

INTRODUCTION



The Degrees and Progressions of Man and the Degrees and Levels of Prayer

Let it be known that, in so far as man has degrees (*maqāmāt*) and progressions (*madārij*),¹ we should consider him as having two degrees: one degree is that of the world (*dunyā*) and witnessing (*shahādah*), the other is that of the here-after (*ākhirah*) and the unseen (*ghayb*). One is the shadow of the Oft-Compassionate (*ẓill al-raḥmān*) and the other is the shadow of the Ever-Merciful (*ẓill al-raḥīm*).² In accordance with this consideration, regarding the shadow and the bondsman, all the names of the possessor of the shadow and of the Lord occur in the encompassment of the two names: the Oft-Compassionate and the Ever-Merciful, as He has been pleased to say in conjunction with the noble verse, 'In the name of *Allāh*, the Oft-Compassionate, the Ever-Merciful'.³ The gnostics⁴ have said: 'Being manifests in⁵ the name of *Allāh*, the Oft-Compas-

1 On degrees and stations (*manāzil*) see 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 107–8.

2 The concept of the shadow (*ẓill*), here evoked in a Qur'ānic citation and extensively employed by Khomeini in his previous writings, is a far-reaching one, casting resonances as far back as Plato's parable of the cave. 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī gives a threefold classification of *ẓill* which is pertinent to what follows of Khomeini's usage of the concept. 'The shadow' is relative being, manifest through the determinates of the possible archetypes. 'The first shadow' is the first intellect and 'the shadow of God' is the perfect man realised in the presence of oneness. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 184.

3 Q.1.1.1.

4 See Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah*, Beirut, n.d., vol. 1, p. 102. Also see Khomeini's commentary on this quote in *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 100–1.

5 The preposition 'in' here translates the preposition in the Arabic *bi*. Another possible reading would be 'by, by means of, or through'. If this latter reading is adopted then it would mean that being manifests through the name of God and the meaning of the phrase as a whole changes. For Khomeini's understanding of being (*wujūd*) see *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 19–21, 71–3; his *Ta'liqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 13–5; *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-walāyah*, pp. 26–7, 48, 51, 57–8, 60, 68, 72, 76, 78–9. See also Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, *Hastī az naẓar-i falsafah wa 'irfān*, Tehran, n.d., pp. 6–15; Āshtiyānī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddimah-i qaysari bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 84–107; Sayyid Ḥaydar al-Āmulī's *Kitāb naṣṣ al-nuṣṣ*, pp. 445–50. Khomeini explains this notion of 'being' manifesting in the name of *Allāh* in his first work *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar* in two instances. In the first instance it is with reference to a tradition on the authority of *Ahl al-Bayt*, 'Through the *ba* being manifests and by the *nuṣṣ* the worshipper (*al-'ābid*) is distinguished from the one worshipped (*al-ma'būd*)'. In the second instance he quotes

sionate, the Ever-Merciful'. In the perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*),⁶ these two degrees consist of the manifestation of the absolute divine volition (*mashī'ah*) from the hidden places of the unseen aloneness (*al-ghayb al-aḥadī*) to the grip of matter, or the grip of the seventh earth—which is the veiling of humanity in accordance with the methodology of the eminent gnostics—and this is one

