

The Spirit of Islam

*This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed
My favor upon you and have chosen Islam as your religion*

— Quran (Maida: 3)

THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM

A GLANCE INTO THE EXTERNAL AND SPIRITUAL
DIMENSIONS OF ISLAMIC PRACTICE

Sharaaz Khan Qadri



Islamic Educational & Cultural Research Center, North America
P.O.Box 1646, Union City, CA 94587, USA
Telephone: 510-732-6786
E-Mail: info@iecrcna.org Web: www.iecrcna.org

Part of a series of IECRC publications

© All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording in language or otherwise, without the prior written permission of author as well as IECRC, California, USA.

Date Published: June 2005

Publisher:

Islamic Educational and Cultural Research Center, North
America, P.O. Box 1646, Union City,
CA 94587, USA

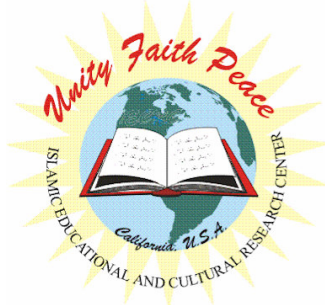
Telephone: (510) 732-6786

E-Mail: info@iecrcna.org

Web: www.iecrcna.org

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	v
Testifying to One's Faith	1
Connecting with One's Creator	17
Giving to the Poor	23
Seeking the Face of the Lord by Fasting	29
Pilgrimage to the House	39
Conclusion	55



The Islamic Educational & Cultural Research Center (IECRC) is a non-profit, non-political, grass-roots, community-based 501(c) (3) organization, with the mission to provide academic and spiritual resources to diverse religious and cultural groups. IECRC was founded in 2002, and now has an office and Library in Hayward, California. As a community service organization, it is based on the model of the centuries' old Islamic tradition of bringing peace and harmony to society by addressing the essential needs of people regardless of their cast, creed, color, religion, or any other discriminating factor.

As a research based organization, IECRC is dedicated to publish research journals, books and monographs on issues related to multicultural groups in general, and spiritual knowledge in specific.

Management, IECRC

California, USA

CHAPTER ONE

Testifying to One's Faith

The Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was born among a people who worshiped idols of stone and wood; others worshiped the planets, stars, sun and moon; still others worshiped their kings and rulers. His father, Azer (who some say was his uncle who took care of him after his father's death) used to make the idols with his own hands.

As a child, Prophet Abraham's (peace be upon him) heart and mind was enlightened with wisdom.¹ He looked at how his father made the statues that people so faithfully worshipped, and Abraham (peace be upon him) often played on the backs of these statues. One day, his father saw him riding the statue of *Mardukh* and he became furious. He ordered his son not to play with it again.

Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) asked: "What is this statue, father? It has big ears, bigger than ours." His father answered: "It is Mardukh, the god of gods, son! These big ears show his deep knowledge." This made Abraham (peace be upon him) laugh. He was only seven years old at that time. He noticed that these idols did not eat, drink, or talk, and they could not even turn themselves right-side-up if someone turned them upside-down. How, then, could people believe that such statues could harm or benefit them, let alone be their Creator?

Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) observed how people would go to the huge temple in the middle of the city and bow at the idols crying, begging and imploring them for help as if they could hear or understand their requests!

At first, this all seemed funny to Abraham, but later he began to ponder. He said to himself, "Could all these people be

¹ Qur'an (21:51)

deceived?” Worse, his father wanted him to be a priest when he was to grow older.

One night, Abraham (peace be upon him) left his house for the mountains. He walked alone in the dark until he came across a cave in the mountain, where he sat resting his back against its wall. He looked at the sky. Hardly did he look at the stars when it occurred to him that these very same planets and stars were being worshiped by people on earth. His young heart was filled with tremendous pain. He thought about what was beyond the moon, the stars and the planets and was perplexed that these celestial bodies could be worshiped by men. He looked at the moon and the stars and rejected, in his heart, the notion that things that rise and set with the day and night could create the heavens and the earth. It then dawned upon him that there must be One that created all this in beautiful harmony, each moving in perfect balance with the permission and command of One Greater than all of these. Thus began the prophetic career of the father of the three monotheistic faiths.²



The sister of the wife of the Prophet Zechariah (peace be upon him) had a daughter named Hannah. She was married to the ‘Imran³, a leader of the Israelites. Hannah (may God be pleased with her) longed for a child and many years had gone by without her bearing a child. One day, to her delight, she was to learn that she had in her womb a baby-to-be. She made a vow that the child will be dedicated for the service of her Creator, Most High. This presented a problem because the

² Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

³ Imran (peace be upon him was) was the son of Bashim, son of Amun, son of Misha, son of Hosqia, son of Ahriq, son of Mutham, son of 'Azazia, son of Amisa, son of Yamish, son of Ahrihu, son of Yazem, son of Yahfashat, son of Eisha, son of Iyam, son of Rahba'am, son of David (peace be upon him).

custom of the Israelites at that time did not allow for women to serve in the temple.

