines, including the legacy of the Greeks as it had been selectively integrated into Islamic thought. The Greeks had themselves faced an analogous tension, which was to some extent reflected by the Aristotelian and Platonic traditions. By the time their culture was assimilated by the Muslims, complex Neoplatonic schemes had attempted, and in some measure achieved, a concord; but it fell to the Muslims to reconcile this late Hellenistic system with the givens of revealed monotheism. With its focus on the undifferentiated One, Islam was, in an important way, more hospitable to the Greek legacy than was trinitarian Christianity, and its
illustrations of which he makes use in his rule for the religious life.... The foundations of that great system of orthodox Islamic mysticism which al-Ghazâlî made it his business to bring to completion, had already been well and truly laid.7

But Ghazâlî did more than merely cite quotations from these sources; he wove them into a harmonious system based upon his own experience of gaining and realizing reality. His whole moral philosophy was a synthesis and a practical expression of the golden mean. He took the rigid framework of the scholastic theologian and clothed it with the warm personal faith of the mystic. To the knowledge of the philosopher, gained through the processes of study, reasoning, and deduction, he added the inner knowledge of the Sufi who sees with the light of certainty, and experiences direct revelations and unveilings of the divine Reality. He was careful, however, to avoid the vagaries of extreme Sufism and especially its tendencies to antinomianism and pantheism. He united the best results of philosophic speculation with Islam, and, while denying the materialism of the philosophers, he nevertheless used their methods to develop his own thought and to refute them where they differed with the teachings of Islam.

Ghazâlî put great emphasis upon man's need for spiritual leaders, and his Ihyâ' gives the ethical teachings of a kindly shepherd who cares for his flock. He was considerate and humane in his dealings with men in general, and, although he was criticized by some, he was slow to refute those who disagreed with him. Even when he did engage the philosophers, his chief concern was to point out the errors of their system of thought and teaching, rather than to denounce them personally.

A Sketch of Ghazâlî's Psychology

INTRODUCTION

The fact that Ghazâlî uses the term "heart" instead of soul in the title of this book is an indication of the primary position this word had in the vocabulary of Muslim religious teachers, and also in that of the philosophers. The term was used in Islam for the seat of intellectual and emotional life even as it had already been used by Judaism and Christianity. Among the Greeks and Romans, the heart took the place of the liver as the seat of life, soul, intellect, and emotion.8 Aristotle gave the heart the place of honor as the seat of the noblest emotions.9

Although Ghazâlî uses the term 'secrets' of the heart as a synonym for its 'marvels,' it apparently does not connote any special mystical significance, though it has such a meaning in Sufi usage. The heart is the seat of secrets.10

Ghazâlî limits the discussion of the subject largely to the field of knowledge of proper conduct ('ilm al-mu'amala). His aim is ethical, and, although he does, sometimes, inevitably deal with questions of metaphysics, it is nevertheless with ethics that he is primarily concerned. He would not go as far as Zeno and reduce all virtues to practical wisdom (phronësis),11 yet that was, for him, the important way of achieving his desired end, the good life.12 He agreed with Aristotle that understanding included both wisdom (sophia) and practical sense (phronësis);13 but what he stressed was the latter, which they both held to be "practical ability, under rational direction, in the choice of things good and avoidance of things which are evil for man."14 This practical end was kept ever in view by Ghazâlî as the logical outcome of man's knowledge and experience.

The Nature of the Soul

In order to understand clearly Ghazâlî's concept of the nature of the heart, or soul, it is necessary to discuss four terms that are applied to it. They are: 'heart' (qalb); 'spirit' (ruh); 'soul' (nafs); and 'intelligence' ('aql). Each of these terms has two meanings, but the second meaning of each term is the same as the second meaning of each of the other three terms.

---

The term 'heart' (qalb) means the heart of flesh in the body of a man or animal, whether living or dead; but it also means that subtle tenuous substance, spiritual in nature, which is the knowing and perceiving essence of man. There is some connection between the physical heart and this spiritual 'heart,' but practical wisdom and prophetic precedent do not demand nor warrant the explanation of this relationship.

'Spirit' (ruh) means that refined material substance which is produced by the blood in the left cavity of the heart and which rises up to the brain and passes to all parts of the body through the blood vessels carrying the animal powers of life and sense perception. This resembles Aristotle's theory of the pneuma as a 'sentient organism of a subtle nature spread through the body and acting as the universal medium of sensation.' Spirit also means the above-mentioned subtle spiritual substance which is the second meaning of 'heart.'

The third term is 'soul' (nafs). This may mean the life-giving soul whose seat is in the heart. Jurjani defines nafs as "that refined vaporous substance (jawhar) which bears the powers of life, sense perception, and voluntary motion," and says that al-Hakim (Ibn Sinâ) called it the animal spirit (al-ruh al-hayawaniyya). Ghazâlî and other Sufi writers commonly bring the word nafs, which is the ordinary Arabic equivalent for the psyche of Greek philosophy, down to the appetitive soul (epithymia), in which are united man's blameworthy qualities. This is the psyche of Pauline theology and the nephesh of Hebrew. It is not clear from this book of the Ihyâ, nor from his Ma'drij al-quds (Leipzig: Sumptibus E. C. G. Vogelli, 1845), or other Arab philosophers, conceived of the human soul as being between the lower realm of the animal and the higher realm of the divine, and as partaking of the characteristics of each of these realms. In the elaboration of their doctrine of the soul they combined the ideas of Plato and Aristotle, and joined to them additional ideas from Neoplatonic sources. Perhaps the most systematic statement of the resulting doctrine of the soul is that given by Ibn Sinâ, which may be summarized in the following scheme, as adapted from Hastings, Encyclo-

22 Ghazâlî, Ma'drij al-quds (Cairo 1346/1927), p. 11.
paedia of Religion and Ethics. Each one of these divisions is further subdivided as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetative Soul</th>
<th>Powers of nutrition</th>
<th>attractive power (concupiscence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Powers of growth</td>
<td>repulsive power (irascibility and passion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Powers of reproduction</td>
<td>in motor nerves and muscles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Soul</td>
<td>Motive faculties</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appетitive power</td>
<td>sight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>smell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Efficient power</td>
<td>taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>touch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptive faculties</td>
<td></td>
<td>common sense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>formative faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cognitive faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>estimative faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human or Rational Soul</td>
<td>Speculative Intelligence (theoretical reason)</td>
<td>perceives ideas by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>material intellect or potentiality of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>intellect of possession recognizes axiomatic knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>perfected intellect lays hold on intelligibles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This system was adopted in large part by Ghazali, and it formed the framework of his philosophy of mind.


In analyzing the above scheme as developed by Ghazali in this book we find ideas corresponding to the Platonic thought of the rational and irrational souls. The rational soul, according to Plato, was created by God and placed in the head, but the irrational part was the creation of the demiourgoi. Its nobler part is anger, or the spirited, irascible nature (thymos), and has its seat in the heart or thorax; while the base part, which is appetite, or the concupiscible nature (epithymia), has its seat in the abdominal cavity.

For Ghazali, of course, God is the Creator of all that man is and does, and he follows Aristotle in holding that the heart is the seat of the rational soul. But, in spite of these differences, the Platonic division is an important part of the thinking of Ghazali. Plato's 'rational soul' is Ghazali's 'soul,' or 'heart,' or 'intellect,' depending on the illustrations he uses. The irrational soul of Plato includes the powers of appetite and anger which, for him and for Ghazali too, must be held in check by the rational soul or intellect. When the intellect dominates these lower powers, justice is established for both soul and body, but when the lower powers dominate the intellect, it becomes their slave. The excellence or virtue of the rational soul is wisdom, that of anger is courage, and that of appetite is temperance.

Even more clearly do we see the Aristotelian analysis in Ghazali's psychology with its vegetative, animal, and human 'souls.' Aristotle tried to explain accurately the phenomena of psychic life, approaching it from the side of metaphysics. All known things are included in an ascending scale from pure matter to pure form. The body alone is matter, and the soul alone is form. The sphere of psychology is the relationship of the two (to empysychon). Soul and body must be defined in relation to each other. The soul is the true essence of that which we call body, and in man in reality. It is the first actualization (entelechy) of the body, and represents a possibility of psychic activity. The second entelechy is the actual realization of this possibility. This is illustrated in the eye that has the power to see

27 Cf. note on page 7.
28 Brett, Psychology, 1:97.
30 Brett, Psychology, 1:300ff.
even when that power is inactive, as in sleep; and the eye that is actually
seeing. Ghazâlî holds quite a similar position, and gives the same illustration
of powers, potential and actual.

Man's power of reaction is threefold: He absorbs nourishment and
reproduces, as does the plant. He has sense perceptions, powers of dis-
crimination, and voluntary movement like the animal. He differs from
them both in possessing rational power, and is capable of that higher
knowledge that includes the knowledge of God. By virtue of this quality
of experiential knowledge, man occupies a place between the animals and
the angels. "There are in him the desires of the beast united with a reason
that is godlike." By neglecting the rational soul he can sink toward the
level of the animal, and by cultivating it he can strive toward the level of the
angels.

THE SOUL'S KNOWLEDGE AND ITS ACQUISITION

According to the Neoplatonic idea of man, "Knowledge is always an activity
of the soul." Through this activity man gains a firm and lasting grasp of
reality. Ghazâlî held that man's peculiar glory is the aptitude which he has
for that highest of all kinds of knowledge, the knowledge of God. In this
knowledge is man's joy and happiness. The seat of this knowledge is the
heart, which was created to know Him, just as the eye was created to see
objective forms. The physical members are used by the heart to attain the
end of knowledge even as the craftsman uses his tool to accomplish his
purposes. Man's potential capacity for knowledge is practically unlimited,
that is, save by infinity itself.

Although knowledge may, to a certain degree, be the result of man's
activity, yet it requires a cause outside of man himself to bestow true wis-
dom. Plato found this outside cause in the world of Ideas. Aristotle said
that intelligence (nous) comes into man "from without as something divine
and immortal." Intelligence is not a mere function of the natural body.
"Knowledge seemed to the Arab to be an eternal and abiding reality, ...
which for a time reproduced itself in the individual."34

Man is potentially capable of knowledge because of the principle
that like can know like.35 The old Greek idea of man as a microcosm36 is
accepted by Ghazâlî, who said, "were it not that He has placed an image
of the whole world within your very being you would have no knowledge
of that which is apart from yourself." He further develops this idea in
Kimiya al-sa'âda.

Know that man is an epitomy (mukhtasara) of the world in which
there is a trace of every form in the world. For these bones are
like the mountains, his flesh as the dust, his hair as the plants,
his head as heaven, his senses as the planets.... The power in
the stomach is like the cook, that in the liver like the baker, that in
the intestines like the fuller, and that which makes milk white and
blood red is like the dyer.37

In man there are many worlds represented, all of which serve him tire-
lessly although he does not know of them nor give thanks to Him who
bestowed them upon him.

Ghazâlî also considers the platonic idea of man being the copy of the
archetype.38 He connects this with the Muslim doctrine of the Preserved
Tablet (al-lawh al-mahfûz).39 The Archetype of the world was written on
the Tablet. The real nature of things is made known to man by disclosure
to him of what is there written through the reflection of these truths in
the mirror of the heart.

This introduces us to the example of the mirror—a favorite of Ghazâlî's.
Man's heart, as a mirror, is potentially capable of having reflected in it the
real essence of all things, and thus of coming to know them. In this knowl-
edge there are three factors: (1) The intellect, or heart, in which exists the
image of the specific natures of things, is like the mirror; (2) The intelli-
gible, or specific nature of the known thing, is like the object reflected in

31 Ibid., 1:137.
32 Ibid., 1:305.
34 Brett, Psychology, 2:51.
35 Plato, Timaeus, 37 B C; see introduction, p. 10.
36 See note on page 59.
37 See page 59, where this is translated.
38 Ghazâlî, Kimiya', p. 19.
39 Plato, Timaeus, 37 D E; translation, p. 79. Cf. Plotinus, Essence, III, viii, 10; V, i, 4;
VI, vii, 15.
Gazâlî's Cosmology, pp. 16ff.
41 Cf. Plotinus, Essence, I, i, 8.
The mirror; (3) The intelligence, or the representation of the known thing in the heart, is like the representation of the image in the mirror.

The reflection of knowledge in the heart may be prevented by one or more of five causes: (1) The heart of a youth is in a crude unformed condition and is incapable of knowledge, just as a crude unpolished piece of metal is incapable of reflecting objects; (2) Disobedient acts tarnish and corrode the mirror of the heart so that the reflection of reality therein is dimmed or destroyed; (3) Man may not know God because his heart is not turned toward Him: even as the mirror does not reflect the desired object unless it is turned toward it; (4) The heart may be veiled to true knowledge by blindly accepting dogmatic teaching without understanding or thought; (5) The heart may not even know in which direction to turn in order to have reality reflected in it.

Man can polish and burnish the mirror of his heart by means of acts of obedience so that it will reflect the image of true reality. He thus gains knowledge by making it possible for the image of the archetype to be reflected in his heart.

The sum total of man's knowledge is thus rooted in his knowledge of himself. He knows only himself in the proper sense, and knows other things only through himself. This is true also of man's highest attainment of knowledge, the knowledge of God; for the quality of the divine Being is reflected in the human soul. "He who knows himself knows his Lord" is the true statement of tradition. Every heart is thus a microcosm and a mirror, and being thus constituted is capable of knowing itself and the divine.42

The heart of man has two kinds of knowledge: intellectual and religious. Intellectual knowledge may be the intuitive knowledge of axioms, or acquired knowledge that is the result of study. Acquired knowledge may deal with the things of this world, such as medicine, geometry, astronomy, and the various professions and trades; or it may be concerned with the things of the world to come, such as the doctrines of religion. Speculative theologians stress this sort of acquired knowledge as being most important.

Religious knowledge is the knowledge of God, His attributes, and His acts. It is accepted on authority by the common people as an unquestionable creed that does not involve direct inspiration. To people of deep religious experience, however, this knowledge is given directly. Saints and

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This list of the internal senses differs from some of Ghazālī's other classifications. Five other lists are presented in tabular form. [See following tables.] In this book Ghazālī deals with practical and ethical ends, and perhaps did not feel that it was necessary to be scientifically accurate in his statement. It will be noted that the classifications given in the first four of the books as tabulated below are definite attempts to present the subject systematically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maqāsid al-falāṣifa</th>
<th>Tahāfut al-falāṣifa</th>
<th>Mizān al-ʿamal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Common sense</td>
<td>Common sense;</td>
<td>Common sense;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 his mushtarak</td>
<td>imagination</td>
<td>imagination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>his mushtarak;</td>
<td>his mushtarak;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>khayāliyya</td>
<td>khayāliyya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Retentive imagination; conservation</td>
<td>Retentive imagination</td>
<td>Retentive imagination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutasaawwira; hāfīza</td>
<td>hāfīza</td>
<td>hāfīza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anterior ventricle</td>
<td></td>
<td>anterior ventricle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Estimation wahiymyya</td>
<td>Estimation wahiymyya</td>
<td>Estimation wahiymyya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>posterior ventricle</td>
<td>posterior ventricle</td>
<td>end of middle ventricle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Compositive animal and human imagination</td>
<td>Compositive animal and human imagination</td>
<td>Compositive animal and human imagination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutakhayyila; mufakkarra</td>
<td>mutakhayyila; mufakkarra</td>
<td>mutakhayyila; mufakkarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>middle ventricle</td>
<td>middle ventricle</td>
<td>middle ventricle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Memory dhākira</td>
<td>Memory dhākira</td>
<td>Memory dhākira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>posterior ventricle</td>
<td>posterior ventricle</td>
<td>posterior ventricle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maʿārij al-quds</th>
<th>Kimiyāʾ al-saʿāda</th>
<th>Iḥyāʾ ʿalām al-dīn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Common sense; phantasia; tablet</td>
<td>Imagination khayāl</td>
<td>Common sense his mushtarak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his mushtarak; bīnṭāsīyya; lawḥ front of anterior ventricle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khayāliyya back of anterior ventricle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Retentive imagination khayāl; khayāliyya mustawwira</td>
<td>Estimation wahiym</td>
<td>Retentive imagination khayāl; takhāyyul anterior ventricle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Estimation (wahiymyya) whole of brain, esp. back of middle ventricle</td>
<td>Reflection tafakkur</td>
<td>Reflection tafakkur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Compositive imagination, animal and human takhāyyul; mutakhayyila; mufakkarra</td>
<td>Recollection tadhakkur</td>
<td>Recollection tadhakkur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>front of middle ventricle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Memory (hāfīza; dhākira) posterior ventricle</td>
<td>Memory ḥifẓ</td>
<td>Memory ḥifẓ posterior ventricle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It would be of added interest if we could know for certain the chronological order of these books. It appears to be quite safe to put the Maqāsid and Tahāfut first. Mizān al-ʿamal is placed third because it seems logically nearer to the first two than does Maʿārij al-quds fi madārij maʿrifat al-nafs (also known as Maʿārij al-sālikin).46

The analyses given in the Mizān and Maʿārij are particularly noteworthy for being systematic and detailed in form, and as coming from the

The list from *Kimiyāʿ al-saʿāda* is given as an interesting parallel to that in this book of the *Ihya*.