the famous statement of 'Alī, 'Verily all that which is in the Qur'ān is in the *al-fātiḥah* and all that is in the *al-fātiḥah* is in *bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm* and all that is therein is in the *bā* and all that is in the *bā* is in the *nuṭṭah* ('dot') and I am the *nuṭṭah* under the *bā*.' See *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 23, 52, 88. These instances are referenced by the Persian editors to the work *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fī asrār amūr al-mu'minīn* by al-Ḥāfiẓ Rajab al-Bursī. (Beirut, 1427 AH/2006, pp. 31, 35, 41, 56). Though al-Bursī has a chapter on this matter and elaborates in detail the concept of the *nuṭṭah* in his work, it may be useful to refer also to the work of Dāwūd b. Muḥammad al-Qayṣarī (*Maṭla' khuṣūṣ al-kalīm fī ma'ānī fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 32–3) where he quotes an oration of Ali, in which he states 'I am the *nuṭṭah* of the *bā* of *bismillāh*', and Sayyid Ḥaydar al-Āmulī, who explains the manifestation of being in the following manner, 'In sum, the mysteries [of *al-basmalah*] are not receptive to writing and composition; of this degree it is said, "Being manifests in the *bā* of *bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*", and it is said, "In the *bā* being manifests and by the *nuṭṭah* the worshipper (*al-'ābid*) is distinguished from the one worshipped (*al-ma'būd*)."' The Prince of the Believers said: "By God! If I had willed I could burden seventy camels with [the commentary of] the *ba* of *bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*." He also said: "I am the *nuṭṭah* under the *bā*." This is because he is as the *nuṭṭah* is in relation to the first determination (*al-ta'ayyun al-awwal*), which is the light of the Muḥammadian reality, due to his [the Prophet's] saying, "The first that God created was my light, called the Ever-Merciful (*al-raḥīm*)", and due to his saying, "Alī and I are from one light." For the prophet is like the *bā* and Ali is like the *nuṭṭah* beneath it. For the *bā* cannot be determined save by the *nuṭṭah*; just as the Prophet does not achieve perfection save through [the degree of] nearmostness (*walāyah*) even though the nearmost one (*walī*) is lesser in rank than the Prophet. It is to this that the Prince of the Believers alluded to when he said "Knowledge is a *nuṭṭah* of which the ignorant made much (*kaththarahā*)."' He means that real knowledge is a *nuṭṭah*; to wit the attainment of real knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ḥaqīqī*) depends upon the knowledge (*al-iṭlā'*) of this *nuṭṭah* and the manner of its manifestation (*ẓuhūr*) and its manifestations (*maẓāhir*) and their levels (*marātib*). However, the ignorant made much of it [along with] the denial of its occupant (*sāhibuhā*). And to whomsoever God assigns no light, no light has he (Q.24:40). That is the bounty of God; He gives it to whom He will, and God is of bounty abounding (Q.62:04). See al-Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār wa man-ba' al-anwār*, pp. 564–5.

- 6 The perfect man is another long-standing concept in gnostic discourse which Khomeini employs in this work. In the Shī'ī usage it is a particular way of conceptualising the infallible Prophet and imāms. See Khomeini, *Ta'liqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 68 and 138; Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣila bayn al-taṣawwuf wa al-tashayyū'*, 3rd ed., Beirut, 1982, vol. 1, p. 484; Ḥasan Zādah Āmulī, *al-Insān al-kāmil fī naḥj al-balāghah*, tr. (from the Persian) 'Abd al-Riḍā Iftikhārī, Qum, 1416 AH/1995; Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *Kalimat maktūnah min 'ulūm ahl al-ḥikma wa al-ma'rifah*, ed. 'Azīz Allāh al-'Aṭṭārī al-Qūchānī, Tehran, 1342 SH/1383, pp. 116–93.

of the two arcs of being,⁷ and from the grip of the inundation of the divine effusion (*fayḍ*) to the utmost limit of the unseen volition and the absolute-ness of being, which is the second arc.⁸ Thus, the perfect man, in accordance with these two degrees, to wit the degree of witnessing and manifestation according to the oft-compassionateness (*rahmānīyyah*), and the degree of the unseen and manifestation according to the ever-mercifulness (*rahīmīyyah*), is the complete circle of being.⁹ 'Then he drew nigh and came down, till he was two bows'-length or even nearer.'¹⁰ One of these two is the reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of the night of measure (*laylat al-qadr*)¹¹ and is the mystery thereof, for it is the