The father of the child did not live long enough to see his awaited baby. The Prophet Zechariah (peace and blessing be upon him) wrapped the baby up and brought her to the elders of the temple. Since the child was from a noble family, the elders were keen to accept her and each wanted to be her guardian. The custom was that lots would be drawn to determine whose protection was the orphaned child to be under. When the lots were drawn, it was decided that the little girl was to be put under the care of the Prophet Zechariah (peace and blessing be upon him) who was her maternal uncle, who was well aware of the vow that the child's mother had made, and who served in the temple. Thus, the vow of her mother was accepted by her Lord (God, Most High).

Mary (may Allah be pleased with her) grew up in good manners under the guidance of the Prophet Zechariah (peace and blessings be upon him). To ensure that she had her privacy to perform her devotions, he built a separate room for her in the temple. As she grew, she spent her time in devotion to her Lord (Allah). The Prophet Zechariah (peace and blessings be upon him) devoted time to her daily ensuring that her sustenance and spiritual needs were met. One day, he found fresh fruit, which was out of season in her room. As he was the only person who could enter her room, he asked her about how the source of the fruit. She replied that they were provisions from God, as He gives to whom He wills.⁴ By this, the Prophet Zechariah (peace be upon him) understood that there was something very special about this young girl. Thereafter, he devoted more time to her, teaching and guiding her along the way. She grew to be a devoted servant of God, glorifying Him day and night. One day, while she was praying in the temple, there appeared before her an angel in the form of a man. Filled with terror, she tried to flee, seeking the aid of her Protector, Most Powerful.

⁴ Qur'an (3: 33-37)

The angel exclaimed that he was only a Messenger from her Lord to give her the good news of a righteous son. “O my Lord! From where shall I have a son when no person has touched me?”⁵ She questioned. The angel replied “So (it will be), your Lord has said: ‘That is easy for Me.’ And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us, it is a matter decreed.”⁶

The angel’s visit caused Mary great anxiety, which increased as the months went by. How could she face giving birth to a child without a husband? Later, she felt that new life moving within. With a heavy heart, she left the temple and went to Nazareth, the city in which she was born where she settled in a farm house to avoid public. But fear and anxiety did not leave her. She was from a noble and pious family. Her father had not been an evil man nor was her mother a lewd woman. How could she prevent slanderous talk about her honor?

After a few months, burdened with the weight of motherhood, she left Nazareth, not knowing where to go. She had not gone far, when she was overtaken by the time of childbirth. Under a dry palm tree, she gave birth to a most beautiful son. Looking at her beautiful baby, she exclaimed: “I wish I had died before this happened and had vanished into nothingness!”

Suddenly, she heard a voice nearby: “Grieve not, your Lord has placed a rivulet below, and shake the trunk of this tree, from which ripe dates will fall. So eat and drink and regain the strength you have lost; and be of good cheer, for what you see is the power of Allah, Who made the dry palm tree regain life, in order to provide food for you.” For a while she was comforted by this miracle, for it was a sign of her innocence and purity. She decided to return to the city. However, her fears also returned. What was she going to tell people?

Sharing in his mother’s worry, the baby began to speak: “If you meet any person say: ‘I have vowed to fast for The

⁵ Qur’an (3:47)

⁶ Qur’an (19: 18-21)

Beneficent and may not speak to any person today.’⁷ With this miracle, Mary (may Allah be pleased with her) felt at ease.

On arrival in the city with a new-born baby in her arms the curiosity of the people was aroused. They accused her by saying: “This is a terrible sin that you have committed.”⁸ As she put her finger to her lips and pointed to the child, the child began to speak clearly: “I am the servant of Allah. Allah has given me the Book, and has made me a prophet, and has blessed me wherever I may be, and has enjoined on me prayers and alms-giving as long as I live. Allah has made me dutiful towards she who has borne me. He has not made me arrogant nor unblessed. Peace unto me the day I was born, the day I die and the day I shall be raised alive.”⁹

And thus Allah protected the sanctity of the Noble Lady of the Family of ‘Imran through miracles of the Prophet Jesus (Isa – may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him and his mother).