Another interesting parallel is found in *al-Risāla al-laduniyya*, where Ghazālī speaks of the soul's activities as recollection (*tadhakkur*), memorizing (*tahaffuz*), reflection (*tafakkur*), discrimination (*tamyiz*), and deliberation (*rawiyya*). But it is evident that this also is not an attempt at a systematic analysis.

In his *Maʿārij* Ghazālī gives a suggestion regarding the inner senses which enables us to understand more clearly their varying names and functions. He says that they include: (1) that which perceives but does not conserve; (2) that which conserves but does not reason; and (3) that which perceives (understands) and deals with perceptions. These three powers in their relation to the forms of sense impressions and to their ideal meanings place before us the entire range of the internal senses. These relationships are shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>That which perceives (al-mudrik)</th>
<th>the form received through sense impression (lil-ṣira) is</th>
<th>common sense (ḥiss mushtarak)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the ideal meaning (lil-μanā) is</td>
<td>the estimative faculty (wahm; wahmiyya)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That which conserves (al-ḥāfiz)</td>
<td>the form received through sense impression (lil-ṣira) is</td>
<td>retentive imagination (al-khayāl; al-ḥāfiza)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the ideal meaning (lil-μanā) is</td>
<td>memory; recollection (al-ḥāfiza; al-dhākira)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That which deals with (al-muttaṣarrafī)</td>
<td>the form received through sense impression (lil-ṣira) is</td>
<td>composite imagination of human intellect (mufakkira)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the ideal meaning (lil-μanā) is</td>
<td>of animal powers (mutakhayyila)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this arrangement it is also easy to see how these functions are sometimes combined and other times separated in the different classifications, and also how the terms may easily vary in their meanings in the different books.

From the foregoing discussion we see that Ghazālī was respectful of Aristotle, Galen, and the later philosophers of the Aristotelian school in his ideas of the body and sense perceptions, both outer and inner. We shall now see that in the realm of intuition, mystic revelation, and ecstasy there is a more pronounced Sufi trend in his thought, and this involves elements from Neoplatonic sources.

Turning then to the inner door of the heart we find Ghazālī's second source of knowledge in divine inspiration and mystical revelation. The experience of this sort of knowledge is given to only a few people, but everyone is obligated to believe in its reality. It is attested by the Qur'ān, by ḥadith, and by many experiences and stories of the saints. Revelation does not differ from acquisition with regard to the knowledge itself, its seat, and its cause, but only in the removal of the veil which does not come about by man's volition. Mystical revelation comes to him whose heart is prepared to receive it, either through the medium of dream-vision during sleep, or, more rarely, in a vision seen during waking hours.

In the case of the prophets, inspiration (wahy) is accompanied by a vision of the angel who imparts knowledge. The inspiration (ilm) of saints differs from it, in that there is no such vision of the angel that brings the knowledge. Ghazālī is not quite consistent in his statements of the part which the angel plays in imparting the knowledge given through revelation. His position seems to be that general inspiration (ilm) is always the result of angelic activity, even though the angel does not appear to the recipient of the revelation. He goes so far as to say that "our hearts attain knowledge only by means of the angels." But in another place he speaks of directly given divine knowledge (ʿilm laduni) apart from the usual means from without. In *al-Risāla al-laduniyya* (p. 42) he says that ʿilm laduni is from the Creator directly, with no mediating agent. This inconsistency is probably explained by his ideas about involuntary suggestions (khawāṭir), which will be dealt with later. The mediated knowledge corresponds to the suggestion of the angel (al-khāṭir al-malaki), while

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47 Published with Ghazālī, *Kimiyāʿ al-saʿāda* (Cairo: Saʿāda Press, 1343), p. 27.  
51 Translation, page 53.
the immediate and direct knowledge corresponds to the suggestion of the Lord (al-khāṭir al-rabbānī).

Through divine inspiration the true nature of reality is revealed to the heart of man. The veils of sense are drawn aside by divine power, and man's heart can perceive, even if it is but for a moment, the truth of the eternal reflected from the Preserved Tablet which is in the world of the unseen. At death the veils of sense are removed entirely and reality is clearly seen by the heart.

Man must prepare his heart to receive this gift of divine unveiling. He can do this by cutting off all earthly ties and making the thought of God not only supreme in every part of his being, but the sole idea which occupies his heart and mind. This is done by withdrawing from the world and engaging in the devotional exercise of dhikr, in addition to the prescribed worship. He continues repeating the name of God, with his mind fixed on Him, until the motion of the tongue ceases and the word seems to be flowing over it. He continues until every trace of the word and of its form and letters and appearance is effaced from his heart and nothing remains save its ideal meaning. All dualism is removed. The heart loses all consciousness of anything other than God, and in its contemplation of Him reaches the highest possible state.52 Man is then prepared to receive the gift of divine unveiling. He had done all that he can do for he has reached the state of ecstasy. God then bestows such gifts as He pleases.

Such are the two ways that man receives knowledge and the two types of knowledge that he may have. Both intellectual and religious knowledge were important to Ghazālī. Both acquired and revealed knowledge played a large part in his scheme of life. He himself was a learned man, and he could never cease to give learning a place of honor and to account it a factor of great importance in human life and experience. But even his learning had not saved him from falling into skepticism, leading to a crisis in his life, while in the experience of mystical revelation he had found certainty and peace. The two factors are strangely intermingled in his writings. At one moment he seems to show his frustration with the common man, who does not have the intellectual power to comprehend knowledge; and at another time we find him praising an almost illiterate saint because of the miraculous gifts (karāmāt) and divinely unveiled knowledge that has been revealed to him. Intellectual knowledge is great, but even it must bow before that which is manifestly a divine bestowment. This Ghazālī knew from experience.

The Relation of Soul to Body and of Thought to Act

The relation of the soul to the body has already been touched upon in the discussion of the nature of the soul. Plato said that the soul was imprisoned in the body, while Aristotle made it an entelechy or actualization. Both of these ideas are considered in Ghazālī's thought. But the metaphor that Ghazālī chooses to express this relationship appears to come from Plato's Timaeus,53 where the body is spoken of as the vehicle of the soul. Plato's word is ὕπονοια; Ghazālī's is markāb.

For Ghazālī, as for Ibn Sīnā, the soul is "a separate independent reality, which is united to the body accidentally, that is to say, without any relation which affects its essence."54 Both the vegetal and animal powers "are made possible by the union of the soul with the body; but if we go beyond these we come to other activities which belong to the soul itself."55 Such soul activity is first of all potential, then nascent, then developed. This is illustrated by a youth who is at first potentially capable of learning to write. Then he comes to know the inkstand, pen, and the letters in their separate forms. And finally he becomes skilled in writing and composition. The heart is the center for both the psychic and physical actions of man and thus in it are to be found the threads which bind thought to act.56 The question of moral qualities and responsibilities as related to the soul's activity and the resultant physical action will be dealt with in the following section of this sketch. The first link in the chain connecting the psychic and the physical is the involuntary suggestion (khāṭir) which comes to the heart. This is of such importance in Ghazālī's scheme that it must be examined in some detail.

The khāṭir (pl. khawāṭir), (also khatra, pl. khaṭarāt), is an opinion, idea, or object of thought bestirring itself in the mind.57 It is the allocation or suggestion that comes to the heart of man; man himself has noth-

52 Cf. Brett, Psychology, 1:313, 2:43; Plotinus, Essence, VI, vii, 34.
53 Plato, Timaeus 44 E; 69 C.
54 Brett, Psychology, 2:57.
55 Ibid., 1:143ff.
56 Ibid., 1:141ff.
ing to do with its coming. This term is used largely in Sufi writings, and especially by Ghazâlî.

There are various divisions of the khawâtîr, the most common being fourfold. (1) The suggestion of the Lord (of the Absolute Reality), (al-khâtîr al-râbbânî; al-haqqânî). It is that which is cast directly into the heart of mystics who dwell, as it were, in His Presence. Nothing can oppose it, but the other sorts of khawâtîr fade away and disappear before it. To defy it vexes the soul. It is a warning and a sign for guidance. (2) The suggestion of the angel (al-khâtîr al-malâkî) exhorts to obedience and good acts, and warns against acts of disobedience and things that are disapproved. It blames man for committing acts contrary to divine law and for being slow in doing which that is in agreement therewith. (3) The suggestion of the self (al-khâtîr al-nafsi) demands the pleasant favors of this swiftly passing world, and sets forth its invitations to vanity. It is not cut off by the light of the devotional practice of the remembrance of God but continues to demand its desire, unless it comes to enjoy divinely given success (tawfîq), in which case its demands are uprooted. (4) The suggestion of the demon (al-khâtîr al-shaytânî). This is the suggestion of the enemy who summons to acts of disobedience and to things that are forbidden and disapproved.

Some say that all khawâtîr are from the angels, and may be approved or disapproved by the individual. An exception to this is the suggestion of Absolute Reality with which man never disagrees. By the light of the divine unity (al-tawhîd) man receives the suggestion of God, and by the light of experiential knowledge the suggestion of the angel. By the light of faith an end is put to the suggestion of the self, and by the light of Islam it is restored to obedience.

All types of suggestions come ultimately from God, but some come directly, and others indirectly. Those which come from Him directly, and those which come through the angel, are good. The commentator on al-Rîsâla al-Qushayriyya says that the suggestion of the Lord is equivalent to true insight (firâsâ) and is a miraculous gift (karâna). The suggestions that come from the self may be either good or evil, although the latter is to be expected. The suggestion that comes from the demon is always evil. Some have added to the foregoing division the following: the suggestion of the spirit (khâtîr al-râûh); the suggestion of the Shaykh (khâtîr al-shaykh); the suggestion of the intellect (khâtîr al-‘aqd); and the suggestion of certainty (khâtîr al-yaqîn). But all of these can be properly placed under the fourfold division already given.

The correct differentiation of these suggestions and their sources can be made only when the mirror of the heart is carefully cleared of all undue fleshly and natural desires by means of asceticism, piety, and remembrance; and then the true nature of the suggestions will be manifest. He who has not reached this stage in the ascetic life should weigh the suggestion in the balances of the divine law to determine its nature. If it is an obligation or a virtue he should do it; but if it is a thing forbidden or disapproved he should put it away from himself. If it is something permitted and rather inclines toward disagreeing with the self, then he should do it; for most of the suggestions of the self are base. Some of the demands of the self are its just rights to things which are necessary, and these must be satisfied. Other demands of the self are for fortune's favors, and these should be denied. He who succeeds in properly recognizing and dealing with these suggestions enters into the way of abundant life and mystic vision, where the suggestions which seek for fortune's favors pass away and trouble man no more.

Sayyid Murtâdâ al-Zabîdî, the commentator on the Ihyâ', says that the novice must put away the suggestions of the self, the angel, and the demon, and give the primary place to the suggestion of the Absolute Reality. Ghazâlî makes the suggestion of the angel equivalent to general inspiration (ilhâm), and that of the demon the same as evil prompting (wiswâs). Sometimes he speaks as though there were but this twofold division, and he refers to these two as 'calls' (lammâtân).


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Zabidi mentions the sixfold division, adding intellect (aql) and certainty (yaqin) to the usual four, but denies that the intellect has a khattir.  

The other states of the heart that lead up to physical action are dealt with quite summarily by Ghazâli. For when a man once gives heed to the suggestion in his heart, the other stages follow almost automatically. Thus the suggestion stirs up the inherent inclination of the nature (mam al-tab') to do the thing suggested. Inclination of the nature leads to a conviction (fitqâd), or a reasoned judgment that the thing must be done. This conviction leads to a definite decision (hamm) to do it. Thereupon the physical members act in obedience to the decision and command of the heart, and the act is done.

Ghazâli illustrates the various kinds of suggestions (khawâtir) by many hadiths and parables. All of the different stages between suggestion and action are made clear by an illustration of which a brief summary is here given. The suggestion comes into the mind of a man that there is a woman behind him in the way, and that, if he were to turn around, he would see her. The inclination of his nature is then to turn and see her. But his inhibitions of modesty and fear must first be removed before he reaches the stage of conviction that he must turn and look. Next he determines and decides finally to look and see her. This state of the heart is followed by the act of turning and looking, unless some new influence is brought to bear upon the man to prevent the act.

### The Soul's Experience of Good and Evil

It has already been stated that Ghazâli's purpose in the Ihya' is primarily ethical. His aim is the enlightenment of the soul in order that it may attain its perfection in the full and immediate knowledge of God. There are potent forces that help man toward this end. But there are also evil tendencies that appeal to his lower nature and constantly drag him down and prevent him from reaching the desired goal. The soul is constantly swaying backwards and forwards between these forces for good and evil. Sometimes the good prevails, and again the evil influence predominates.

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61 Zabidi, Itha'à, 9:400.
62 Cf. the further development in Ihya', 4:104ff.
63 Cf. Brett, Psychology, 1:221.
64 Ibid., 1:62, 258.
Ghazali is careful also to show that, although good and evil are both inevitably present in man's experience, every individual is responsible for the development of his character. Man must discipline his soul. The book of the Ihya' that immediately follows this one deals with the subject of this discipline. But in the present book we find the subject constantly stressed. The rational soul must be made and kept the master, while anger and appetite must be kept in the position of servants. The demands of the appetitive and spirited natures must be balanced against each other so that desire and will may all be harmoniously developed into a complete character. But when man habitually yields to the demands of his lower nature, his intellect becomes the slave of his passions and is entirely occupied with schemes to attain the ends of his lower desires. The master has become enslaved, and the soul is overcome by confusion, immorality, and sin.

The discipline of the soul is accomplished through ascetic and devotional practices. This present world and the desire for the things of the world must be denied, and the entrances of Satan may thus be closed. There must be complete dependence upon God and submission to Him. As long as man truly desires any of the things of this world, be it but a stone to use for a pillow, just so long will Satan find in his desire a way to approach his heart and lead it astray.