7 Khomeini here is alluding to the degree of the alone (*aḥad*) when he says 'unseen aloneness' (*al-ghayb al-aḥadī*). He explains in *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar* (p.23) that it is through absolute divine volition (*mashū'ah*) that the manifestation of being occurs. This he supports by the tradition of al-Ṣādiq that God created volition by itself (*bi-nafsihā*) and then He created things through volition (*Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 78, 98–101, 104, 106–7). Also see al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol. I, p. 8, note 51 and al-Ṣadūq, *al-Tawhid*, p. 339. For the divine will (*al-irādah*) understood as the divine act and volition (*al-mashū'ah*) as a creation through which things are created see al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol. I, pp. 109–10. Also see his note in *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 61, 65–6. These subtleties should be borne in mind in order to follow Khomeini's thought; see *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 19, 45–7, 49, 61–2, 65, 79. Furthermore, he states that the divine act is His volition (*Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 100, 106–7) and he also notes that absolute divine volition is described as the holy effusion (*al-fayḍ al-muaqaddas*), the broad mercy (*al-rahmah al-wāsi'ah*), the greatest name (*al-ism al-a'ẓam*), the absolute Muḥammadian nearmostness (*al-walāyah al-muṭlaqah al-muḥammadiyyah*), and the degree of 'Alī (*al-maqām al-'alawīyyah*). See Khomeini, *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 17–8. See also Āshtiyānī's introduction to Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 17–8. The arc of being alluded to here is the descending arc of being (*al-qaws al-nuzūlī*).

8 This is the ascending arc of being (*al-qaws al-ʿuḍī*). Divine effusion (*al-fayḍ al-ilāhī*) is divided into two. One is the most holy effusion (*al-fayḍ al-aqdas*) and the other is holy effusion (*al-fayḍ al-muqaddas*). It is through the former that the permanent archetypes are realised within the divine knowledge and through the latter they are realised in the external world. See al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭla' khushūṣ al-kalim fi ma'āni fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 15–9. Also see al-Bursī on the discussion of the reality of the *nuṣṣah* which he calls the first effusion in *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fi asrār amūr al-mu'minīn*, pp. 41, 43–4. When Khomeini uses the term 'absoluteness of being' here he is referring to the level of the divine essence.

9 Khomeini's remark on al-Qayṣarī's writings on the reality of being discussed above in the translator's introduction should be borne in mind here.

10 Q.53:8. Khomeini here is alluding to the degrees of even nearer (*aw andā*), suspended-hung (*al-tadallā*), and two bows'-length (*qāba qawsayn*). He returns to the discussion of these degrees in part 2, chapter 9. For his explanation of the degree of even nearer see *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, p. 15, and for the degree of suspended-hung see *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, p. 17.

11 This is a reference to what is alluded to in *sūrat al-Qadr*, Q.98:1–5. The night of measure

sun of reality within the veiling of determinates (*ta'ayyunāt*). The other is the reality of the day of resurrection, for it is the coming forth and dawning thereof from its veiling, and these are the entire day of divinity.

And from the consideration of man having three degrees: firstly, there is the degree of material dominion (*mulk*) and the world (*dunyā*); secondly, the degree of the isthmus (*barzakh*);¹² and thirdly, the degree of the intellect (*'aql*)¹³ and the hereafter (*ākhirah*). In the perfect man these three degrees are: a degree of the determinates of manifestation (*ta'ayyunāt al-maẓāhir*); a degree which is the degree of the absolute divine volition (*al-mashī'ah al-muṭlaqah*), which is the isthmus of isthmuses (*barzakh al-barāzikh*)¹⁴ and, according to one consideration, the degree of the thin cloud (*'amā*);¹⁵ and a degree which is the degree of the aloneness of the assemblage of the names (*maqām aḥadiyyah jam' al-asmā*).¹⁶ These three degrees are alluded to in the noble verse, 'In the name of *Allāh*', where '*Allāh*' alludes to the degree of

is identified with the person of Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet. As noted in the introduction, it is through the means of Fāṭimah that the eventide prayer is performed. Qāḍi Sa'īd Qummī in his *Sharḥ tawḥīd al-ṣadiq* explains that the reason why Fāṭimah is linked to this time is that she is the divine night and the night of measure (*laylat al-qadr*). He cites a tradition from Ja'far al-Šādiq, as recorded by the early exegete Furāt b. Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī, that he said: 'The night is Fāṭimah the radiant, and the measure is God the exalted. Thus she is the night of God (*laylat Allāh*). See Qummī, *Sharḥ tawḥīd al-ṣadiq*, p. 600. Also see Khomeini, *Ta'liqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 61.