The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him and his family) truly honored Lady Mary the mother of Jesus (peace be upon him and his mother) and once said that the best of the world's women is Mary (in her lifetime), and the best of the world's women is Khadijah (in her lifetime).¹⁰ He also has said that many among men attained perfection, but among women none attained perfection except Mary the daughter of ‘Imran, and ‘Asiya the wife of Pharaoh; and the superiority of ‘Aisha¹¹ to other women is like the superiority of Tharid (an Arabic dish) to other meals.”

⁷ Qur'an (19:26)

⁸ Qur'an (19:27)

⁹ Qur'an (19: 30-33)

¹⁰ Sahih Bukhari

¹¹ ‘Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) was the youngest wife of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He loved her dearly and she later became one of the most learned women of her time.



Nowhere is the story of Mary (may Allah be pleased with her) more beautifully illustrated than in these Qur'anic verses.

And when the angels said, 'O Mary; verily Allah has chosen you and purified well, and today has chosen you from amongst the women of all the worlds'.

'O Mary! Stand before your Lord humbly and prostrate for Him and bow down with those who bow down.

These are the tidings of unseen that We reveal to you in secret. And you were not with them when they drew lots with their pen that under whose guardianship Mary should be given, and you were not with them when they were disputing.

And remember when the angels said to Mary, 'O Mary! Allah gives you glad tidings of a word from Him, whose name is Masih, Isa¹² son of Mary, he shall be dignified in the world and the Hereafter and of those nearest to Allah.

And he shall talk to the people in the cradle and in the ripe age (Maturity) and shall be of the righteous.

She said, 'O my Lord! From where shall I have a son no person has touched me. Said He, "Allah creates in such a way what He pleases". When He decrees any thing, then He only says to it 'Be! And it is.

And Allah will teach him the Book and wisdom and the Taurat and Injeel¹³.

And he shall be a Messenger towards the children of Israel saying this, 'I have brought to you a sign from your Lord; that I make a form out of clay like a bird for you then again breathe in it and it becomes a bird at once by the

¹² Isa is the Arabic name for Jesus (peace and blessings of God be upon him and his mother)

¹³ The Torah (Taurat) of Moses (peace be upon him) and the Gospel (Injeel) that was revealed to Jesus (peace be upon him)

command of Allah; and I heal the born blind and the leper and I make the dead alive by the command of Allah and tell to you whatever you eat and what you store in your houses. No doubt, in these things there is a great sign for you if you believe.

And I have come confirming the Torah that was before me; and for this that I should make lawful some of those things, which were forbidden to you; and I have brought to you a sign from your Lord then fear Allah and obey my command.

No doubt Allah is the Lord of me, of yours, of all so worship Him only. This is the straight path. ¹⁴

The likeness of Isa with Allah, is like Adam. He created him of dust, then said, 'Be and 'he' was at once.¹⁵



One day a group of Jews from Khaybar came to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and said “O Father of Qasim, God created the angels from light. And He created Adam (peace be upon him) from clay and He created the Devil from fire and He created the Heavens from smoke and He created the Earth from the foam of the water. Tell us about your Lord?” The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did not answer like any one of us would have. He waited. Not so that he didn’t know the answer, as he was given the knowledge of what is and what is to come, but because he waited for the right time. Then revelation came from his Lord (Most High):

Say (O Beloved!) He is Allah, the One

Allah the Independent, Care free

He begot none, nor was He begotten

And nor is anyone equal to Him¹⁶

¹⁴ Qur’an (3:42-51)

¹⁵ Qur’an (3:59)



According to some sources Hadrat Sultan Bahu¹⁷ (may Allah be pleased with him) was born in the village of Shorkhote in Punjab Province in the year 1039 AD, during the reign of the great Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan.

Already as a child his saintly qualities became apparent. He too, like Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (may Allah be pleased with him), refused to drink his mother's milk between dawn and dusk during the blessed month of Ramadan.

Despite showing inherent spiritual qualities he was still guided by his pious, devout and saintly mother, Ma Rasti (may Allah be pleased with her). In his childhood and early days, she was responsible for both his inward and outward training, coloring his personality in the Prophetic light.

Ma Rasti (may Allah be pleased with her) had seen a vision that she will soon be blessed with a child with inherent spiritual qualities whose light of inward poverty in Allah will benefit many a seeker till the end of time. She was instructed to name the child 'Ba Hu' - meaning – 'With Allah.'