Ghazali uses another figure to express the same idea. Satan's food is man's appetite or desire. It therefore becomes man's duty to empty his heart of all desire for worldly things, and thus remove that upon which Satan feeds.

The dhikr, or the devotional practice of the remembrance of God and the repeated mention of His name, is the best way to fix the heart's desire upon Him, and so to ward off the attacks of Satan. Hadith says that the dhikr causes Satan to slink away and hide himself. It is therefore the best means of defense against the evil promptings that Satan suggests to the human heart. It is conceivable that some of Satan's evil promptings may thus be cut off entirely, but for the most part there is no complete victory over Satan in this life. Man may triumph over him for a moment or for an hour by means of pious practices, but he returns to man again and again. Only the prophets, who are preserved from sin (ma'sīmūn), are able to baffle Satan indefinitely. It is therefore essential that man shall maintain a constant lifelong struggle against Satan, for only thus can he develop his character as he ought to do.

In dealing with man's moral responsibility for his own good and evil acts, Ghazali lays down one clear rule. Man is held accountable for his own voluntary choices. He will be judged in accordance with the purpose (qāṣd) on which he has fixed his heart, his determination (azm), his intention (niyya), and his decision (hamm). When two men engage in a sword fight both slayer and slain will be condemned to the fire, because each one intended to kill the other.

On the other hand, man is not held accountable for the involuntary suggestion (khāṭrī) that occurs to his mind, nor for the inclination of his nature (mayl al-jāb'), since there is no element of volition on his part in either of them. In regard to man's conviction (fitqād) that he must do a certain thing, Ghazali says that this may have been reached involuntarily through circumstances beyond his control, and in such a case the man is not accountable. But when the conviction has been reached as the result of voluntary deliberation, then he is held morally responsible for it.

Ghazali deals with the subject of the soul's destiny. Because of the fact that he was able to accept so many of the positions of the Aristotelian philosophers and to find a harmony between their teachings and those of Islam, we may naturally expect him to say, with Ibn Sinā, that the rational soul, prepared by the practice of the virtues, attains perfection after death. But in the closing portion of this book Ghazali does not stress the philosophical position; indeed he turns toward the position of Islam. The general and particular decrees (qādā' wa qadr) of God determine inevitably and inexorably the fate of the soul. Some hearts are built up by means of piety and purified through discipline. Others are burdened by passion and utterly corrupted by foul actions, so that they have no place for good. The hearts of most men sway between the good and the evil, the angel and the demon, until the dominant factor obtains the victory. But this factor has been caused to predominate by the predestination of God. Because of the divine decree, obedience has been made easy for some, and disobedience for others, God guides aright and leads astray.

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66 Hastings, Religion and Ethics, 2:276a.
Praise belongs to God, whose majesty perplexes the hearts and thoughts of those who seek in vain to comprehend it; whose shining light at its beginning is such as to bewilder eye and sight; who is acquainted with all hidden secrets; who knows all that conscience conceals; who has no need of counselor or helper in ruling His kingdom; the Overturner of hearts and the Forerunner of sins; the Concealer of faults; the Deliverer from anxieties. And may blessings and peace rest in abundance upon the master of the messengers, who unites religion and defeats heretics, and upon his descendants, the righteous, and the pure.

The honor and excellence of man, in which he surpasses all other sorts of creatures, is his aptitude for knowing God, praise be to Him. This knowledge is man's beauty and perfection and glory in the present world, and his provision and store for the world to come. He is prepared for this knowledge only through his heart, and not by means of any of his members. For it is the heart that knows God, and works for God, and strives toward God, and draws near to Him, and reveals that which is in the presence of God. The members of the body, on the other hand, are merely

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1 A pious phrase known as the basmala. It confers blessings, and is used at the beginning of formal writings as well as in many other connections touching all phases of Muslim life.
2 The hamdala is an ascription of praise to God; it is used as one of the fixed introductory phrases to every formal writing.
3 Zabidi says that the mystics' knowledge of God is in the fact that they come experientially to know that they can never know Him in the sense of having a complete experiential knowledge of His being and attributes. This knowledge is His alone.
 followers, servants, and instruments that the heart uses and employs as the king uses his slave, as the shepherd makes use of his flock, or as the craftman uses his tool.

For it is the heart that is accepted by God when it is free from all save Him, but veiled from God when it becomes wholly occupied with anything other than Him. It is the heart upon which claims are made, with which conversations are carried on, and with which remonstrance is made, and which is punished. It rejoices in nearness to God and prospers if kept true, and is undone and miserable if debased and corrupted. It is that which in reality is obedient to God, the Exalted, and the acts of devotion that are manifest in the members of the body are but its light. It is that also which is disobedient and rebellious against God, the Exalted, and the acts of turpitude that course through the members are but its effects. By its darkness and its light there appear the good and evil qualities of its external appearance, since “every vessel drips that which it contains.” The heart is that which, if a man knows it, he knows himself, and if he knows himself, he knows his Lord. It is that which, if a man knows it not, he knows not himself, and if he knows not himself, he knows not his Lord. He who knows not his own heart is still more ignorant of everything else, since the majority of mankind know not their own hearts and their own selves, for intervention has been made between them and their own selves. For God intervenes between a man and his heart (8:24). His intervention consists in preventing man from observing it [i.e., his heart], and watching over it, and becoming acquainted with its qualities, and perceiving how it is turned between two of the fingers of the Merciful, and how at one time it lusts for the lowest of the low and is brought down to the plane of the demons; and at another time, it mounts up to the highest of the high, and advances to the world of the angels who are drawn near to God (al-malā’ika al-muqarrabin). He who knows not his heart, to watch over it and be mindful of it, and to observe what shines on it and in it of the treasures of the world of spirits (al-malākāt), he is one of those of whom God, the Exalted, has said, those who forget God; and He made them to forget their own souls. Such are the rebellious transgressors! (59:19). Thus the knowledge of the heart and of the real nature of its qualities is the root of religion and the foundation of the mystic traveler's way.

Since we have completed the first part of this book, which deals with those acts of worship and customs that are carried out by the external bodily members, which is external knowledge, and since we have promised to explain in the second part those mortal vices and saving virtues that come upon the heart, which is inner knowledge, we must preface this part with two books. One book will deal with the explanation of the heart’s qualities and characteristics, and the second with the manner of disciplining the heart and improving its characteristics. After that we will launch forth into a detailed discussion of the things that destroy and save. So we shall now mention that which can be most readily understood of the exposition of the wonders of the heart by means of examples. Most minds are too dull to comprehend a plain statement of its wonders and of its secrets that pertain to the realm of the world of spirits.
Chapter 1

An Exposition of the Meaning of 'Soul,' 'Spirit,' 'Heart,' and 'Intelligence,' and of the Purport of these Names

Now that there are four names that are used in these chapters. But few of the leading savants have a comprehensive knowledge of these names and their different meanings, and of the definitions of the things named. Most of the mistakes regarding them originate in ignorance of the meaning of these names, and of the way in which they are applied to different objects. We will explain as much of the meaning of these names as pertains to our purpose.

One of these is the term 'heart' (qalb), and it is used with two meanings. One of them is the cone-shaped organ of flesh that is located at the left side of the chest. It is flesh of a particular sort within which there is a cavity, and in this cavity there is black blood that is the source (manba') and seat (ma'dan) of the spirit (rukh). We do not now propose to explain its shape nor its mode of operation since religious ends have no connection therewith, but only the aim of physicians. Animals and even the dead have this heart of flesh. Whenever we use the term 'heart' in this book, we do not mean this sort of heart, for it is but an impotent bit of

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1 “Nafs,” El. EP, 7:880. Cf. “The blood round the heart is the thought of men.” H. Diels, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, quoted in Brett, Psychology, 1:359. Editor’s note: seat (ma’dan) may also be translated as origin, or source.
flesh, belonging to the visible material world (ālam al-mulk wa-l-shahāda), and is perceived by the sense of sight, by animals as well as by mankind.

The second meaning of the 'heart' is a subtle tenuous substance of an ethereal spiritual sort (lātiya rabbāniyya rūḥāniyya), which is connected with the physical heart. This subtle tenuous substance is the real essence of man. The heart is the part of man that perceives and knows and experiences; it is addressed, punished, rebuked, and held responsible, and it has some connection with the physical heart. The majority of men have been become perplexed when they tried to perceive the nature of this connection. Its connection therewith resembles the connection of accidents with substances, of qualities with the things they qualify, of the user of a tool with the tool, or of that which occupies a place with the place. We will guard against trying to explain this for two reasons: first, because it deals with mystical sciences ('ulūm al-mukāshafa), and our aim in this book includes only the knowledge of proper conduct ('ilm al mu'āmala); and second, because to ascertain it calls for a disclosing of the secret of the spirit (rūḥ), concerning which the Messenger of God did not speak, and therefore no one else should speak. Our aim then is this: whenever we use the term 'heart' (qalb) in this book we mean by it this subtle tenuous substance. And what we propose is to mention its characteristics (awṣaf) and states (ahlāl), not its real nature (haqīqa) in itself, for the science of practical religion does not require the mention of its real nature.

The second term is the 'spirit' (rūḥ), and it is also used with two meanings relevant to our purpose. One of these [meanings] is a subtle body whose source is the cavity of the physical heart, and which spreads by means of the pulsative arteries to all the other parts of the body. Its circulation in the body and the overflowing from it of the light of life, sense perception, sight, hearing, and smell to the members of the body resemble the flood of light from a lamp that is moved around throughout a house. Whenever the lamp is brought to any part of the house it is lit by it. Life is like the light that falls upon the walls; the spirit is like the lamp; the circulation of the spirit and its movement within correspond to the movement of the lamp throughout the house by the moving of the one who moves it. Whenever physicians use the term 'spirit' they have in mind this meaning, which is a subtle vapor produced by the heat of the heart. It is not our purpose to explain this usage of the term since its connections are within the scope of physicians who treat the body. The purpose of physicians of religion who treat the heart that it may be led near to the Lord of the worlds has no connection at all with the explanation of this 'spirit.'

The second meaning is that subtle tenuous substance in man which knows and perceives, which we have already explained in one of the meanings of the 'heart.' It is the meaning intended by God, the Exalted, in His statement, Say: "the spirit is my Lord's affair" (17:85). It is a marvelous and lordly (rābī'ī) affair, the real and ultimate nature of which most intellects (uqūl) and [people's] understandings (afhām) are unable to grasp.

The third term, 'soul' (nafs), partakes of many meanings, two of which pertain to our purpose. By one is denoted that meaning which includes both the faculty of anger (ghadab) and of appetite (shahwa) in man.

The arteries are made doubly strong so as to be able to carry the subtle body (jism latīf) which is the spirit. Zabidi quotes Suhrawardi's 'Awārīf al-ma'drifī on the spirit. Animals have it. It gives the power of sense perception. It is strengthened by nourishment. Zabidi says further that the learned say that this spirit is a tenuous vaporous body produced from the blood that comes to its left chamber. Its value lies in the way it bears the physical powers so that they are circulated in the body.

Zabidi says that thinkers and writers have differed much about the true nature of the spirit (rūḥ).

The nafs is the appetitive soul or self, the 'flesh' of Pauline usage; see EI 3:827-30, and EP 7:880. Macdonald, Religious Life and Attitude, pp. 228-30.

The twofold division of the irrational soul according to Plato was (1) thymos, anger or the irascible faculty, including courage, energy, and ambition. This is the higher of the two and its seat is the heart. (2) Epithymia, the appetite or the concupiscible faculty, including the appetites. It is the lower part and its seat is in the abdominal cavity. This idea with slight variation is a basic factor in the psychology of Ghazālī.
which we will explain later. This meaning predominates among Sufis, for they mean by the ‘soul’ that principle in man that includes his blameworthy qualities (ṣifāt madhimma). So they say, “The soul must be striven against and broken.” This is alluded to by [the Prophet] in his statement, “Your soul, which is between your two sides, is your worst enemy.”

The second meaning is that subtle tenuous substance that we have mentioned, which is, in reality, man. It is the soul of man and his essence. But it is described by different descriptors according to its differing states. When it is at rest under His command, and agitation has left it on account of its opposition to the fleshly appetites, it is called ‘the soul at rest’ (al-nafs al-mutma‘ma). Of such a soul did God, the Exalted, say, Oh, you soul at peace, return to your Lord, pleased, and pleasing Him (89:27–8). The soul, according to the first definition, cannot be conceived of as returning to God, the Exalted, for it is far removed from God and belongs to the party of Satan. But when the soul is not completely at rest, but is striving to drive off and oppose the appetitive soul, it is called ‘the upbraiding soul’ (al-nafs al-lawwama); for it upbraids its possessor whenever he falls short in the worship of his Master. God, the Exalted, said, Nay, and I swear by the upbraiding soul (12:53). Yet it may sometimes be said, “By the ‘soul that commands to evil’ (al-nafs al-ammāra bil-siḥ) God, the Exalted, said, relating the words of Joseph to his Master and the angel Gabriel. Of such a soul did God, the Exalted, say, verily the soul commands to evil (7:204); indeed its seat had to have been created before it or along with it, and because one cannot converse with it [i.e., knowledge, ilm].

The fourth term, which is intellect (‘aql), also partakes of various meanings that we have mentioned in the Book of Knowledge. Of these, two pertain to our purpose. ‘Intelect’ may be used with the force of knowledge (ilm) of the real nature of things, and is thus an expression for the quality of knowledge whose seat is the heart. Second, ‘intellect’ may be used to denote that which perceives knowledge, or the heart in the sense of the subtle tenuous substance. And we know that every knower has within himself an entity (wujūd) which is a self-existing principle (ās al-qā‘im bi-nafsihī), and knowledge is a quality (ṣifā) residing in it, and the quality is other than the thing qualified. So ‘intellect’ may be used as meaning the quality of the knower, and it may be used to mean the seat of perception, the mind which perceives. The latter meaning is that referred to in the saying of the Prophet, “The first thing God created was the intellect.”

For knowledge is an accident that cannot be conceived as the first created thing; indeed its seat had to have been created before it or along with it, and because one cannot converse with it [i.e., knowledge, ilm]. A hadith also relates that He, the Exalted, said to the intellect, “Draw near,” and it drew near. Then He said, “Retreat,” and it retreated.

So it is now made clear to you that there exist the following meanings of these names: the corporeal heart, the corporeal spirit, the appetitive soul, and intelligence. These are four meanings that are denoted by four

13 “Sufi,” a Muslim mystic; see “taṣawwuf,” EI, 4:681ff. EP, 10:313.

14 A hadith quoted by Bayhaqi from Ibn ‘Abbās.

15 Editor’s note: throughout the translation, shaytān is translated alternately as ‘demon,’ ‘devil,’ or ‘Satan,’ and can refer to the Devil or any of his progeny. When referred to by Imam al-Ghazālī as Iblīs, it is left as such and denotes the Devil.

16 Zabīdī gives an additional list of types of souls: (1) al-nafs al-dāssiṣā, or the concealing soul (Qurʾān 91:10); (2) al-nafs al-mushātra, or the bought soul (Qurʾān 9:112); (3) al-nafs al-sawwwā ṭal-dāssiṣā al-qattāṭā, or the soul that makes evil seem inconsequential, which conceals and slays; (4) al-nafs al-zākiyya, or the purifying soul (Qurʾān 91:9); (5) al-nafs al-dāhiṭa, or the remembering soul (Qurʾān 7:204);


19 A weak hadith with many variations, discussed at length in Zabīdī, Ithā’, 1:453ff. Zabīdī here gives one fuller form of it as follows: When God created the intellect He said to it, “Draw near” and it drew near. Then He said, “Retreat,” and it retreated. Then He said, “I have created nothing that I love more than you; by you I take and by you I give.” The idea to which Ghazzalī refers in this passage is comparable to the Neoplatonic concept of the intellect being the first emanation from the Absolute. See Browne, Arabian Medicine, pp. 121ff. Cf. also the Active Intellect of Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, Ueberweg, Philosophy, 1:412ff.; Brett, Psychology, 2:53.
terms. There is also a fifth meaning, which is that subtle tenuous substance in man that knows and perceives, and all four of these names are successively applied to it. There are then five meanings and four terms, and each term is used with two meanings.