- 12 The isthmus is the locus whence comes forth the sides of oneness (*al-wahdah*) and multiplicity (*al-kathrah*), and it is the reality of man (*al-ḥaqīqah al-insāniyyah*). A comprehensive discussion of this may be found in al-Fanārī, on whom Khomeini writes a commentary and who must be considered an important source. See al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, with various glosses, ed. Muḥammad Khwājawi, Tehran, 1374 SH/1995, pp. 205, 232. For the concept of the reality of man see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 149.
- 13 See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 149; al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 191–99; Khomeini, *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, p. 80.
- 14 Al-Fanārī describes the perfect man as the beloved of God (*maḥbūb al-ḥaqq*) and the isthmus of isthmuses (*barzakh al-barāzikh*). See al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 270.
- 15 The degree of the thin cloud is derived from the Prophet's answer to the question of where God was prior to creating, 'He was in a thin cloud' (*kāna fi 'amā*). Khomeini notes the difference of opinion regarding this matter, pointing out that some have seen this as alluding to the presence of aloneness (*al-ḥaḍrah al-aḥadiyyah*), whilst for others it concerns the presence of oneness (*al-ḥaḍrah al-wāḥidiyyah*). Khomeini himself, however, maintains that the term alludes to the presence of the most holy effusion (*ḥaḍrah al-fayḍ al-aqdas*). See Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 29–30; *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 72–3. See also al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 200–8; al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭla' khusūṣ al-kalim fi ma'ānī fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 32–3; Āshtiyānī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddimah-i qayṣarī bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, p. 432; Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt-i ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 148–9.
- 16 See al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 562.

the aloneness of assemblage (*maqām ahadiyyah al-jam'*),¹⁷ 'the name' (*ism*) alludes to the degree of the greater isthmus (*al-barzakhīyyah al-kubrā*),¹⁸ and the determinates of 'oft-compassionateness' and 'ever-mercifulness' allude to the divine volition.

And from the consideration of man having four degrees: these are the realm of dominion (*mulk*), the realm of the spirit (*malakūt*), the realm of invincibility (*jabarūt*), and the realm of divinity (*lāhūt*).¹⁹

And from the consideration of man having five degrees: these are absolute witnessing (*al-shahādah al-muṭlaqah*), the absolute unseen (*al-ghayb al-muṭlaq*), relative witnessing (*al-shahādah al-muḍāfah*), the relative unseen (*al-ghayb al-muḍāf*), and the degree of comprehensive being (*al-kawn al-jāmi'*). These correspond to the five presences (*al-haḍarāt al-khamsah*) employed in the language of the gnostics.²⁰

And from the consideration of man having seven degrees: they are known in the language of the gnostics as the seven citadels of love (*shahr-i 'ishq*)²¹ or the seven climes of being (*aqālim al-wujūd*).²²

And from a detailed consideration, man has a hundred or a thousand stations (*manzil*); the detailing thereof would be beyond the capacity of this brief treatise.²³

17 See Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, p. 51; al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 526.

18 See al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 506; Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 20, 45, 67, 75.

19 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī explains *mulk* as the realm of witnessing (*'ālam al-shahādah*) and *malakūt* as the realm of the unseen (*'ālam al-ghayb*). See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 108.

20 For both the fourfold and fivefold classifications see al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭla' khuṣūṣ al-kalim fi ma'ānī fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 23–4; al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 203, 231, 262–3, 287, 349–51, 373, 539, 593, 708; Āshtiyānī, *Sharḥ muqaddimah-i qayṣarī bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 268–95; Khomeini, *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, p. 120; *Ta'liqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 32–3. See also William Chittick, 'The Five Divine Presences: From al-Qunawi to al-Qaysari', in *Muslim World* 72 (1982), pp. 107–28.

21 This seems to be an allusion to a line from Rūmī wherein he laments, '*Haft shahr-i 'ishq rā 'Aṭṭār gasht | mā hanūz andar-i kham-i yek kūche'īm*' ('Aṭṭār wandered the seven citadels of love | In a single winding alley yet we remain'). This, in turn, evokes the seven valleys through which the wayfaring birds progressed towards their goal in 'Aṭṭār's most celebrated work, *Manṭiq al-ṭayr* ('The speech of the birds').