It is said that in the early years of his life, whenever Hadrat Sultan Bahu (may Allah be pleased with him) ventured out of his house, he caused alarm because whenever his sight fell onto non-Muslims, they would involuntarily recite the *Kalima Shahaadah* (declaration of Faith). The townsfolk sent a delegation to the parents of the saint (may Allah be pleased with them), requesting that a guard or sentry be posted near their house, so that whenever 'little' Bahu would venture out a

¹⁶ Qur'an (Chapter 112)

¹⁷ Like many Sufi Saints of Indian Subcontinent, Sultan Bahu (may Allah be pleased with him) was also a prolific writer in Punjabi, with more than forty books on Sufism attributed to him. He belonged to the Qadiri Sufi order.

siren would be sounded so that the people would take shelter from the penetrating gaze of ‘little’ Sultan Bahu.

One day on his return from a journey to Delhi, Hadrat Sultan Bahu (may Allah be pleased with him) lay resting on the side of the road when a group of Hindu Sanyasies (priests) came by. They were lost so one of them disturbed the resting Bahu asking for right way. Immediately, the saint replied “*La Ilaha Illa Llah Muhammad ur-Rasul ul-Llah* is the right way”. On hearing this, the group went into a state of ecstasy and immediately embraced Islam. Through the blessings of the saint, all of them reached the stage of being an ‘*Abdal*’ (A very high spiritual rank granted by God to the most devout Muslim saints).



The preceding stories are true events related from the Holy Qur’an, from the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), and from our rightly guided predecessors. All of them have one thing in common, and that is the Unity of God. To witness in your heart and by the spoken word that there is no god except the One True God (Allah¹⁸) is the first part of the testimony of faith. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) has said that anyone who utters the first part of the testimony of faith in his or her lifetime will be removed from the fire.¹⁹

Laa ilaha illa Llah

There is no god but God (Allah)!



Many centuries had passed. The house that was built by Abraham and his son Isma’il (peace be upon both of them)

¹⁸ Allah is the Arabic term for God. Arab Christians and Muslims both use this term to describe the term God.

¹⁹ Sahih Bukhari – vol. 5 page 70; Sahih Muslim – kitab ul-Iman vol. 1 pages 194, 164; As-Shifa of Qadi Iyad.

solely for the worship of the One and True God, was now filled with idols of various shapes and sizes. People had fallen back to the old ways. This was a time known as the *Jahiliyyah* (The Age of Ignorance). The people around this house were the Arabs. The story of Abraham (peace be upon him) had reached them, but had become distorted over time.

Tribal affiliations were absolutely important if one were to be considered safe. The Arabic language had reached its peak in oratory and eloquence. Wars would spark between rival tribes because the poet of one tribe would recite poetry against the other. Such would continue for years.

Even children were not safe. Little baby girls were buried alive as the *Jahiliyyah* Arabs considered the girl a shame and a sign of weakness of the father. The birth of a son was a sign of manhood and strength. Little girls were buried alive after birth, no questions asked.

Certain Christian holy men lived around the outskirts of Mecca, while a greater number of Jewish scholars lived in Yathrib (now and forever named *Medina Munawwarah* – The City of Light). They all were awaiting the one who they had read about in their books and in the contents of the poems of the early Unitarians²⁰. There were many, many other such incidents where the coming of a Prophet was described. Sometimes in books, other times on stones and ancient graves.

Mecca was center of business and economy for trade routes between Syria in the North and Yemen in the South. This angered a certain king called *Abraha* from Abbysinniya. He wanted a share of the economic profits. He was of the thinking that by building a magnificent house of idol-worship, he could attract the economic welfare. After he completed the building no one showed for the grand opening, which eventually led to

²⁰ The Poetry of Tubba. Tubba was a King of Yemen who wanted to destroy Yathrib, so the most learned Jewish Scholar, Shamul, gave a lengthy description of a Prophet who was to appear there, prompting Tubba to leave them and the city alone.

a showdown between the Arabs and Abraha's army, who were intent on destroying the Meccan house (the Ka'ba). A significant part of this event occurred when the elephant that lead the army, knelt in submission in before the house and refused to destroy it. Some narrations say that the Elephant knelt when he saw the light in the forehead of Abdul Muttalib²¹. Suddenly, there appeared in the sky a cloud of birds that swooned down with such thrust upon Abraha's army, each carrying two stones killing most of the army. The remaining army including Abraha died of a disease on the way back to his city. This was the result of the prayer of the leader of the keeper of the Kaaba (from the Qurayshi tribe), Abdul Muttalib, where he asked the Lord of the Kaaba to protect His house of Worship. This was called the year of the Elephant.