Most of the learned (‘ulamā’) are confused in distinguishing between these terms, and in regard to their successive use. So you find them talking about involuntary suggestions (khawātir), and saying, “This is the suggestion of the intellect, this is the suggestion of the spirit, this is the suggestion of the heart, and this is the suggestion of the soul,” and the observer does not understand the distinction in the meanings of these names. So for the sake of uncovering this matter we have put here at the beginning an explanation of these names. Wherever the expression ‘heart’ occurs in the Qur’an and in the Sunna, its intended meaning is that in man which discerns and comes to know the real nature of things. This may be alluded to by metonymy as the heart which is in the breast, because between that subtle tenuous substance and the physical heart there is a special connection. For although this subtle tenuous substance is connected with and used by the rest of the body as well, yet this connection is by means of the heart, so therefore its primary connection is with the heart. It is as though the heart were its seat, its kingdom, its world, and its mount. Therefore Sahl al-Tustari has likened the heart to the throne and the breast to the seat. He said, “The heart is the throne (‘arsh) and the breast is the seat (kursi).” But it must not be supposed that he meant that it is the throne of God and His seat, for that is impossible. But he meant that the heart is its [i.e., the subtle tenuous substance’s] kingdom and the primary channel for its planning and activity. These then [i.e., the physical heart and the breast] stand in the same relationship to the heart [the subtle tenuous substance] as do the throne and seat to God, the Exalted.

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20 Editor’s note: Zabidi comments that they are soul, spirit, heart, and intellect.
21 Khawātir, see Introduction, pp. xxixff.
22 Ghazālī gives the heart the place of honor; it is the seat of the noblest functions, the brain being given an inferior position. For this concept as it was held in the Aristotelian psychology see Brett, Psychology, 1:106.
23 Sahl al-Tustari, Abū Muḥammad Sahl b. ‘Abdallāh b. Yūnus (203–63/818–96 or 897), was a Sunnī theologian, a mystic, and a strict ascetic. He held that in interpreting the Qur’an it was necessary to seek four meanings: literal, allegorical, moral, and analogical. See EP, 8:840.
Chapter 2

An Exposition of the Armies of the Heart

God, the Exalted, has said, And none knows the armies of your Lord except Him (74:31). For in hearts and spirits and in other worlds God, praise be to Him, has "armies levied," whose nature and the details of whose number none knows save He. We will now refer to some of the armies of the heart such as pertain to our purpose.

The heart has two armies: an army seen with the eyes, and an army seen only by insight. The heart is as king, and the armies are as servants and helpers, and this is the meaning of 'army' (jund). Now its army, which is visible to the eye, includes the hand, the foot, the eye, the ear, the tongue, and the rest of the members, both outer and inner. These all serve the heart and are in subjection thereto, and it is the disposition of them, and repels for them. They were created with an inherent disposition to obey it, and cannot disobey it or rebel against it. For if it orders the eye to be opened, it is opened; if it orders the foot to move, it moves; if it orders the tongue to speak and is fully determined in the matter, it speaks; and so also for the rest of the members. The subjection of the members and the senses to the heart resembles, from one point of view, the subjection of the angels to God, the Exalted; for they were created with an inherent disposition to obedience, and they cannot disobey Him. They do not disobey God in what He commands them, but do what they are commanded (66:6). There

1 An allusion to the well-known hadith narrated by Muslim, "Spirits are armies levied (set in array)." See Wensinck, Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1933–7), 1:365.
is, however, this one difference: the angels know their own obedience and conformity, whereas the eyelids obey the heart in opening and closing because they are in subjection to it, and they have no knowledge of themselves nor of their obedience to the heart.

The heart needs these armies because of its need for a vehicle, and for provision for that journey for which it was created, the journey to God, praise be to Him, and for passing through its stages (manāzil) until He is met face to face. For this cause hearts were created, as God, the Exalted, has said, I have not created the jinn and humans save that they may worship me (51:56). The vehicle of the heart is the body alone; its provision is knowledge alone; and the means of attaining the provision for the journey and supplying one’s self therewith lie only in righteous acts.

It is impossible for the creature to reach God, praise be to Him, except by dwelling in the body and passing through this present world (al-dunyā), for the nearest stage must be passed through in order that the most distant stage may be attained. This present world is the seedbed (mazra‘a) of the world to come (al-akhirā), and it is one of the stages of right guidance (ḥudā). It is called ‘nearer’ (dunyā) only because it is the nearer of the two abodes. The heart must therefore get its supply of provision from this world. The body is its vehicle by which it comes into contact with this world. Thus the body needs to be cared for and preserved, and it is preserved only by procuring for it such food and other things as are suitable for it, and by warding off from it the causes of destruction which are repugnant to it and destroy it.

The heart thus needs two armies in order to procure food: an internal army which is the appetite, and an external [army] which is the hand and the members that procure food. So the needed appetites are created in the heart, and the members of the body are created which are the instruments of the appetites.

Likewise the heart needs two armies to drive off the things that lead to destruction: an internal army of anger (ghadāb), by which it drives off things that lead to destruction and takes revenge upon its enemies, and an external [army], which is the hand and the foot by which it carries out the dictates of anger. This is completed by means of things outside the body, such as weapons, and the like.

2 See "dunyā," EI, 2:626.
3 See "akhirā," EI, 1:231. EI, 1:325.
he had forgotten and it comes back to him again. Then he gathers together in his retentive imagination all the meanings of his sense impressions by means of the common [i.e., shared] sense (ḥiss mushtarāk). For there are within man common sense, imagination (takhayyul), reflection (tafakkur), recollection (tadhakkur), and memory (ḥīfẓ). Were it not that God created the powers of memory, thought, recollection, and imagination, the brain would be devoid of them even as is the hand and the leg. Thus these powers are internal armies and their seats are internal. Such then are the armies of the heart. It would take a long time to explain this by citing examples so that the understanding of the weak could comprehend it, while our purpose in such a book as this is that the strong and masterful from among the learned can profit thereby. Yet we will strive to make the weak understand by citing examples so that this is brought within the range of their understanding.

Chapter 3

An Exposition of the Similitudes of the Heart and its Internal Armies

Know that the two armies of anger and appetite are sometimes perfectly obedient to the heart, which helps it along the path it journeys, and their companionship on the journey that lies before it is desirable. But these two also disobey the heart at times, in trespass and revolt, until they gain the mastery over it and bring it into subjection. This results in destroying it and cutting it off from its journey, by which it might reach eternal happiness.

The heart has another army, which is knowledge, wisdom (ḥikma), and reflection, the explanation of which will follow. It should gain the assistance of this army, for it is the party of God, the Exalted, against the other two armies, for they may join themselves to the party of Satan. If it neglects this help and gives the army of anger and appetite dominion over itself, it will surely perish and suffer a manifest loss. This is the state of the majority of people, for their intellects have been forced by their appetite to labor at devising stratagems to satisfy the appetite, whereas appetite should be forced by their intellects to labor at that which the mind needs. We will make this clearer to your understanding by means of three examples.

6 For a discussion of these internal senses see Harry Wolfson, “The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew Philosphic Texts,” Harvard Theological Review 28, no. 2 (April 1935), pp. 69–133. See also Brett, Psychology, 2:55ff.

2 Zabīdī, Bihāf and Princeton MS read ‘heart.’
Example One. We may say that the soul (I mean by the soul the aforementioned subtle tenuous substance) is like a ruler in his city and his kingdom, for the body is the kingdom of the soul, its world, its abode, and its city. The powers and members of the body occupy the place of craftsmen and laborers. The intelligent reflective power is like the sincere adviser and intelligent minister. Appetence is like an evil slave who brings food and provisions to the city. Anger and ardor (hamiya) are like the chief of police. The slave who brings the provisions is a liar, a deceiver, an impostor, and a malicious person who plays the part of a sincere adviser, while beneath his advice there is dreadful evil and deadly poison. It is his wont and his custom to contend against every plan that the wise minister makes, so that not even for an hour does he cease his contention and opposition to his [the minister’s] opinions. When the ruler in his kingdom seeks the advice of his minister and shuns the counsel of this vile slave, inferring indeed from his counsel that the right course is that which is contradictory to his opinion; and [when] the chief of police disciplines him and brings him under the authority of the minister and causes him to be under his orders, empowering him on his part over this vile slave and his followers and helpers, so that the slave is under authority and not the possessor of it, and so that he [the slave] is subject to orders and directions and not the one who gives orders and directs; then the rule of his [the king’s] state is upright and then justice is ordered because of him. Thus when the soul seeks the aid of the intellect and is disciplined by the ardor of anger, which it empowers over appetite, seeking the aid of one of the two against the other; sometimes by lessening the degree and excess of anger by making an ally of appetite and gradually modifying it; sometimes by subduing and overcoming the appetite by giving anger and ardor power over it and by disapproving of its demands; then its powers are made harmonious and its character comely. Whoever turns aside from this path is like the one of whom God, the Exalted, has said, ‘I mean the perceptive power in man, is like a king who rules over it. Its perceptive powers of the senses, both external and internal, are like its armies and helpers. Its members are like the people of the city. ‘The soul that commands to evil,’ which is appetite and anger, is like the enemy who opposes him in his kingdom and strives to destroy his people. His body thus becomes, as it were, a frontier outpost, and his soul the place in which guards are stationed. So if he is one who strives against the enemy and routs him and conquers him as he ought, then will his deeds be praised on the day when he returns to the Presence [i.e., of God]. As God, the Exalted, says, and those who strive in God’s way with their wealth and their persons, God has preferred those who strive with their wealth and their persons a rank above those who sit still (4:95). But if he loses the frontier and neglects his people, his deeds will be blamed and vengeance will be taken against him [from those he neglected] when he meets God the Exalted. A hadith says, ‘It will be said to him on the day of resurrection, ‘O evil shepherd, you ate meat and drank milk and did not bring back the lost nor restore the broken; today will I [the one neglected] be revenged against you.’ It is also to this struggle that reference is made in the saying of the Prophet, ‘We have returned from the lesser struggle (jihad) to the greater.”

Example Three. The intellect is like a horseman who has gone hunting. His appetite is his horse and his anger is his dog. When the horseman is skilled and his horse well broken and his dog trained and taught, then he is able to succeed. But when he is himself clumsy, his horse unmanageable, and his dog vicious, then his horse is neither guided under him, nor does his dog go forth in obedience to his signs. So he himself deserves to perish

the way in which some of them are given power over others will be told, if God, the Exalted, so wills, in the Book of Disciplining the Soul.

Example Two. Know that the body is like a city and the mind (‘aql), I mean the perceptive power in man, is like a king who rules over it. Its perceptive powers of the senses, both external and internal, are like its armies and helpers. Its members are like the people of the city. ‘The soul that commands to evil,’ which is appetite and anger, is like the enemy who opposes him in his kingdom and strives to destroy his people. His body thus becomes, as it were, a frontier outpost, and his soul the place in which guards are stationed. So if he is one who strives against the enemy and routs him and conquers him as he ought, then will his deeds be praised on the day when he returns to the Presence [i.e., of God]. As God, the Exalted, says, and those who strive in God’s way with their wealth and their persons, God has preferred those who strive with their wealth and their persons a rank above those who sit still (4:95). But if he loses the frontier and neglects his people, his deeds will be blamed and vengeance will be taken against him [from those he neglected] when he meets God the Exalted. A hadith says, ‘It will be said to him on the day of resurrection, ‘O evil shepherd, you ate meat and drank milk and did not bring back the lost nor restore the broken; today will I [the one neglected] be revenged against you.’ It is also to this struggle that reference is made in the saying of the Prophet, ‘We have returned from the lesser struggle (jihad) to the greater.”

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rather than to gain that which he seeks. The clumsiness of the horseman is like the ignorance of a man, his paucity of wisdom, and his dim insight. The restiveness of the horse is like the victory of appetite, and especially the appetite for food and for sexual indulgence. The viciousness of the dog is like the victory of anger and its domination. We ask God in His grace to grant us success.  

Chapter 4

An Exposition of the Special Properties of the Heart of Man

Know that God has bestowed on all animals other than man all of these things that we have mentioned. For animals have appetite and anger, and the senses, both outer and inner. Thus the sheep sees the wolf with her eye and knows in her heart its enmity, and so flees from it. That is an inner perception.

We will now mention that which peculiarly characterizes the heart of man, and because of which he has been given great honor and is qualified to draw near to God, the Exalted. This special characteristic has its basis in knowledge and will. By 'knowledge' is meant that knowledge which deals with the things of this world and the world to come, and with intellectual realities (haqiqat 'aqiqiyat). These things are beyond the objects of sense perception, and animals do not share with man in them. Nay, rather, knowledge of axioms and universals (al-'ulûm al-kulliyat al-`atiriyat) is a peculiar property of the intellect. Thus a man judges that a single individual cannot be imagined to be in two places at one time. This is his judgment for every individual, although it is well known that he has only observed some individuals by his sense perception. So his judgment passed on all individuals goes beyond that which sense has perceived. If you understand this in regard to this obvious axiomatic knowledge, it is even more obvious in the rest of the theoretical sciences (nazarîyyat).
Now regarding the will, when a man perceives by his intellect the consequences of an act and the best way to do [something], there is aroused within his essential self (dhâat) a desire for the advantageous way, a desire to exert himself in the means to attain it, and also the will to this end. This differs from the will of appetite and the will power that animals have, indeed it is quite the opposite of appetite. For appetite shuns bleeding and cupping, while the intelligent [man] wants them, seeks them, and freely spends money for them. The appetite inclines to savory foods in time of sickness, while the intelligent [man] finds within himself that which causes him to abstain from them. This abstinence does not come from appetite. Had God created the intellect that gives information regarding the consequences of things, and not created this cause that moves the members to carry out the mandates of the intellect, then the judgment of the intellect would, in reality, be lost. Thus the heart of man has the special properties of knowledge and will which separate it from the other animals, nay, rather, which separate it from the youth in his original constitution, for this comes to him only with maturity.

Now appetite, anger, and the external and internal senses exist potentially in youth, but in attaining them the youth must pass through two stages. One stage is that his heart must comprehend the knowledge of axioms and first principles, such as the knowledge of the impossibility of impossible things, and the possibility of things manifestly possible. But in this stage he has not as yet attained to the speculative sciences, save that they have become possible and within easy reach of attainment. His status in relation to knowledge is like that of the writer whose knowledge of writing consists merely in knowing inkstand, pen, and the letters as they are written separately but not in their combined forms, for such a person is well on the way to writing but has not as yet achieved it.

The second stage is that he shall gain that knowledge which is acquired by experiment and thought, so that it is stored up in him and he can return to it whenever he wills. His status is like that of a man skilled in writing, who, on account of his ability therein, is called a writer, even when he is not actually engaged in writing. This is the highest stage of humanity, but in this stage there are innumerable degrees of contrast among men in the abundance or paucity of knowledge, in the dignity of knowledge or its sordidness, and in the way of attaining it. [This knowledge] comes to some hearts through divine revelation (iḥām ilāhī) by way of immediate disclosure (mubāda’a) and unveiling (mukāshafa), and for some it is a thing to be learned and acquired. Sometimes it is gained quickly and sometimes slowly. In this stage are seen the varying degrees of the learned (‘ulamā’), the wise (ḥukamā’), prophets (anbiyā’), and saints (awliyā’).