22 The division of the world into seven geographical regions is a common motif in Islamic literature and elsewhere, as is that of seven earths corresponding to the seven heavens.

23 See for example Khwājah 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī, *Manāzil al-sā'irūn*, Beirut, 1408 AH/1988, wherein al-Anṣārī gives one hundred such stations. Khomeini begins with man and the degrees of man because, discussing as he is the prayer of man, this work concerns primarily the arc of ascent, the upward progression of the prayer of the servant towards

As far as prayer (*namāz*) is concerned, which has a universal and pre-dominant²⁴ position amidst all acts of worship (*'ibādāt*) and divine rituals (*al-manāsik al-ilāhiyyah*), it concurs step by step with these degrees, for all the spiritual degrees of man are in accordance with his mystical journey, from the point of descent into the realm of material dominion, which is the dark abode of the soul (*nafs*), to the furthest limit of true spiritual ascent, which is the arrival (*wuṣūl*) at annihilation in God.²⁵

Prayer is the heavenly steed (*burāq*) of wayfaring (*ṣayr*) and the fluttering wings (*raḥṣ*) of ascension for the folk of gnosis and the lords of the heart. Each one of the folk of the wayfaring (*ṣayr wa sulūk*) unto God has their own specific prayers, and each one has a lot and share thereof according to their own degree. In the same way, all other rituals such as the fast (*ṣawm*) and the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) are also like this, although they do not possess the universality of prayer; 'The ways to God are as many as the breaths (*anfās*) of the creatures.'²⁶ For those who have not reached this degree, for them is no lot from their prayer; but rather the individual of any realm or degree (*nash'ah wa maqām*), if he does not abandon the mount of prejudice and egotism, denies the existence of the other levels (*marātib*). Furthermore, he who is convinced of this considers the other degrees (*maqāmāt*) to be useless and pointless. In the same way, the one who has not arrived at these levels (*marātib*) and degrees (*maqāmāt*) of man (*insāniyyah*) and who has

his Lord, through the three unities as discussed in the introduction. The prayer of the Lord commences with the oneness of essence and closes with the oneness of actions. In the servant's prayer the opposite is the case, rather it commences with the oneness of actions and progresses through the oneness of names to end with the oneness of essence. Otherwise conceived it may be said that the servant's prayer rises towards the Lord above, whilst the Lord's prayer descends towards His servant. This rising and ascending is also referred to as the arcs of ascent and descent, as discussed earlier. See Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī, *Rūḥ al-ṣalāt*, in *al-Arba'īnīyyāt li-kashf anwār al-qudsīyyāt*, pp. 49–50. Khomeini will return to this matter in depth in part 1, chapter 6 and in part 2, chapter 6.

24 The word '*amūdiyyat*' has been translated here as 'predominant'; the author here is basing his understanding upon the well-known tradition '*al-ṣalāt 'amūd al-dīn*' ('Prayer is the pillar of religion'), taking the term '*amūd*' and using it adjectivally.

25 Khomeini throughout this work refers to the concept of arrival (*wuṣūl*). For a full appreciation of this notion recourse should be made to 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, who quotes the following tradition from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, 'Whosoever knows parting from arrival, motion from stillness, he has reached firmness in unity (*tawḥīd*).': See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 76–7. Annihilation (*fanā*) and its opposite, subsistence (*baqā*), are concepts which the author employs throughout the text in various contexts. For an explanation of the two concepts and their relationship see the detailed note by 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 367.