During the spring of the same year, a baby was born to lady Amina whose husband Abdullah was on a trade mission. Abdullah was to die on his way back never to reach or see his unborn child.

This was a sad time for lady Amina, but as a consolation to her she became more and more aware of the light that was within her. One night, it shone so brightly that all worldly veils fell away and she would witness the horizon alight beholding all that was between the East and the West. There were other incidents.

Lady Amina did not live long and followed her husband a few years later. Muhammad (peace be upon him) was to come under the care of his grandfather Abdul Muttalib, and later his uncle Abu Talib. He would go on trade missions with his uncle to Syria and once or so met some Christian monks. These encounters were short and always in the company of his elders.

²¹ Traditional sources maintain that this was the light of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that was passed down from generation to generation from the point where the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) witnessed the same light in his thumb nails and kissed it.

As the years had passed, the young Muhammad (peace be upon him) was to marry Lady Khadija, his companion in the most difficult of years to come. He had gained a reputation as being honest and trustworthy. Everyone loved him. Even the children of Mecca loved being around him.

The ways of the Arabs bothered his conscience. Their idol-worship, their pride in and love worldly things, and a host of other ills of the time. He knew he was different from them. He avoided their company and would take to the mountains to get away from all of this and to meditate in a cave far above the city of Mecca. It was on one such night that he was to hear a voice saying "Recite." He tried to ignore the voice. Then again it called out to him "Recite!" He replied "But I am not a reciter." The voice grew louder and he felt himself being embraced tightly. Each time the voice grew louder, he was embraced even tighter, until he felt that he was going to be crushed. "What shall I recite?" he responded to the voice.

Recite in the name of your Lord Who created

Created man from a clot of blood

Recite, for your Lord is the Most Generous

Who taught writing by the pen

Taught man that which he knew not²²

In all glory there stood in front of him an angel. "O Muhammad (peace be upon you), you are the Messenger of God. And I am Gabriel."

In awe, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) descended the mountain. "Cover me cover me" he asked Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her). She consoled him in the most loving way, reminding him of his kindness to the weak and the orphans, and that God would not let him down for he had the best of character among his people.

²² Quran (96: 1-5)

Lady Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her), decided to discuss this with her cousin Waraqah ibn Nawfal, a Christian who was now an old man and blind in the eyes. After listening attentively to the incident he said “Holy! Holy! By Him in whose hand is the soul of Waraqah, there has come unto Muhammad (peace be upon him), the greatest Namus²³. Just like he had come unto Moses (peace be upon him). Bid him rest assured, Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Prophet of his people.” Later he was to hear the incident from the very lips of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and would reply “You will be called a liar, and ill-treated, and they will cast you out and make war against you. And God knows, if I ever live to see that day, I will help His cause.” Waraqah then leaned forward and kissed the blessed forehead of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family). And thus started the string of prophetic revelation upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).



Salman was a young lad who loved to read. He had a special liking for the religious scripture and spent a great deal of time with the Christian monks and religious scholars of Persia.

One day he asked his mother that he would like to become a scholar and travel for the sake of knowledge. When she gave him permission, he began learning from one teacher after another each sending him to a different teacher to further his studies. One after another they all passed away and at the end Salman was told by the last of his wise old teachers that he must look for this city of date palm orchards between two great mountains. Because in this city was to arrive the last of the Prophets (peace be upon them all).

When his beloved teacher died, Salman felt lost and wondered to himself how would he ever find this city? How long will it be before he would find the Prophet that his teacher had so well described? All these questions perplexed him.

²³ The Greek Nomos, the Angel of Revelation

It was on one of his journeys in search of the last Prophet (peace be upon him), that he was taken captive by bandits who took him as a slave. They traveled for many days and just as things seemed worse for Salman, who had lost all hope to ever find the Prophet (peace be upon him) whom he so much yearned to meet, he entered with the bandits upon a city with orchards of date palms between two mountains. Salman couldn't hold himself with joy. He had reached his destination and it was nothing but Divine guidance that led him to this city.