The degrees of advancement in knowledge are unlimited inasmuch as the knowledge of God, praise be to Him, is infinite. The highest rank is that of the prophet to whom is revealed all realities, or most of them, not by a process of acquisition nor after difficulty, but by a divine unveiling in the shortest possible time. In this happiness man draws near to God, the Exalted, in idea (ma’nā), reality, and quality, not in respect to place and distance. The levels up to these various degrees are the stages (manāzil) reached by those journeying (sā’tān) toward God, the Exalted, and there is no limitation to these stages. Each traveler knows only his own stage, to which he has attained on his journey. He knows it and he knows also those stages that are behind him. He does not know the real nature of that which is just ahead of him, but he may believe in it as he believes in the unseen. Even as we believe in prophecy and the prophet and accept his existence as true, while no one but a prophet knows the real nature of prophecy; and even as the embryo knows not the state of the infant, nor the infant the state of the discarnate child and what has been opened up to him of axiomatic knowledge; nor the discarnate child the state of the intelligent man and what he has acquired of speculative knowledge; so also the intelligent man knows not what attainments of the grace and mercy of God have been revealed to His saints and prophets. The mercy which God grants to humanity none can withhold (35:2). This mercy is generously bestowed by reason of the goodness and generosity of God who does not begrudge it to anyone, but it only appears in those hearts that are exposed to the gifts of God. The Prophet ἡ said, “Verily your Lord, in the days of your generation, has gifts; will you then not expose yourselves to them?” This exposing of one’s self to them is done by cleansing and purifying the heart from evil and from the turbidity that comes from a blameworthy

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5 iḥām is the general inspiration given to saints; see EI, 2:467ff. EP, 3:1119.
9 A ḥadīth described by ‘Irāqī as disagreed upon (mukhtalaf al-‘ınād), quoted also in Iḥyā’, 1186.
character, as will be set forth later. This liberality is that which is referred to in the statement of the Prophet ﷺ, “God descends every night to the lowest heaven and says, ‘Is there anyone who asks, that I may grant his request?’”\(^{10}\) Again the Prophet ﷺ said, quoting the statement of his Lord, ﷺ, “Great indeed is the longing of the righteous to meet me, and I long even more to meet them.”\(^{11}\) There is also the saying of [God], the Exalted, \(“\text{Whoever draws near to me by a span, I approach him by a cubit.”}\(^{12}\)

All of this is an indication that the light of knowledge is not veiled from men's hearts by any stinginess or prohibition on the part of the Giver, who is far removed from such acts, but rather is veiled by wickedness, turbidity, and anxiety within the heart. For hearts are like vessels; as long as they are filled with water, air cannot enter them. So the knowledge of the majesty of God, the Exalted, cannot enter into hearts that are occupied with anything apart from Him. It is to this that reference is made in the saying of the Prophet ﷺ, “The sons of Adam would look unto the kingdom of Heaven were it not that the demons hover over their hearts.”\(^{14}\)

From all of this it is clear that the special characteristic peculiar to man is knowledge and wisdom,\(^{15}\) and that the noblest kind of knowledge is the knowledge of God, His attributes, and His deeds. By this comes man's perfection, and in his perfection is his happiness and worthiness to live near the divine majesty and perfection. The body then is a vehicle for the soul, and the soul is the seat of knowledge. Knowledge is the end destined for man and his special characteristic for which he was created.

\(^{10}\) An authentic hadith given by Malik, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Ibn Māja. Wensinck, Concordance, 2152b; Muhammad al-Madani, al-Ittāfi al-sarbiyya fi-l-ahadith al-qudsiyya (Hyderabad 1323), nos. 422, 796, 844-50; Ibn Qutayba, Mukhtalaf al-hadith, p. 243. It is quoted also in Zabidi, Itthāl, 33.

\(^{11}\) Ibrāhīm says that he did not find a source for this hadith.

\(^{12}\) Zabidi says this a hadith qudsi.

\(^{13}\) An authentic hadith given by Bukhārī from Abū Hurayra, and accepted by all. Wensinck, Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1927), p. 188.; Ibn Qutayba, Mukhtalaf al-hadith, p. 284.

\(^{14}\) A hadith quoted by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal from Abū Hurayra. Previously quoted in Iyyāl, 1264.

\(^{15}\) This was one of the teachings of the Aristotelian system; see Windelband, Philosophy, p. 154.

The horse shares with the donkey the power to carry burdens and is distinguished from it by its own special characteristics of charging and fleeing, and beauty of form, and therefore the horse was created for the sake of these special characteristics, the removal of which from it would bring it to the low rank of the donkey. Likewise man shares in some things with the donkey and the horse, and differs from them in others, which are his own special characteristics. These distinguishing characteristics are among the qualities of the angels who are drawn near to [God,] the Lord of the worlds.

Man has a rank between the beasts and the angels. Man, in that he takes nourishment and reproduces, is a plant; and in that he has sense perceptions and moves by his own free will, he is an animal; and with regard to his figure and his stature, he is like the relief figure on the wall; but his distinguishing characteristic is his experiential knowledge (ma'rifah) of the real nature of things.\(^{16}\) Whoever makes use of all of his members and powers in such a way as to seek their aid in attaining to knowledge and work, is like the angels and is worthy to be joined to them, and deserves to be called an angel and a lordly being (rabbānī). Thus God, the Exalted, has declared, by the mouths of the women who beheld Joseph ﷺ, \(“\text{This is no mortal; this can be no other than a noble angel}”\) (12:31). But whoever spends his energy in following after bodily pleasures and eats as do the animals is brought down to the low depths of the beasts. So he becomes ignorant as an ox, glutinous as a hog, greedy as a dog, or a cat, malevolent as a camel, vain as a leopard, or sly as a fox. Or he may unite all of these and become a rebellious demon (shayṭān marid).

There is not a single one of the bodily members nor a single sense perception but that it helps along the path that leads to God, the Exalted, as will be shown, in part, in the Book of [Patience and] Thankfulness. Whoever uses them therein wins the victory, but whoever turns aside therefrom loses and is disappointed. The totality of man's happiness therein lies in making the meeting with God, the Exalted, his aim, the abode of the world...
and the heart is his king. If the king enjoys good health, so also do his armies.” She said, “Thus have I heard the Messenger of God speak.”

‘Ali, also, in illustrating the heart of man, said, “Verily, God, the Exalted, in His earth has vessels, and they are the hearts of men. Those most beloved by Him, the Exalted, are the gentlest, the clearest, and the most robust.” Then he explained, saying, “The most robust in religion, the clearest in certainty, and the gentlest to the brethren.” This is a reference to the statement of [God] the Exalted, hard against the unbelievers and merciful among themselves (48:29), and the statement of [God] the Exalted, His light is like a niche within which is a lamp (2:43). Ubayy b. Ka‘b said, “This means ‘as the light of a believer and his heart.’” Again there is the statement of [God] the Exalted, Or like the darkness in a vast deep ocean (24:40), which is an illustration of the heart of the hypocrite. Zayd b. Aslam said of the statement of [God] the Exalted, in a preserved tablet (8:22), “It is the heart of the believer.” Sahl said, “The heart and the breast are like the throne and the seat.” These then are the examples of the heart.

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17 Zabidi reads ‘path.’
18 This localization of the seat of the imaginative power was an older idea of Greek philosophers and was given new life by Ibn Sina; Brett, Psychology, 2:56.
19 Ka‘b al-Aḥbār, Abū Ishāq b. Mati‘ b. Haisūr, was a Yemeni Jew, converted to Islam in the caliphate of Abū Bakr or ‘Umar. He was the oldest authority for Jewish-Muslim traditions; see EI, 1:2582ff. EP, 4:316.
21 ‘Irāqī says that this hadith was not authentic.
22 ‘Ali b. Abī Tālib, the cousin of the Prophet and his son-in-law, was the fourth caliph; see EI, 1:128ff. EP, 1:381.
23 A weak hadith quoted from Makkt, Qit al-qulub.
NOW THAT THERE ARE four mingled factors that dwell together in man's nature and make-up, and therefore four kinds of qualities are united against him. These are the qualities (ṣifāt) of the beasts of prey (sabu'iyya), brutish qualities (bahimiyya), demonic qualities (shaytāniyya), and lordly qualities (rabbāniyya).

Insofar as anger rules over him he is overcome by the deeds of a beast of prey, such as enmity, detestation, and attacking people by beating and cursing them. Insofar as appetite rules him he is overcome by brutish acts of gluttony, greed, carnal desire, and so on. Insofar as there is within his soul something lordly, as God, the Exalted, has said, "The Spirit is my Lord's affair" (17:85), he claims lordship for himself and loves mastery, superiority, exclusiveness, and despotism in all things; and to be the sole ruler, and to slip away from the noose of servitude and humility. He longs to study all [branches] of knowledge, nay, rather he claims for himself knowledge and gnosis and the comprehension of the real nature of things. He rejoices when knowledge is attributed to him, and is grieved when accused of ignorance. The comprehension of all realities, and seeking to rule by force over all creatures are among the lordly qualities, and man is greedy for them. Insofar as he differs from the beasts in having the faculty of discernment, although sharing anger (ghadab) and appetite (shahwa) with them, he attains to demonic qualities. Thus he becomes wicked and uses his discernment in the discovery of ways of evil. He seeks to attain
his ends by guile, deceit, and cunning, and sets forth evil as though it were good. These are the characteristics of demons (shayātīn).

Every man has within him a mixture of these four qualities, i.e., lordly, demonic, beastly, and brutish; and all of these are gathered together in the heart. So there are gathered inside of a man’s skin, as it were, a pig, a dog, a demon, and a sage. The pig is appetite, for the pig is not blamed for his color, his shape or appearance, but for his covetousness, his voracity, and his greed. The dog is anger, for the carnivorous beast and the savage dog are not dog and beast from the standpoint of their appearance or color or shape, but because the spirit and meaning of this bestial quality is savagery and enmity and slaughter. Now within man there is the savagery and anger of the beast, and the greed and lechery (shibāq) of the pig. Thus the pig through gluttony invites man to excess and abomination, and the wild beast by means of anger calls him to oppression and harmful acts. The demon continues to stir up the appetite of the pig and the wrath of the wild beast, and to incite the one by means of the other; and he makes their inborn dispositions appear good to them.

The sage, who represents the intellect, is in duty bound to ward off the plotting and guile of the demon by revealing his deception by means of his [i.e., the sage’s] penetrating insight and evident clear illumination; and to destroy the gluttony of this pig by setting the dog over him, for by means of anger he breaks down the assault of appetite. He wards off the savagery of the dog by setting the pig over him and bringing the dog in subjection under his rule. If he does this successfully his affairs are set right, equity is manifest in the kingdom of the body, and all proceeds on the straight path.

But if he is unable to overcome them they overcome him and bring him into servitude, and so he continues to seek crafty tricks and careful plans to satisfy his pig and please his dog. Thus he is constantly in servitude to a dog or a pig. This is the condition of the majority of mankind whenever their primary concern is for the belly, loins, and vying with the enemy. The strange thing is that he disapproves of idolators worshipping stones, whereas if the veil were removed and his true state were disclosed and his true condition set before him as it is set before mystics (al-mukāshafūn), either in sleep or when awake, he would see himself standing before a pig, now prostrating himself before him and again kneeling, awaiting his signal and his command. So whenever the pig is roused up to seek the satisfying of any of his appetites, the man is sent forth at once to serve

The strange thing is that he disapproves of idolators worshipping stones, whereas if the veil were removed and his true state were disclosed and his true condition set before him as it is set before mystics (al-mukāshafūn), either in sleep or when awake, he would see himself standing before a pig, now prostrating himself before him and again kneeling, awaiting his signal and his command. So whenever the pig is roused up to seek the satisfying of any of his appetites, the man is sent forth at once to serve

him and to bring that for which he lusts. Or else the man would see himself standing before a savage dog worshipping him, obeying him and giving ear to his demands and requests, and carefully planning schemes to render obedience to him. Thus he endeavors to please his demon, for it is he who stirs up the pig and arouses the dog and sends them forth to bring [the man] into subjection. In this way he worships the demon in his worship of these two.

So let every servant watch over his times of activity and of inactivity, his silence and his speech, his rising up and his sitting down, and let him look to them with careful insight, and he will find, if he is honest with himself, nothing but an effort all day long to serve these base impulses. This is the utmost oppression, for it makes the possessor possessed, the lord lorded over, the master a slave, and the conqueror conquered, in that [man] forces the mind that is worthy of lordship, conquest, and rule to serve these low impulses. And undoubtedly from obedience to these three qualities are spread to the heart that are heaped up thereupon so that they become a dirty stain and a rust that is destructive and deadly to the heart.

From obedience to the pig of appetite there result the following characteristics: shamelessness, wickedness, wastefulness, avarice, hypocrisy, defamation, wantonness, nonsense, greed, covetousness, flattery, envy, rancor, rejoicing at another’s evil, and so on. As for obedience to the dog of anger there are spread thereby into the heart the qualities of rashness, squandering, haughtiness, boasting, hot temper, pride, conceit, sneering, disregard, despising of creatures, the will to evil, the lust of oppression, and others. In regard to obedience to the demon through obedience to appetite and anger, there results from it the qualities of guile, deceit, craftiness, cunning, deception, audacity, dissembling, violence, fraud, mischief, obscenity, and such like.

But if the matter is reversed and man overcomes all these, bringing them under the rule of the lordly element within him, then his heart becomes the abode of such lordly qualities as knowledge, wisdom, certainty, the comprehension of the real nature of things, the knowledge of matters as they really are, the subjugation of all by the power of knowledge and insight, and worthiness to advance beyond all creatures because of the perfection and majesty of his knowledge. Then too he dispenses with the worship of appetite and anger, and, by holding in check the
pig of appetite and returning him to his proper limits, he acquires such honorable qualities as chastity, contentment, quietness, abstemiousness, godliness, piety, happiness, goodly aspect, modesty, sagacity, helpfulness, and such like. By holding in check the power of anger and conquering it, and returning it to its proper limits, man attains to the qualities of courage, generosity, gallantry, self-control, patience, gentleness, endurance, pardoning, steadfastness, nobility, valor,3 dignity, and others.

The heart is as a mirror that is surrounded by these factors which exert their influence upon it. These influences reach the heart in uninterrupted succession. The praiseworthy influences that we have mentioned add to the clearness, shining, illumination, and brightness of the mirror so that the clear statement of the Real4 (jaliyyat al-Haqq) shines therein, and there is revealed in it the real nature of the thing sought in religion. To such a heart as this is the reference of the Prophet5 in his saying, "Whenever God wills good for a man He causes his heart to exhort him"; and in his saying "The man whose heart is his exhorter has a protector from God over him."6 This is the heart in which there abides the remembrance (dhikr) of God, the Exalted said, *Verily in remembrance of God do hearts find rest* (13:28).