26 * See Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *Ilm al-yaqīn*, Qum, 1400 AH/1980, vol. I, pp. 14, 32.

not extracted himself from the veiling of egotism will make denial and will think nothing of the ascensions and ways (*ma'ārij wa madārij*) of the folk of divine knowledge and the ones nearest to God. This very thing is one of the greatest impediments in the wayfaring to God and one of the foremost obstacles to the spiritual risings and spiritual degrees, which keep the commanding soul (*al-nafs al-'ammārah*),²⁷ on account of its love for itself and the vanities of this world, in the veiling of darkness. Furthermore, such an individual is aided by devilish whispered temptations causing him to cling to the earth, so much so that sometimes he begins to reckon that the prayer and fasting of the immaculate ones nearest to God is like his own prayer.²⁸ Or, if he upholds any distinction, he confines it to the exoteric disciplines of their prayer such as Qur'anic recitation (*qirā'ah*), lengthy bowing (*rukū'*), prostration (*sujūd*), and other such acts which are the outer form of prayer. Again, if he progresses a little further from this point, he deems the ultimate distinction to be the attention of the heart at the time of prayer and the meditation on its customary meanings and concepts, without having himself any awareness of the presence (*ḥuḍūr*) of the heart, the levels, and the mysteries thereof, or the means of realising it. Moreover, he is not even concerned, at the least, to realise the presence of heart according to the measure that he has carved out for himself, nor to remove the impediments to it, nor to realise its requisites.

Furthermore, the prayer of the nearest to God, peace be upon them, cannot be understood by our erroneous impressions. The first level of their worship, which is the general and normal degree, is the worship of the free. Moreover, for them there are other degrees (*maqāmāt*) and ways (*madārij*) amidst this wayfaring to God, some of which we will point out in the following pages.

In sum, just as for prayer there are degrees and levels, so at every level the prayer of the one who is praying will be much different to that at other levels. Similarly, his degree will be much different to other degrees. So, as long as man is in the form of man and is in formal terms a man, then equally his prayer is a form and is in formal terms a prayer. The benefit of this prayer is only that it is correct and that it fulfils formal Islamic law in the form that attends to all its parts and conditions correctly; however, this is neither acceptable at the threshold of the court nor approved by the soul (*pasand-i khātir*). Yet, if he takes steps from the exoteric level to the esoteric and from form to meaning, then his prayer would also find reality in every degree that

27 Q.12:53. For *al-nafs*, *al-nafs al-'ammārah*, *al-nafs al-lawwāmah*, and *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah* see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 114–6.

28 Here Khomeini alludes to the fourteen immaculate ones, i.e., the Prophet, his daughter Fāṭimah, and the twelve imāms.

he verifies. Therefore what has been alluded to before, that the prayer is the mount of traversing and the heavenly steed of wayfaring to God, would reflect this subject. Thus, as long as the prayer of man is in the form of prayer and man has not verified the level of the esoteric (*bāṭin*) and its mystery, then man is also in the form of man and has not verified the reality of this. So, the scale for the perfection of humanity and its reality is its ascension through true ascent and its rising up to the summit of perfection and arrival at the portal of God by means of the ladder of prayer. Therefore, for the one who believes in the Truth (*ḥaqq*) and the reality (*ḥaqīqah*) and for the one who traverses unto God on the steps of gnosis, it is necessary that he prepare himself for this spiritual journey and this faithfully ascension, and he should take with him whatever equipment and provision, daily fare, and aid are necessary for the way, and that he remove from himself all those things that hinder and obstruct the wayfaring, and traverse this path with the divine legions and the companion who is in agreement as to this path, in order that he may remain safe and secure from the devil and his troops, who are the brigands on the path of the way to the arrival (*wuṣūl*). After this, we will expound on companionship and the companion, and expound on the divine legions in the mysteries of the call to prayer (*adhān*) and the second call to prayer announcing the commencement of prayer (*iqāmah*).

Our main purpose in this chapter is to point out that for prayer, or rather all acts of worship (*ʿibādāt*), apart from this form, shell, and metaphor, there are other aspects such as the esoteric, the kernel, and a reality. This is known by way of the intellect (*ʿaql*) and there are numerous examples of evidence for it by way of transmission (*naql*). The mention of all of that is beyond the capacity of these pages and we will grace these pages only with the mention of some of them.

From them comes the well-known tradition which says, 'Prayer is the ascension of the believer'.²⁹ Contemplation and reflection upon this well-known tradition opens doors for those initiated folk who contemplate it, most of which we are veiled and excluded from. All the previous explanations can be drawn from this noble tradition.