Meanwhile, just as Waraqah had described, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) after thirteen years of immense suffering at the hands of his people, was ordered by his Creator to migrate from Mecca to Medina. This he did after about seventy of his companions already migrated. Much had transpired since the first revelation. His beloved wife, Lady Khadija, was no more. The protection of his uncle Abu Talib was no more. He had become the object of daily reprisal and hatred because of the ground-breaking message he faithfully conveyed.

In *Medina Munawwarah* he was to find a large community who were willing to give their lives for him and the message that came down from his Lord. Things were different here. Islam was now to grow stronger and the community was to expand coming under the fold of Islam.

Salman arrived just around the time when *Medina Munawwarah* was awaiting the arrival of the Prophet (peace be upon him). In Medina, Salman was sold to a Jewish master.

While the Prophet (peace be upon him) entered the city, and the children and young girls of the city recited beautiful poetry in praise of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Salman wept as he was laboring hard in the orchard of his master, because he could not go and welcome the Prophet (peace be upon him). As the days went by Salman became more and more anxious to meet the Prophet (peace be upon him). He would steal time out in the night and escape to listen

in the distance the beautiful words of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He longed to get a closer look. One day he got his chance and slowly made his way to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He looked over the Prophet (peace be upon him) curiously and seemed very agitated. The Prophet (peace be upon him) knew what Salman was looking for. As Salman slowly made his way behind the blessed back of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Prophet (peace be upon him) ever so gently lowered his shirt only to expose the mark between his shoulder blades. This was what Salman was looking for. He sat down and wept silently. He couldn't hold himself anymore and his tears flowed and flowed with no end. The Prophet (peace be upon him) drew him closer and embraced him. Salman had witnessed the Seal of Prophethood that as foretold by his teachers, appeared between the shoulder blades of all Prophets (peace be upon them all).

Salman al-Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him) was later to be bought off from his master and freed to become one of the greatest companions of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) Companions. His contribution to the religion of Islam is unquestionable.



All the preceding events are true and are related from the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), and from our rightly guided predecessors. The purpose of relating these events is for the reader to get a feeling of what the second part of the first pillar of Islam means – that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the last and final Messenger of God. This completes the testimony of faith. Numerous such events have been related that testify to the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Laa ilaha illa Llah

There is no god but God (Allah)!

Muhammad ur-Rasul ul-Llah

Muhammad is the Messenger of God!

Believing in the above words and uttering it places you in the fold of Islam and among those who have submitted (Muslims). May it be so – Ameen!

Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things.
- (Qur'an 33:40)



CHAPTER TWO

Connecting with One's Creator

In the trees and mountains that stand high above our heads, and in the stars that rise and set each night, like the animals that are humbled and bowed in their natures, and the living plants that draw their nourishment from the earth, the actions of the one performing the ritual prayer symbolizes something more than just a mundane exercise of bodily limbs. It reinstates the central position in creation for which God has destined man. It is the means by which creation connects with the Creator; the ascension of the believer and means of stilling the spirit. It is that river in which the believer washes away the soil of worldliness five times a day.



The Prophet Dawood (David – May the peace and blessings of God be upon him and his son) used to say in his intimate prayers: “My God, who inhabits Your house? And from who do You accept the Prayer?” Then God replied by Divine inspiration, “He who inhabits My House, and he whose Prayer I accept, is none but he who is humble before My Majesty, spends his days in Remembrance of Me, and keeps his passions in check for My sake, feeding the hungry and sheltering the stranger and treating the afflicted with compassion. His light shines in the sky like the sun. If he invokes Me, I am at his service. If he asks of me, I grant his request. In the midst of ignorance, I give him discernment; in heedlessness, remembrance; in darkness, light. He stands out among ordinary people as Paradise towers over earthly gardens, its rivers inexhaustible and its fruits not subject to decay.”²⁴

²⁴ Related by Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) *Ihya Ulum ud-Din* of Imam al-Ghazali



When Hatim al-Asam²⁵ was asked by a Shaikh as to how he performed his Prayer, he replied “When the time for Prayer comes, I make two ablutions, outward ablution with water and inward ablution with repentance. When I go to the place of prayer, I feel I am standing in the Sacred Kaaba in Mecca with the Station of Ibrahim (peace be upon him) ahead of me, Paradise on my right, Hell on my left, the Bridge *Sirat* under my feet, and the angel of death behind me. After that I say *Allah-u-Akbar* (God is Greater) to start the Prayer with full reverence, and stand with respect, recite the Qur’an with awe, bow down with humility, prostrate with submission, sit with grace and gratitude and wish *salaam* (peace) to the whole world (by turning my face to the right and left).