The blameworthy influences are like a darkening smoke that rises up over the mirror of the heart and is heaped up upon it time after time until it becomes dark and murky and entirely veiled from God the Exalted. This is corrosion and rust. God, the Exalted, said, *Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts* (83:14). He also said, if *We will, We can afflict them in their sins, and imprint their hearts, so that they hear not* (7:100). Here He connected their lack of hearing with their being corroded by sins, even as He connected hearing with godly fear. He, the Exalted, said, *but fear God and listen* (5:108), and *fear God, and God teaches you* (2:282). Whenever sins are heaped upon the heart it is corroded, and thereupon it is blinded to the perception of reality and the correctness of one's practice of religion. It scorns the world to come and magnifies this present world, feeling concern for it alone. So if anything concerning the world to come and the dangers therein knocks at its hearing, it goes into one ear and out the other. It does not find an abode in the heart nor stir it to repentance and to make amends. These are they who despair of the world to come even as the infidels despair of those who are in their graves.7 This is the meaning of the blackening of the heart by sins according to the statement of the Qur'an and the Sunna.8

Maymûn b. Mîhrân9 said, "Whenever a man commits a sin he makes a black spot upon his heart, and whenever he turns away from it and repents, the spot is polished away, and if he returns to sin it increases until it covers the heart." This is rust. The Prophet9 said, "The heart of the believer is stripped clean and a lamp shines therein, but the heart of the unbeliever is black and upside down."10 Obedience to God, praise be to Him, by striving against the appetites polishes the heart, but disobedience to Him blackens it. So whoever engages in acts of disobedience blackens his heart; and whoever does a good deed after he has done an evil one, and thereby removes its effect, does not have his heart darkened, but its light is decreased. It is like a mirror which [one] breathes upon and then wipes off, and then breathes upon again and wipes off, which is not without a certain cloudiness.11

The Prophet9 said, "There are four kinds of hearts:12 a heart that is stripped clean, in which a lamp shines and this is the believer's heart; a heart that is black and upside down, which is the heart of the unbeliever; a hardened heart bound in its sheath of evil, which is the heart of the hypocrite; and a broad heart in which there is both belief and hypocrisy. Its belief is like green herbage that pure water causes to abound, and its hypocrisy is like an ulcer which purulent matter and pus cause to spread.

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9 A part of the following hadith; see the next note.

10 Editor's note: see Hamza Yusuf, trans., Purification of the Heart (Starlatch, 2004).


3 Zabidi omits the last two of the list.

4 Al-Haqq, God as the Absolute Reality.

5 ‘Irâqi says that the chain of narrators for this hadîth is good (jâyi’d).

6 ‘Irâqi says that he did not find a source for this hadîth.
This heart is judged to belong to whichever of the two gains the mastery. Another reading is, “is carried away by whichever.”

God, the Exalted, said, Indeed, those who fear God, when a thought touches them from Satan, they remember [God] and at once they have insight (7:201). Thus He stated that the clearness of the heart and its perspicacity are attained by the practice of remembrance (dhikr), and none achieve this except those who fear Him. For the fear of God is the door to remembrance of Him; remembrance is the door to mystical unveiling (kashf); and mystical unveiling is the door to the greatest success (fawz) which is the success of meeting (liqa') God the Exalted.

Chapter 6

An Exposition of the Similitudes of the Heart as Related Specifically to Knowledge

Now that the seat (mahall) of knowledge (ilm) is the heart, by which I mean the subtle tenuous substance (latifat) that rules all the parts of the body and is obeyed and served by all its members. In its relationship to the real nature of intelligibles (ma'lumat), it is like a mirror in its relationship to the forms (suwar) of changing appearances (mutalawwinat). For even as that which changes has a form, and the image (mithal) of that form is reflected in the mirror and represented therein, so also every intelligible has its specific nature, and this specific nature has a form that is reflected and made manifest in the mirror of the heart. Even as the mirror is one thing, the forms of individuals another, and the representation of their image in the mirror another, being thus three things in all, so here, too, there are three things: the heart, the specific natures of things, and the representation and presence of these in the heart. The 'intellect' (al-ilm) is an expression for the heart in which there exists the image of the specific natures of things. The 'intelligible' (al-ma'lum) is an expression for the specific natures of things. 'Intelligence' (al-ilm) is an expression for the representation of the image in the mirror.

Even as the act of grasping, for example, requires that which grasps, such as the hand, and that which is grasped, such as the sword, and an act bringing together the sword and the hand by placing the sword in the hand, which is called the act of grasping, so also the coming of the image of the intelligible into the heart is called intelligence. The reality was in existence and so also the heart, but there was no intelligence present, for
intelligence is an expression for the coming of the reality into the heart. Similarly the sword was in existence and also the hand, but there was nothing named ‘the act of grasping and taking’ present because the sword had not actually come into the hand. It is true that ‘grasping’ is an expression for the presence of the sword itself in the hand, while the intelligible itself does not actually come into the heart. For fire itself does not actually come into the heart of one who knows fire, but that which is actually present is its definition and its real nature that corresponds to its form. So the comparison of [the heart] with the mirror is more apt, for man himself is not really present in the mirror, but there is present merely an image that corresponds to him, and thus the presence of an image in the heart corresponding to the real nature of the intelligible is called intelligence.

The mirror may not reflect the forms for five reasons: first, a defect in its formation, as, for example, a piece of crude iron before it is turned and shaped and polished; second, because of its dirt and rust and dullness, even though it is perfect in formation; third, because it is turned away, from the direction of the object toward something else, as, for example, if the object were behind the mirror; fourth, because of a veil placed between the mirror and the object; and fifth, because of ignorance of the direction of the object desired, so that it is impossible to place it in front of the position and direction of the object.

Thus too is the heart a mirror, ready to have reflected in it the true nature of reality in all things. Hearts are destitute of the knowledge that they lack only because of the following five reasons.

The first reason is an imperfection in its own nature, such as the heart of a youth that does not reflect intelligibles because of its imperfection.

The second reason is because of dullness that is a result of acts of disobedience, and the filth from many lusts that are heaped upon the face of the heart, for these prevent the purity and cleanliness of heart. Reality ceases to be manifest therein in proportion to its darkness and the filth heaped upon it. To this the Prophet Ḥusayn referred in his statement, “When [a man] commits a sin something of his intelligence forsakes him and does not return to him again.” That is to say, there comes over his heart a dullness whose influence abides forever, even when his purpose is to follow it with a good deed that will erase it. But if he had done the good deed without the preceding evil deed, then the illumination of the heart would unquestionably have increased. However when the evil deed preceded [it], the value of the good deed was lost, although the heart was restored by it to its state previous to the evil deed, but its light was not increased thereby. This is an evident loss and an inescapable defect. The mirror that has been stained and then wiped off with a polishing cloth is not like that which has been wiped with the polisher to increase its clearness without any previous stain. So undertaking obedience to God and opposing the demands of the appetites is that which brightens the heart and purifies it. Therefore God, the Exalted, said, And those who strive for Us—we will surely guide to Our ways (29:69). The Prophet Ḥusayn said, “God causes him who does the best he knows to become the heir to knowledge that he knows not.”

The third reason is that the heart may be turned away from the direction of reality which is sought. For the heart of the good and obedient man, although it is bright, does not have the clear statement of the Real revealed in it, for he does not seek the Real and does not have his mirror opposite to the direction of the thing sought. Perhaps all of his attention is taken up by the details of bodily submission or arranging the means of his livelihood, and his thought is not free to contemplate the Lordly Presence and the hidden divine realities. So there is revealed to him only that which he thinks about, whether it is the minute defects of his [religious] works or the hidden faults of the soul, if it is these which occupy his mind, or the interests of gaining a livelihood if he thinks of them. Now if limiting one’s attention to works and the details of acts of obedience prevents the revelation of the clearness of the Real, what is your estimation (zann) of one who expends his energies in the lusts and pleasures of this present world and the things connected therewith? And how should true revelation not be denied to such a person?

The fourth reason is the veil. The obedient man who has overcome his appetites and devotes himself exclusively to a certain specific reality may not have this revealed to him because it is veiled from him by some belief that he has held from his youth, and which he has blindly followed (taqlid) and accepted in good faith. This belief walls him off from the true nature of the Real and prevents there being revealed to his heart

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1 Cf. the separated form or intellectus agens of Ibn Sīnā’s doctrine of the intellect. Brett, Psychology, 2:57ff.
2 Ḥusayn says that he did not find a source for this ḥadīth.
The Heart as it Relates to Knowledge

needs another mirror to place behind the back of his neck, with the first mirror facing it in such a way that he can see it, and he must observe the proper relationship between the placing of the two mirrors so that the image of the back of his neck is reflected in the mirror opposite to it, and the image of this mirror is reflected in the other mirror that faces the eye. Then the eye perceives the image of the back of his neck. So in the hunt for knowledge there are strange ways in which there are devious turnings and oblique shiftings, stranger than those we have mentioned concerning the mirror; and rare indeed upon the face of the earth is he who is guided to the way of clearly seeing through those devious ways.

These are the reasons that prevent the heart from coming to know the real nature of things. Otherwise every heart is innately able to come to know realities, for it is a lordly and noble thing, differing from other substances in the world by this special property and noble quality. To it is the reference in the statement of [God] 38. Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it, but man [undertook to] bear it (33:72). This refers to his possession of a special characteristic that distinguishes him from the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, by which he is enabled to bear the trust of God the Exalted. This trust is gnosie and divine unity (tawhid). ⁸

The heart of every human being is, [in its original constitution], able and capable of bearing this trust, but the causes that we have mentioned prevent it from carrying this burden and arriving at the realization of the trust. In this connection the Prophet ⁹ said, "Every child is born with a natural conformity to religious truth (i.e., Islam, fitra), and it is only his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian." The Messenger of God ⁹ also said, "Were it not that the demons hover over the hearts of the children of Adam they would turn their eyes toward the heavenly

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7. The reference is to the syllogism.
9. Lane, Lexicon, p. 2416, says, "Every infant is born in a state of conformity to the natural constitution with which he is created in his mother's womb, either prosperous or unprosperous (in relation to the soul)." See also Ḥirra, EI, 2:135ff. EP, 2931. This is a hadith from Abū Hurayra related by all. Wensinck, Handbook, p. 439.
It is true that only a part of it appears to the heart, but in itself and in its relation to the knowledge of God it is infinite. The material world and the earth is only an expression for the visible material world, which, Its total expanse is greater than the heavens and the earth, for 'the heavens and the earth' is only an expression for the visible material world, which, although broad in extent and far-reaching in compass, is still but a part of the whole. But the world of spirits is boundless, consisting of those secrets hidden from the sight of the eyes and perceived only by insight. It is true that only a part of it appears to the heart, but in itself and in its relation to the knowledge of God it is infinite. The material world and the world of spirits taken together under one classification are called the world of spirits.

Another narration says that the Messenger of God was asked, "Who are the best of men?"

He replied, "Every believer whose heart is cleansed."

They asked, "What is the cleansed heart?"

He answered, "It is the godfearing, pure heart, in which there is no fraud, nor iniquity, nor treachery, nor rancor, nor envy."14

On that account 'Umar15 said, "My heart saw my Lord when, because of godly fear, He raised the veil." For whomsoever the veil is lifted between himself and God,16 the form of the material world (al-mulk) and of the world of spirits (al-malakūt) is clearly manifest in his heart, and he sees a Garden the width of a part of which is that of the heavens and the earth. Its total expanse is greater than the heavens and the earth, for 'the heavens and the earth' is only an expression for the visible material world, which, although broad in extent and far-reaching in compass, is still but a part of the whole. But the world of spirits is boundless, consisting of those secrets hidden from the sight of the eyes and perceived only by insight. It is true that only a part of it appears to the heart, but in itself and in its relation to the knowledge of God it is infinite. The material world and the world of spirits taken together under one classification are called the world of spirits.

Lordly Presence (al-ḥādīr, al-rajūbiyya),17 for the Lordly Presence encompasses all existing things. For there exists nothing except God, the Exalted, His works, and His Kingdom; and His servants are a part of His works.18 What appears of this to the heart is, according to some, Paradise19 itself, and according to the people of reality (ahl al-ḥāqq),20 it is the means of deserving Paradise. The extent of his possession in Paradise is in proportion to21 the extent of his knowledge and the measure to which God and His attributes and works have been revealed to him.

The intent of all of these acts of obedience and actions of the members is the purification, improvement, and enlightenment of the heart. Prosperous is he who purifies it (91:19). The purpose of improvement is to achieve the illumination of faith in it; I mean the shining of the light of knowledge [of God]. That is the point in the statement of the Exalted, Whomsoever God wants to guide, He expands his breast to [accept] Islam; (6:125); and in His statement, So is one whose breast God has expanded to [accept] Islam, and he is upon light from his Lord [like one whose heart rejects it] (39:22). This illumination and this faith have indeed three degrees. The first degree is the faith of the rank and file, which is purely blind imitation (taqlid).22 The second is the faith of the theologians (mutakallimin), which is mingled with a sort of logical reasoning but its degree is nearly the same as that of the faith of the rank and file. The third degree is the faith of the mystics (ārifūn), which is seeing [clearly] with the light of certainty.23

10 A very uncertain hadith, possibly confused with that mentioned on page 27, says 'Irāqī.
12 A hadith given in Makki, Qūt al-qulūb and Qusayyirī, al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya; 'Irāqī says that he did not locate a source with this exact wording.
13 'Irāqī says that he did not find a source for this hadith.
14 'Irāqī says that the chain of narrators for this hadith is authentic (ṣaḥīḥ), given by Ibn Māja from 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar. Wensinck, Concordance, 2:78b.
15 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644) was the second caliph; see EI, 3:982ff. EP, 10:818.
16 Zabidi text reads, 'between himself and his heart.'
18 Zabidi gives another reading: "and His Kingdom is made up of His servants and His works" (Ithāf, 7:235). This passage is an assertion of the unity of God, the Self-existent One, which also guards against the possibility of there being anything in the universe that owes its existence to other than Him.
21 Zabidi reads, 'because of.'
22 "Taqālīd," faith based on acceptance of custom and authority; see EI, 4:630ff. EP, 10:137.
23 Zabidi gives a further analysis of these degrees of faith, taken from other writings of Ghazālī. The first two are from Ghazālī, Iḥām al-'awīmm wa'm ilm al-kalām (Cairo, 1309/1891) and the third from Mishkāt al-anwār (Cairo 1322/1904). Also see W. H. T. Gairdner, "Al-Ghazālī's Mishkāt al-Anwār and the Ghazālī Problem," Der Islam 5, no. 2 (1914), pp. 121-53. The first degree of faith, or that of the rank and
We will make clear to you these degrees, with an example, your acceptance that Zayd, for instance, is in the house. This has three degrees. The first is that someone has told you, someone whom you have experienced to be truthful, and never known to lie and never doubted his word. Your heart, by the mere hearing, calmly receives his report and is satisfied with it. This is belief by mere blind acceptance, and of such nature is the faith of the rank and file. For when they reached the age of discrimination they heard from their fathers and mothers of the existence of God, the Exalted, of His knowledge, will, and power, and the rest of His attributes; also of the sending of the messengers and their veracity, and their message. They received even as they heard and became established therein and satisfied therewith; and it never occurred to their minds to disagree with what their fathers and mothers and teachers told them because of the high esteem in which they held them. This faith is the efficient cause of salvation in the world to come, and those who embrace it are in the first [i.e., lowest] ranks of the people of the right hand, but not among those who are drawn near [to God]. For this [faith] has in it no mystical unveiling, nor insight, nor

file, is blind imitation. It comes through: (1) hearing the doctrine from someone who is an authority worthy of trust, as a child trusts a parent or teacher; (2) hearing, in convincing circumstances, something known about previously; (3) hearing a doctrine that appeals to the nature of the individual, which is the weakest of all types of faith. The faith of the theologians is the second degree, and it is mingled with some logical reasoning. It may be (1) belief resting on complete proof that has been worked out step by step, which is the highest rank of this sort; or (2) belief resting on the well-known stock arguments of leading teachers; or (3) belief resting on written proofs, such as those used in debates and correspondence. The third degree of faith, which is that of mystics, is seeing with the light of certainty. (1) It is belief that all other than God has no essential existence, but has only contingent and figurative existence. Man, therefore, is the absolute possession of the One Unique Ruler who has no partner. (2) This is followed by advancement from the level of the figurative to an ascent to the summit of reality, until a clear vision is experienced that the face of God is the One Existence, and all else is eternally perishing. Cf. Qur’an 28:68. (3) After attaining the heaven of reality there is no existence seen save God and the believer is devoid of all feeling of self or of other than God, and is lost in contemplation of Him. This state, in which a ‘passing away’ (fanā) takes place, is an experience of the divine Unity (tawḥīd). Editor’s note: see also Abī Ja’far al-Ṭāhāwī, The Creed of Imam al-Ṭāhāwī, trans. Hamza Yusuf (Zaytuna Institute, 2007).