And from them comes the following noble tradition from *al-Kāfī* with a chain of transmission to Abū ʿAbd Allāh, peace be upon him.³⁰ He said:

Verily service (*ʿibādah*) is threefold: there are people who serve God, may He be honoured and glorified, in fear and so that is the service of the vassal; and people who serve God, may He be blessed and exalted, seeking

29 * Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Iʿtiqādāt*, 1321 SH/1942, p. 29.

30 The *kunyah* here refers to Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (not Abū ʿAbd Allāh Imām al-Ḥusayn), as is usual in *ḥadīth* literature.

reward and so that is the service of hirelings; and people who serve God, may He be honoured and glorified, loving Him and so that is the service of the free, and that is the most excellent service.³¹

It has been reported in *Waṣā'il al-shī'ah* from the sources *ʿIlal*, *Majālis*, and *Khiṣāl* by al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq,³² through the chain of transmission, from the object of resort³³ (*ḥaḍrat*), Imām al-Ṣādiq, may the blessings of God be with him, that he said:

Verily, the people who serve God, may He be glorified and exalted, are of three kinds: and so a group serves Him desirous of his reward and so this is the service of the covetous and this is greed. Others serve Him fearful of the fire and so this is the service of the vassals and this is fear. However, I serve Him loving Him, may He be glorified and exalted, and so this is the service of the generous. And this is the security in accordance with what God, may He be glorified and exalted, has said: 'And they are secure from the fear of that day.'³⁴ And God, may He be glorified and exalted, has said: 'Say: "If you love God, follow me; God shall love you and He shall forgive your sins."³⁵ 'Whoever loves God, may He be glorified and exalted, God the High will love him, and whoever God loves will be saved.'³⁶

Similarly, a report containing similar content has been recorded in the *Nahj al-balāghah*.³⁷ And of that is the word of the Noble Envoy, 'Serve God as if you see Him, for though you do not see Him, He sees you.'³⁸ This alludes to two degrees (*maqām*) of the presence of the heart regarding the one who is served

31 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 84.

32 Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh al-Qummī, also known as al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381 AH/991).

33 The words *ḥaḍrat* and *janāb* are honourific epithets with which Khomeini precedes the names of the infallible imāms or those to whom he accords the greatest respect, as is the norm in the Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Turkish literary traditions. They have here both been translated as 'the object of resort', as noted by E. W. Lane in his *Arabic-English Lexicon*.

34 Q.27:89.

35 Q.3:31.

36 Ibn Bābawayh, *ʿIlal al-sharā'i*, p. 12; the last sentence of this extract is a tradition attributed to the Prophet. *Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, ed. 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, Qum, 1342 SH/1963, p. 188 and al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'ah*, vol. I, p. 45.

37 *Al-Rāḍī, *Nahj al-balāghah*, *ḥikmah* 229.

38 *Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Biḥār al-arwār*, Beirut, 1403 AH/1983, vol. LXXIV, p. 74; Raḍī al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Faḍl Ṭabarsī, *Makārim al-akhlaq*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn al-'Ālamī, Beirut, 1392 SH/1972, p. 459.

(*ma'būd*), and this is as follows: in addition, it has been reported of the Prophet that he said: 'Surely, two men of my *ummah*, standing in prayer, their bowing and prostrations are one, whilst the difference between their praying is as the difference between the earth and the heavens.'³⁹

It is reported of the object of resort, the Prince of the Believers, peace be upon him, that he said:

Ṭūbā⁴⁰ is for whomsoever is sincere in their service and supplication to God, who does not occupy his heart with whatever his eyes see, who does not forget the invocation of God with what his ears hear, and whose heart is not aggrieved by what is given to another.⁴¹

Later we shall mention sincerity (*ikhlas*).