There was a man who lived in the previous generations when humans would live for hundreds of years. On a deserted island he worshipped his Lord day and night in Prayer. He did this for five hundred years, before he died. It was related by the Prophet (peace be upon him) that this man will be brought in front of His Creator on the Day of Judgment and pronounced, “Enter by Our Mercy into Paradise!” His response will be, “By my worshipful prayer!” The Lord Most High will repeat: “Enter by Our Mercy into Paradise!” and again he will deny that it was by the Mercy of God. This will continue until he will be asked to put his eye on one of the trays of the scales and five hundred years of his Prayer on the other. The weight of his single eye will exceed that of his worship. He will then admit that it is through the Mercy of His Lord that he may enter Paradise.

²⁵ A great Saint and Friend of Allah

The moral of the story is that we owe our existence to our Creator, and regardless of whether we can ever repay our debt to God, we must remain grateful to our dying breath for that last breath itself. Nobody likes an ingrate and we vie with each other to thank each other (which is a good practice), but do we ever thank the One Who created the world and everything in it? This is something to ponder about.



Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani²⁶ (may Allah be pleased with him) has said,

Prayer is the supplication of the created to the Creator. It is the meeting of the servant and the Lord. The place of this meeting is the heart. If the heart is closed, heedless, and dead, so is the meaning of worship. No good comes to the material being from such a Prayer. For the heart is the essence of the body; the rest is dependent upon it. As the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing of God be upon him and his family) says, ‘There is a piece of flesh in a man’s body – when it is in a good state, the whole being improves, and when it is in a bad state, the whole being falls apart. Beware, that piece of flesh is the heart.’

Prayer prescribed by the religion is to be performed at specific times. Within a day and night there are five such times of Prayer. The best place to perform them is in a mosque, in congregation, turning toward the direction of the city of Mecca, following the one who leads the prayer without hypocrisy, not for the approval of others, and without ostentation.

²⁶ Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166 CE) was a great Saint of Islam. He was a descendent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from both, his mother and father. He is known for his extraordinary spiritual experiences and memorable sayings and teachings. The famous Qadiri Spiritual Order is founded in his name.

The time for inner worship (Prayer) is timeless and endless, for the life here and in the hereafter. The mosque for this Prayer is the heart. The congregation is the inner faculties, which remember and recite the names of the unity of Allah in the language of the inner world. The leader of this Prayer is the irresistible wish. The direction of this Prayer is toward the oneness of Allah – which is everywhere – and His eternal nature and His eternal beauty.

The true heart is the one which can perform such a prayer. A heart like this neither sleeps nor dies. A heart and a soul like this are in continuous worship, and a being with such a heart, whether he appear awake or asleep, is in constant service. The inner worship of the heart is his whole life. There is no longer the sound of recitation, nor standing, bowing, prostrating, or sitting. His guide, the leader of his prayer, is the Prophet Muhammad himself (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family). He speaks with Allah, Most High saying, *Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help* (Qur'an 1:4). These divine words are interpreted as a sign of the state of the perfect man, who passes from being nothing, being lost to material things, into a state of oneness. Such a perfect heart receives blessings from the Divine. One of the blessings is mentioned by our Master the Prophet (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family): 'The prophets and those that are beloved to Allah continue their worship in their graves as they did in their house while they were of this world.' In other words, the eternal life of the heart continues its supplications to Allah Most High.

When the ritual worship (Prayer) of the material being and the inner worship of the heart unite, the prayer is complete. It is perfect worship, and its rewards are great. It brings one spiritually to the realms of the proximity of Allah, and physically to the highest level of one's possibility. In the world of appearances one becomes the devout servant of Allah. Inwardly one becomes the wise one who has attained the true

knowledge of Allah ('*Arif billah*). If ritual worship does not unite with the inner worship of the heart, it is lacking. Its reward is only advancement in rank. It will not bring one close to the realm of the Divine.²⁷



Salaat (Prayer, Worship) is the second pillar of Islam. It becomes binding on the one who has borne witness to the testimony of faith (the first pillar) to pray five times a day without fail. It is blameworthy to miss one's Prayer without a valid reason such as insanity, occasional sleep, unconsciousness, menstruation, post-partum bleeding, or occasional forgetfulness. Its condition includes ritual purification.



²⁷ Kitab Sirr al-Asrar, Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (tr. The Secret of Secrets – Shaykh Tosun Bayrak).