The second degree of belief is to hear the words and voice of Zayd from within the house, but from behind a wall, and you deduce from this the fact of his being in the house. Then your belief, your acceptance as true, and your certainty that he is in the house are stronger than your belief through hearsay alone. For if you are told, “He is in the house,” and then hear his voice, you become more certain of it, for the voice indicates shape and form to him who hears it, on condition of seeing the form. So his heart judges this to be the voice of that person. This is belief mingled with proof. It is also possible for error to follow because one voice might resemble another. Also pretense is possible by means of imitating the voice. This might not occur to the mind of the hearer, for he had no thought of any such accusation, or that anyone had a purpose in such deception and imitation.

The third degree of belief is to enter the house and look at him with your own eyes and see him. This is real experiential knowledge and sure observation. It is like the knowledge of those who are drawn near [to God] and of the veracious (ṣiddiqūn), for their belief is based on eyewitness [account]. This belief includes that of the rank and file and that of the theologians; and they have this very evident additional advantage that the possibility of error is taken away. It is true that believers of this class differ in rank according to their attainments in knowledge, and the degrees of unveiling. An example of the difference in degrees of knowledge is that one man sees Zayd in the house when he is near at hand in the courtyard and while the sun is shining, and so he sees him perfectly; while another sees him in a room, or at a distance, or in the evening, so that his form is sufficiently plain that he can be sure that it is he, but the minute details and hidden features of his form are not made clear to him. The variance in degree in seeing divine things is of this sort. Regarding the difference in the attainments of knowledge, it is as though one sees Zayd, ‘Amr, Bakr, and others in the house, while another sees Zayd only. The knowledge of
the former is unquestionably greater than that of the latter because of the abundance of things known.

This is the state of the heart in relation to knowledge, and God, the Exalted, knows best that which is right.

Chapter 7

An Exposition of the Condition of the Heart as Related to the Categories of Knowledge: Intellectual, Religious, Worldly, and Otherworldly

Now that the heart is innately prepared to apprehend the real nature of ideas as has been stated previously. But the kinds of knowledge that exist in it may be divided into those which pertain to the intellect, and those which pertain to divine law. Intellectual knowledge (‘ulūm ‘aqliyya) is subdivided into axiomatic (darūriyya) and acquired (muktasaba) [knowledge]. Acquired [knowledge] is further divided into that which deals with this [present] world, and with the world to come. By intellectual knowledge we mean that by which the innate intellect makes its judgments and which does not come into existence through blind imitation and instruction. It is divided into axiomatic and acquired [knowledge]. No one knows whence or how the axiomatic is attained. Such is a man’s knowledge [for example], that one person cannot be in two places, and that one thing cannot be both created and eternal, existent and nonexistent at the same time. For man finds this knowledge to be a natural endowment of his soul from his youth, and does not know when or whence he attained it. I mean that he does not know any proximate cause for it. Otherwise it would not be hidden from him that it is God who has created him and guided him aright. Acquired knowledge is that which is gained by learning and deduction. Both of these are sometimes called intellectual. ‘Ali said, “I beheld the intellect as though it were twofold: innately endowed, and developed through instruction. That
which is developed through instruction is of no avail, apart from the innate endowment, even as the sun is of no avail apart from a seeing eye.1

The first of these is referred to in the saying of [the Prophet] to 'Ali, "God certainly has not created anything more honorable to Him than the intellect."2 The second is referred to in his statement to 'Ali, "Then men draw near to God by different kinds of good deeds; you draw near by your intellect."3 For it is not possible to draw near by innate constitutional endowment, nor by axiomatic knowledge, but by that which is acquired. In 'Ali's case, he was able to draw near by using his intellect to acquire the knowledge for which close proximity to the Lord of the worlds is bestowed. The heart is like the eye, and the innate intelligence in it is like the potentiality of sight in the eye. The potentiality of sight is a subtlety which is lost in blindness, but which is present in sight, even though a man may have closed his eyes or the darkness of night may have enfolded him. The knowledge attained thereby in the heart is like the potentiality of perception of sight in the eye, and its vision of the essences of things.

The fact that knowledge is held back from the eye of the intellect during youth until the age of discretion and maturity is like the holding back of the vision from the sight until the time when the sun shines with its flood of light upon the objects of the sight. The pen with which God has written knowledge upon the pages of the heart is like the disk of the sun. Knowledge is not achieved within the heart of the youth before the age of discretion only because the tablet of his heart is not yet prepared to receive the engraving of knowledge. The pen (al-qalam)4 is a term for one of the creations of God, the Exalted, which He has made a cause by which knowledge is inscribed upon the hearts of men. God, the Exalted, said, Who taught by the pen, taught men that which he knew not (96:4–5). The pen of God, the Exalted, does not resemble the pen of His creatures, even as His description does not resemble the characterization of His creation. Thus His pen is not made from a reed nor from a piece of wood, even as He Himself is not made up of substance (jawhar)5 nor of accident (arad).6

So the comparison between the inner insight and the outer vision is valid from these points of view, save that there is no comparison between them in honor. For the inner insight is the very soul itself, which is the subtlety that perceives. This is like the rider, and the body like his mount; and blindness in the rider is more dangerous to the rider than blindness in his mount. Indeed there is no relation between the one affliction and the other, nor any comparison of the inner insight with the outer vision. God, the Exalted, has called it by its name, for He said, The heart lied not about what it saw (53:11), thus calling the perception of the mind a vision (ru'ya). Like this is the statement of the Exalted, Thus did we show Abraham the realm of the heavens and the earth (6:75). In this He did not mean the outer vision of the eye, for that was not granted exclusively to Abraham that it should be set forth as having been a special favor. Therefore the non-perception is called blindness. The Exalted said, For it is not eyes which are blind, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts (22:46). And again, the Exalted said, And whoever in this life is blind, will be blind in the hereafter, and more astray in way (17:72). This is the exposition of intellectual knowledge.

Now, as regards the religious sciences, they are taken by way of acceptance on authority (taqlid) from the prophets (anbiya'), on whom be the peace and blessings of God. This is acquired by learning the Book of God, the Exalted, and the Sunna of the Messenger of God, understanding their meaning after having heard them. In this is the heart made perfect in quality and safe from illness and disease. For the intellectual sciences, although needed by the heart, are not sufficient for its safety, just as the intellect is not sufficient to make continuous the causes of physical health, but needs also to gain the experiential knowledge of the properties of

1 This quotation is in poetic form and might be reproduced approximately as follows:
Man's mind a twofold intellect appears:
   The one instinctive; the other what he hears
That which is heard avails naught, save when joined
   To that which is instinctive in the mind.
Just as the sun which shines in the sky
   Is of no worth without a seeing eye.

2 A hadith quoted by Tirmidhi al-Hasan (Nawadir al-Tasbi), which 'Irāqī says has a weakness (da') in the chain of narrators. For Zabīdī's discussion of this and the following hadith see Ithāf, 1:461ff.

3 'Irāqī says that there is a weakness (da') in the chain of narrators of this hadith.

4 "Qalam (kalam)," pen; see EI, 2:675ff. EP, 4:471.


6 "Arad," an accident that exists in a substance; see EI, 1:417. EP, 1:603.
The intellectual sciences are divided into those of the present world and those of the world to come. Those of this present world are such sciences as medicine, mathematics, engineering, astronomy, and the other professions and trades. Those of the world to come are such as the knowledge of the states of the heart, of defects in religious works, and of the knowledge of God, the Exalted, and His attributes and His acts, as we have explained in the Book of Knowledge. These two sciences exist in tension, by which I mean that whoever applies himself to one of them and goes deeply into it has his insight into the other lessened for the most part.

‘Ali has given three similes of this present world and the world to come. He said, “They are like the two scales of the balance; and like the East and the West; and like a man’s two wives, for when he makes the one content he makes the other angry.” So you see those who are wise in the affairs of the present world, in medicine, mathematics, engineering, and philosophy, are ignorant in the affairs of the world to come. Similarly those who are wise in the minutiae of the sciences of the world to come are ignorant, for the most part, of the sciences of this present world; for the power of the intellect cannot accomplish the two things together, as a general rule. Thus one of them obstructs the perfection of the second. The Prophet said, “Most of the inhabitants of Paradise are simpletons (bulh).” That is, they are simpletons in the things of this present world. Hasan said in one of his exhortations, “We perceived a group, which if you saw them, you would say that they are mad; and if they saw you, they would say that you are demons.”

So whenever you hear about a strange thing in the field of religion, which people wise in the sciences deny, do not let their denial delude you so that you do not accept it; for it is impossible for one who walks the eastern path to possess [goods] that exist [only] in the West. So also is the case with this present world and that which is to come. The Exalted said, Those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, but are pleased and satisfied with the life of the present [and feel secure therein and those who are heedless of Our signs] (10:7). Again, the Exalted said, They know but the outer (things) in the life of this world, but of the End of things they are heedless (30:7). And again, He said, So turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. This

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is their sum of knowledge (53:29–30). So to combine a complete attentive observance of the affairs of this present world and of religion is rarely easy, save to those whom God has firmly established for the direction of His servants in their livelihood and their return [to God]. Such are the prophets who are helped by the holy spirit, who receive divine power sufficient for all things, nor does it fall short at all. But when the hearts of creatures are given over completely to that which pertains to this present world, they turn aside from the world to come and fall short of coming to perfection therein.

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Chapter 8

An Exposition of the Difference between General Inspiration (ilhām) and Learning (ta’allum); and the Difference between the Sufi Way of Seeking the Unveiling of Reality and the Way of the Speculative Theologians (nuṣṣār)

Know that the sciences that are not axiomatic, but which come into the heart at certain times, differ in their manner of attainment. Sometimes they come upon the heart as though something were flung into it from a source it knows not. At other times they are gained through deduction (istidlāl) and study. That which is not attained by way of acquisition nor through artful proof is called general inspiration (ilhām), and that which is attained through inference is called reflection (iṭibār) and mental perception (istibār). Furthermore that which exists in the heart apart from some expedient or cunning or effort on the part of man is subdivided into two classes. In the first the servant is not aware how he achieved it, nor whence; in the second he is acquainted with the

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1 For a close and interesting parallel see the statement of Philo quoted in Brett, Psychology, 1:249, here given in part: "... and sometimes when I come to my work empty, I have suddenly become full, ideas being in an invisible manner showered upon me and implanted in me from on high; so that through the influence of Divine Inspiration I have become greatly excited, and have known neither the place in which I was nor those who were present, nor myself, nor what I was saying, nor what I was writing."
secondaries (sabab) from which he has derived that knowledge, which is the vision of the angel who cast it into his heart. The former is called general inspiration, and inbreathing into the heart (nafsh il-l-rawr). The latter is called prophetic inspiration (wahy), and it is an exclusive characteristic of the prophets (anbiyâ), whereas the former is given only to the saints (awliyâ) and the pure (asfîyâ). The preceding type, which is gained through deduction, is that given to the learned (ulumâ).

The true doctrine is that the heart has the capacity to receive inspiration, the vision of the angel who imparts the knowledge; for our hearts attain the real nature of divine things. The reflection of the real nature of knowledge from the heart to the heart is like the reflection of an image from one mirror to another mirror opposite it. The veil between the two mirrors is sometimes removed by the hand, and at other times by a gust of wind that moves it. Thus the winds of divine favor sometimes blow and the veils are drawn aside from the eyes of hearts so that there is revealed to it the secret of the world of spirits.

If you come to know this, know also that the inclination of the Sufis is toward the knowledge gained through inspiration, more than that gained through instruction. Therefore they do not jealously covet the study of knowledge, nor the acquisition of that which authors have written, nor discussion about the statement of [doctrines] and proofs that have been mentioned. But they say, “The way of knowledge is to put foremost spiritual striving, to abolish blameworthy traits, to cut all ties, and to advance toward God, the Exalted, with utmost concern.” Whenever this takes place, God becomes the ruler over the heart of His creature and the surety for his illumination with the light of knowledge. When God becomes the ruler of the heart, He floods it with mercy and sheds His light upon it. And the breast is opened and there is revealed to it the secret of the world of spirits (malakût), and by a gift of mercy there is cleared away from the surface of the heart the veil of whiteness that blinds its eye, and there shines in it the real nature of divine things.

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3 "Wahy," prophetic inspiration; see EI, 4109ff. EP, 11:53. Zabidi (7:245) gives six varieties of wahy, as follows: (1) that which comes as the ringing of a bell; (2) that in which an angel appears and addresses man; (3) visions in sleep; (4) that which is cast into the heart; (5) Jibril comes (to the Prophet) in his true form, having six hundred wings, each one of which fills the horizon; (6) God speaks to him directly as He did the night of the heavenly journey: This is the highest sort.
4 "Ulumâ," the learned; see EI, 4994. EP, 10:801. Zabidi says (7:245), in commenting on this, that there are three kinds of ilm mentioned by Ibn al-'Arabi, as follows: (1) intellectual knowledge, whether axiomatic or rationally proven; (2) knowledge of states, which is learned only through experience; and (3) knowledge of secrets, which is above the intellect, and is received only through the inbreathing of the holy spirit.
6 Zabidi (7:246) says that knowledge is gained in the following ways: (1) through intuitive intelligence and sense contact; (2) through sight, based on intellectual or sensible premises; (3) through the report of others, hearing, or reading; (4) through inspiration (wahy), (4a) through the tongue of an angel who can be seen, (4b) by hearing the voice of an angel without seeing him, or (4c) through a casting into the heart, either during waking hours or when asleep.
7 Zabidi says that this elevation above the world of sense is the first ascent (al-mîrây al-awwal) of the traveler on the mystic’s path.
8 Ghurra—whiteness. The reference is probably to the white leucoma which so often causes loss of sight in eastern lands.
The servant has only to make himself ready by a thorough purification, by summoning intention along with a sincere desire, by complete yearning, and by watching with constant expectation for the mercy that God, the Exalted, may grant to him. For prophets and saints have had divine things revealed to them, and the light has flooded their breasts, not by learning and study and the writing of books, but by asceticism (zuhd)\(^9\) in this present world, by cutting the self off from all of its ties, by emptying the heart of all of its busying affairs, and by advancing with the utmost concern toward God, the Exalted; for whoever belongs to God, God belongs to him.