Thus, through meditating upon these noble traditions and through contemplating the state of the imāms of guidance, God's peace be upon them, some of whom, during the time of the fulfilling of the divine trust, went pale and would begin to tremble, and some of whom went beyond the self and became completely unaware of anything other than God until they forgot the material domain of the body and the material realm of their own being, it is understood that the reality of these acts of divine service and comprehensive example, which released these holy winged beings (*al-ṭā'ir al-qudsi*) from the constraints of the cage of nature and arranged them according to the perfect Muḥammadian unveiling, may the blessings of God be with him and his descendants, which was revealed to his holy heart,⁴² are not the same as worldly form and exoteric material appearance. For any knowledgeable scholar or layman who can read the alphabet is able, given the correct conditions and the perfect formal terms, to establish this form and to come out well from the obligation without the need for the changing of colour to such an extent, the trembling of the nerves, and fear and dread of failings and shortcomings.

And with this we will end the chapter by mentioning a tradition and that should suffice for anyone who 'has a heart or listens and is a witness'.⁴³

The striving wayfarer, the gnostic, Sayyid b. Ṭāwūs,⁴⁴ may God be pleased

39 * Majlisi, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXI, p. 249.

40 Ṭūbā is the name of a heavenly tree.

41 * Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'ah*, vol. I, p. 43.

42 The possessive pronoun here refers to the Prophet.

43 Q.50:37.

44 His full name is 'Alī b. Mūsā b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Ṭāwūs (d. 664 AH/1266); he is sometimes referred to as Raḍī al-Dīn, and also in short as Ibn Ṭāwūs, as he is referred to by the author and the Persian editors of this text.

with him, reports in his book, *Falāḥ al-sā'il*, that it is reported in the tradition that Rizām the client of Khālīd b. 'Abd Allāh,⁴⁵ who was from amongst the wretched, questioned Imām Ja'far b. Muḥammad, peace be upon them, in the presence of Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr,⁴⁶ regarding prayer and its ordinances (*ḥudūd*).

And so he, peace be upon him, said: 'For prayer there are four thousand ordinances; you have not fulfilled any one of them.'

He said: 'Tell me what it is not permitted to abandon of it and save by which prayer is not complete?'

And so he, peace be upon him, said:

Prayer is not complete save for the master of full cleanliness, who has attained fullness,⁴⁷ not a slanderer and deviator, he knows and so is humble and steadfast, and he stands still between renunciation and covetousness, fortitude, and anguish, as though the promise has been wrought forth for him and the threat has befallen him; he has given away his goods, typified his aim, spent his heart's blood in God, turned the way towards Him, not distracted by distractions, and cut off the clinging of concerns from anything other than the One to Whom he betakes himself, and towards Whom he comes and from Whom he seeks help. And so when he comes forth with this, then this is the prayer that prohibits him from foulness and abomination.⁴⁸

The explanation of this noble tradition in accordance with the way of the folk of gnosis and its application to the principles and degrees of prayer would be lengthy. In respect of some of these degrees, we may allude to them through some of its phrasing. If these four thousand ordinances, which the object of resort, Imām al-Šādiq, peace be upon him, spoke of, were according to the exoteric ordinances and the disciplines of formal terms he would not have said: 'you have not fulfilled any one of them', because it is known that anyone can establish the disciplines of the formal terms of prayer. Truly, the cutting of ties from anything other than God (*ḥaqq*), the arrival in His presence, the spending of the heart's blood in His way, and the abandoning of other and otherness instantaneously, is a matter which is not accessible to anyone save the folk of the divine gnoses (*ma'ārif*), the immaculate ones nearest to God, the lovers

45 Rizām's full name was Rizām b. Muslim. He is said to have been saved from the cruelty of his master by Imām al-Šādiq. See Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl al-ma'rūf bi rijāl al-kashshī*, Tehran, 1382 SH/2003, p. 407.

46 This is a reference to Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (d. 158 AH/775), the second 'Abbāsīd caliph.

47 From the apparent meaning it could be argued that he is alluding to the coming of age.

48 * 'Alī b. Mūsā b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Ṭāwūs, *Falāḥ al-sā'il*, Tehran, 1382 AH/1962, p. 23.

(*muḥibbūn*), and ones drawn to the divine grace (*majdhūbūn*).⁴⁹

Ṭūbā for them, again Ṭūbā for them,
Their graces pleasant for the lords of grace.

49 For further details on being drawn to the divine grace see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 65.