The [Sufis] assert that the way to this is, first of all, by cutting off ties with this present world and by emptying the heart of them, by taking away concern for family, possessions, children, homeland, knowledge, rule, and rank. Nay rather he must bring his heart into that state in which the existence of all these is the same as their nonexistence.\(^11\) Then he must withdraw alone, apart, into a place of private devotion (zāwiya),\(^12\) and limit himself to the prescribed religious duties (farā’id)\(^13\) and the supererogatory prayers (rawātib).\(^14\) He must sit with an empty heart and concentrated purpose. He must not divide his thought by reciting the Qurʾān, nor the contemplation of its exposition, nor by books of hadith, nor anything else. But he must strive [such] that nothing save God, the Exalted, shall come into his mind. Then after he has seated himself in a place apart (khālwa) he shall keep saying continuously with his tongue, “Allāh, Allāh,” and his heart shall be fixed on it too, until he comes finally to a state in which the motion of the tongue will cease and it will seem as though the word is flowing over his tongue. He must continue patiently in this until every trace of the word is effaced from the heart and there remains present in it naught save the ideal meaning which is, as it were, adhering to and inseparable from the heart.

To attain to this point is a matter of his choice; so too is the prolonging of this condition by warding off the suggestions of Satan. Not by his choice, however, can he procure the gift of the mercy of God, the Exalted. By what he has done thus far he has exposed himself to the breezes of God’s mercy, and it only remains for him to wait for such mercy as God may grant to him, even as He has, in this way, given His mercy to the prophets and saints. Upon doing this, if his desire is sincere, his intention pure, and his perseverance good, and if his lusts do not draw him aside nor the suggestions of the self (hadith al-nafs)\(^15\) engross him with the ties of this present world, there will shine forth the gleams of reality into his heart. In its beginning this will be like a blinding flash of lightning. It is not continuous but it returns, although it may delay. If it returns it may continue, and it may be but a flash. If it continues it may be for a longer or shorter time. These different types may appear, the one succeeding the other, or they may be limited to one sort only. The stages (manāzil) of the saints of God, the Exalted, in this are unlimited, even as the superiority of their nature and moral characteristics is not to be reckoned. So this way goes back to an absolute purifying and clarifying and brightening of the heart on your part, and then only to make ready and wait in expectation.

The speculative theologians (muzzār) and those whose opinions deserve consideration have not denied the fact that this way does exist, that it is a possibility, and that it does, in rare instances, lead to the desired end. Indeed this way has been that of most prophets and saints. But they consider it a difficult way, and think it slow in bearing fruit, and feel that the fulfillment of all of its conditions is very improbable. They claim that to blot out all ties to this extent is practically impossible. If it does happen for a moment, its continuation is even more difficult, since the slightest evil prompting or involuntary suggestion disturbs the heart.

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9 Editor's note: Skellie has 'novice (murid) here, from Zabidi, Ithāf (7:246). He then refers the reader to "murid," novice or neophyte; see EI, 3:735. EP, 7:608.


11 Zabidi says that this is the first stage, or the true beginning, of the mystic's path.


14 "Rawātib" (pl.), supererogatory acts of worship which may precede and follow the prescribed prayers; see EI, 3:1129. EP, "ratīb," 8:459. See also Ghazālī, trans. Calverley, Worship in Islam, pp. 21, 218ff.

15 The hadith al-nafs is equivalent to al-khūtir al-nafs (see page xxx). See Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, al-Qushayrī's Epistle on Sufism, trans. Alexander Knysh (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 2007), pp. 106–7. See also 'Abbādallāh b. 'Umar al-Baydāwī, Anwār al-tanzil wa asrār al-tāwil, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1846–8), on Qurʾān 50:15. It is the lightest type of sin, and according to some, is not even to be reckoned as sin on the day of judgment. See EI, 2:927a. See also chapter 13 of the present work.
The Prophet  said, “The heart of the believer is more unsteady than a cooking pot as it boils.”16 He, may the best blessings and peace be upon him, also said, “The heart of the believer is between two of the fingers of the Merciful.” During such strenuous effort the physical constitution may be disordered, the intellect confused, and the body may suffer. If progress in the discipline and improvement of the soul is not made by means of the realities of the sciences, then the heart is ensnared with corrupt imaginings in which the soul trusts for a long time before they come to an end; and one may live out his appointed time without succeeding. Many a Sufi has traveled this way and continued to hold a single visionary [state] for twenty years, whereas if he had mastered knowledge beforehand, the point of confusion in his vision (khayal) would have been opened up to him at once. So to busy one’s self in the path of learning is a surer and easier means of attaining the aim. They claim that it is as though a man left off the study of jurisprudence (fiqh),17 asserting, “The Prophet  did not study it and he became one who understood the divine law by means of prophetic and general inspiration without any repetition or application, and perhaps discipline of the soul and steadfastness will bring me finally to that goal.” Whoever thinks this wrongs himself and wastes his life. Nay, rather, he is like one who gives up the way of gain through farming, hoping to chance upon some treasure. The latter is indeed possible, but extremely unlikely. So too [in the matter of gaining knowledge]. They say, “It is first of all necessary to attain to that which the learned have achieved and to understand what they said. Then after that there is no harm in expectantly waiting for that which has not been disclosed to the other learned men, and it may be that this will be disclosed afterwards through strenuous effort.”

16 An authentic hadith quoted by Ahmad from Miqdād b. al-Aswad.
Chapter 9

An Exposition of the Difference in Rank between the Two Positions by a Tangible Example

Know that the wonders of the heart are outside the realm of things perceived through the senses (mudrakāt al-ḥawāss),¹ for the heart is also beyond sense perception. The understandings are too weak to grasp, except by means of a tangible example, that which is not perceived through the senses. So we shall explain this to people of weak understanding by means of two examples.

For the first illustration let us suppose that a reservoir is dug in the earth, into which the water can be conducted from the surface above through streams which empty into it. The bed of the reservoir may also be dug up and the dirt removed from it until the fountain of pure water is reached, and then the water bursts forth from the bottom of the reservoir. This water is purer and more constant, and perhaps more copious and abundant. The heart then is like the reservoir and knowledge like the water. The five external senses are like the streams. Knowledge may possibly be conducted to the heart by means of the streams of the senses and the consideration of things observed until it is thus filled with knowledge. It is also possible to stop up these streams [from flowing into] it by solitude and seclusion and averting the eyes from seeing, and then to resolve in the depths of the heart to purify it and remove from it the layers of veils until the fountain of knowledge bursts forth from within it.

But if you say, “How can knowledge burst forth from the heart itself while it is destitute of it,” know that this is one of the wonders of the heart’s secrets. It is not permissible to deal with it in the knowledge of proper conduct (ʿilm al-muʿāmala). This much, however, can be mentioned, that the real natures of things are written down in the Preserved Tablet (al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ), and indeed in the hearts of the angels who are brought near [to God].

For just as an architect draws plans for buildings on blank paper and then brings them into actuality in accordance with that archetype (nuskha), thus the Creator of the heavens and the earth wrote an archetype of the world from beginning to end upon the Preserved Tablet, and then brought it into actuality in accordance with that archetype.

From the world which has been brought into actuality in the image [of the archetype] there is transmitted to the external senses and the retentive imagination (khayāl) still another image. For whoever looks at the sky and the earth and then closes his eyes, sees in his imagination the image of the sky and the earth, so that it is as though he were looking at them; and were the sky and the earth annihilated and he himself remained, he would find within himself the image of the sky and the earth as though he were beholding them and looking at them.

Then from his imagination an effect is transmitted to the heart, so that there is represented in it the real natures of things that have entered into sensation and imagination. The representation in the heart corresponds to the world that is represented in the imagination, which in turn corresponds to the world as it exists in itself, external to the imagination and heart of man. This existing world corresponds to the archetype existing in the Preserved Tablet.

Thus the world has four degrees of existence. There is existence in the Preserved Tablet; this is prior to its corporeal (jismâni) existence. Its

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2 Khayāl, the power to preserve the forms of sensibles perceived by the common sense after the objects themselves have been removed. It is a storehouse for the common sense, placed in the back part of the front ventricle of the brain, Jurjānī, al-Taʿrīfāt, p. 107. See also Wolfson, “Internal Senses,” p. 100n.; Weliur-Rahman, “The Psychology of Ibn-i-Sina,” p. 353.

3 Editor’s note: here, Imam al-Ghazâlî uses the word ṣūra, usually translated as form.

4 Cf. Ibn Sinâ’s three modes of existence. Things are ante res, in the mind of God; in rebus, natural existence together with its accidents; and post res, as conceived by the human intellect. Ueberweg, Philosophy, 1:413. Ghazâlî has merely subdivided
real (ḥaqīqī) existence follows this, and it is followed in turn by its imaginative (khayālī) existence,\(^5\) by which I mean the existence of its image in the imagination. Its imaginative existence is followed by its intellectual existence, by which I mean the existence of its image within the heart. Some of these [orders of] being are immaterial (rūḥāniyya) and some [are] corporeal. Of the immaterial, some are more immaterial in their [order of] being than others. This is a kindness (lutf) coming from the divine wisdom; for God has made the pupil of your eye in such a way that, in spite of its smallness, there is pictured within it the image of the world, the heavens and the earth, with all their widespread extent. Then it goes on from existence in the realm of sensation to existence in the imagination, and from it to existence in the heart. For you can never apprehend anything save that which has reached you; and were it not that He has placed an image (mithāl)\(^6\) of the whole world within your very being you would have no knowledge of that which is apart from yourself. Glory belongs unto Him who has ordered these wonders in the heart and eye, and then blinded the heart and eye to the perception of them so that the hearts of the majority of creatures have become ignorant of themselves and their wonders.

Let us now go back to intended purpose and say, “It is conceivable that the real nature of the world might be represented in the heart, its mental image coming now from the senses and again from the Preserved Tablet; even as it is conceivable that the image of the sun should be represented in the eye, coming now from looking directly at it, and again from looking at the water on which the sun shines which reproduces its image.” So whenever the veils are lifted between the heart and the Preserved Tablet, the heart sees the things which are therein, and knowledge bursts forth into it therefrom, so that it does not have to acquire its knowledge through the avenues of the senses. This is like the bursting forth of water from the depths of the earth. Whenever the heart becomes occupied with things


\(^6\) Cf. the Aristotelian idea of the human soul as a microcosm, uniting in itself all the faculties of the other orders of animate existence and distinguished by nous. Ueberweg, Philosophy, 1:168.
in the imagination derived from sensibles (mahṣūsāt), this veils it from examining the Preserved Tablet, just as when water is collected from streams [into a reservoir]; it is thereby prevented from bursting forth from the earth; or just as he who looks into the water that reproduces the image of the sun is not looking at the sun itself.

Thus the heart has two doors. One door opens toward the world of spirits (ālam al-malakūt), which is the Preserved Tablet and the world of the angels (ālam al-malāʾika). The other door opens toward the five external senses that are tethered to the visible material world. This visible world also resembles the world of spirits to a certain extent. Now the fact that the door of the heart is opened to the acquisition of knowledge through the senses is a thing you understand. But regarding its door that opens to the world of spirits and [is able to] see the Preserved Tablet, you have certain knowledge through meditating upon the wonders of dream-visions (ruʿyā) and the heart’s observation in sleep of what will be in the future or what was in the past, without any acquisition on the part of the senses.

That door, however, is opened only to one who devotes himself exclusively to the remembrance of God, the Exalted. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Men of a single [thought] have taken the lead.” He was asked, O Messenger of God, “Who are they?” He answered, “Those who are devoted to the remembrance of God, the Exalted, for this remembrance (dhikr) of theirs has put away from them their load of sin and they come to the resurrection unburdened.” Then he described them by relating the statement of God, the Exalted, “Then I shall draw near with my face toward them. Do you think that anyone knows what thing I desire to bestow upon him toward whom I turn my face?” Then He, the Exalted, said, “The first thing I give

7 Man’s potential intelligence is made actual from two directions: divine inspiration, and reasoning and argumentation. This was taught by Ibn Sinā (Weliur-Rahman, “The Psychology of Ibn-i-Sina,” pp. 356ff.); Ueberweg, Philosophy, 1:412ff.; Brett, Psychology, 2:51, 57), and further developed by Ghazālī, who added Sufi elements as we find here. The soul of man, or his heart, is between sense perception and divine illumination and is influenced by them both, in the sense that both are sources of knowledge. This is similar to what Ghazālī has already told us of man’s being between the angel and the demon, in the sense of being influenced by them both in the sphere of conduct.

8 This first part is an authentic hadīth given by Muslim from Abū Hurayra.

9 This latter part, which begins ‘for this remembrance’ and so on, is a weak addition. Wensinck, Handbook, p. 97a.
them is that I cast light into their hearts and they give tidings of me even as I give tidings of them.”10 The entrance for these tidings is the inner door.

So this is the difference between the knowledge of the prophets and saints and that of the learned and the philosophers (ḥukumāʾ): the knowledge of the former comes from within the heart through the door that is opened toward the world of spirits, whereas the knowledge of the philosophers11 comes through the doors of the senses that open to the material world. The wonders of the world of the heart and its wavering between the visible and invisible worlds cannot be fully dealt with in a [study of the] knowledge of proper conduct. But this is an example that will teach you the difference of the entrance of the two [kinds of] knowledge.

The second example will explain to you the difference between the two types of action, by which I mean the action of the learned and that of the saints. The learned work to acquire knowledge itself and gather it into the heart, but the saints among the Sufis labor only [with the goal of] polishing, cleansing, clarifying, and brightening the heart.

The story is told that once the Chinese12 and the Byzantines (Rūm) vied with one another before a certain king as to the beauty of their workmanship in decorating and painting. So the king decided to give over to them a portico so that the Chinese might decorate one side of it and the Byzantines the other side; and to let a curtain hang down between them so as to prevent either group from looking at the other. And he did so. The Byzantines gathered together countless strange colors, but the Chinese entered without any color at all and began to polish their side and to brighten it. When the Byzantines had finished, the Chinese claimed that they had finished also. The king was astonished at their statement and the way in which they had finished the decorating without any color at all. So they were asked, “How have you finished the work without any color?” They replied, “You are not responsible for us; lift the veil.” So they lifted it, and behold on their side there shone forth the wonders of the Byzantine skill with added illumination and dazzling brilliance, since that side had

11 Editor’s note: the Cairo text has ḥikma (wisdom), Zabidi (7:254) has ḥukamāʾ, as used above.
12 Zabidi gives a proverb which says that wisdom descended (in special power) upon three bodily members: the brain of the Greek, the hand of the Chinese, and the tongue of the Arab. See following page for painting representing the contest.
A painting of the contest that takes place between the Chinese and the Byzantines. (From a manuscript of Niżāmî, Khamsa, Shiraz, 1449–50, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 13.228.3, fol. 332r.).
Let us then limit ourselves to this brief mention of the wonders of the heart, for to undertake it in complete detail is not appropriate for [a discussion of] the knowledge of proper conduct (muʿāmala). But we have mentioned what is needed in order to know the depths and secrets of the knowledge of proper conduct, in order to benefit the one who is not satisfied with the external, nor content to take the shell instead of the kernel, but longs to have a detailed knowledge of the true nature of causes. In what we have mentioned he will find that which, if God wills, will both suffice and convince. God is Lord of success.\footnote{Zabidi omits all that follows; MSS have slightly varying endings.}

The \textit{Book of the Marvels of the Heart} is complete, and to God be praise and gratitude. It is followed by the \textit{Book of Disciplining the Soul and Refining the Character}.  

\begin{quote}
Praise be to God alone, and may 
His blessing be upon 
every chosen 
servant.
\end{quote}
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Printed on acid-free, Glatfelter offset 50 # extra bulk off-white paper made by the Glatfelter corporation of York, PA. It provides superior opacity, print clarity, and meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (Permanence of Paper). It was printed by the Friesens Corporation of Altona, Manitoba, Canada and perfect bound in 10 point full-color cover stock.
Verily in the remembrance of God
do hearts find tranquility

Qurān 13:28