CHAPTER THREE

Giving to the Poor

Some of them have said that generosity is to give with discrimination between the deserving and the non-deserving, while bountifulness is to give without any discrimination between the two.

These two qualities are illustrated by the example of the Prophet Ibrahim (May peace be upon him) and the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The Prophet Ibrahim (May peace be upon him) was of the habit of taking meals only when a guest ate with him. Once no guest came for three days and did not eat anything. At last a guest arrived, but when he asked who he was, the guest replied that he was a fire worshipper. Thereupon the Prophet Ibrahim (May peace be upon him) refused to entertain him. God reproached him by saying “You refused to give a piece of bread to one whom I have nourished for seventy years.” But when the son of Hatim Tai²⁸ came to visit the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he spread out his mantle (cloak) on the ground for him saying, “Honor the chief of the tribe who comes to visit you.” In this case, the position of the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) was of generosity and that of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was of bountifulness.

Syed Ali bin Uthman al-Hajwari (also called Hadrat Data Ganj Bukhsh) the famous Saint of Lahore relates the preceding story and says that the best policy in this respect is to act according

²⁸ Hatim was a famous Christian Arab chief of the Tai tribe who was known for his generosity. His son Adi accepted Islam at the hand of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is said had he met the Prophet (peace be upon him), it was most likely he would have accepted Islam.

to the first notion that crosses the mind, since the first notion is from God and the second is from miserliness.²⁹



Once, a chief of a tribe came to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) presented him with a big flock of goats grazing in the valley between two hills. The chief was so impressed that on returning to his people he urged them to embrace Islam saying that Muhammad's generosity (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) knows no bounds, nor is he afraid of poverty.³⁰

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was presented a sum of eighty thousand silver coins. He placed it under his pillow and started distributing it. He only rose after all the coins were gone. Ali (may Allah ennoble his face³¹) says, "This was at the time when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had tied a stone to his belly to mitigate the pangs of hunger."³²



A man asked Hasan ibn Ali ibn abi-Taalib (may Allah be pleased with him and his father), the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for some charity, so he gave him fifty thousand silver coins and five hundred gold coins. He ordered, "Bring a porter to carry it for you." So the man

²⁹ Kashf ul-Mahjub (Unveiling the Veiled)

³⁰ Related by Anas in Kashf ul-Mahjub (Unveiling the Veiled)

³¹ Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was the fourth Caliph and the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He once was ready to strike a fallen enemy in battle when the enemy spat in his face. He immediately lowered his sword and walked away. When asked why, he said that had I had killed him, I would have killed him for the sake of my ego. The man accepted Islam at the noble character of Ali (may Allah ennoble his face). He was known for his deep wisdom and courageous bravery.

³² Related by Anas in Kashf ul-Mahjub (Unveiling the Veiled)

brought a porter. Al-Hasan then gave him his shawl saying, “The porter’s wages also come from me.”³³

At another occasion, a man came to Al-Hasan (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) and said that he owed four hundred silver coins to someone. Al-Hasan (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) gave him the money and went into the house weeping. When asked why he wept, he replied, “Because I failed to give him the money before his asking. Had I done so, I would have saved him from the humiliation of begging.”³⁴



Umar ibn Khattab³⁵ (may Allah be pleased with him) relates, “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had ordered us to give in charity. It happened to coincide with some wealth I had just acquired and I said to myself, “If I will ever surpass Abu Bakr³⁶ (may Allah be pleased with him), this is the day.” So I came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with half of my wealth and he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to me “What have you

³³ Risalah of Al-Qushayri (may Allah be pleased with him)

³⁴ Kashful Mahjub

³⁵ Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was the second Caliph of Islam and was known for his immense piety, discipline, generosity, and bravery. Before Islam he was a bitter enemy of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and set out to kill the Prophet (peace be upon him) but on hearing the words of the Qur’an recited by his sister who had accepted Islam, his heart was calmed. He proceeded to the mosque of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who drew him close to him and said “Umar, accept Islam” at which Umar entered Islam.

³⁶ Abu Bakr was the closest friend of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and one of the earliest who accepted Islam. Some say he was the first. He was the first Caliph of Islam and was known for his unflinching truthfulness, absolute devotion, piety, generosity, and dedication to the Prophet (peace be upon him). O Allah! There will never be another like Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) – O Allah! Send him and all the Companions Your peace and blessings – Ameen!

left for your family?" I replied, "The same amount." Then, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) came with all of his wealth. The Prophet (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked him: "What have you left for your family?" He replied, "I have left them Allah and His Messenger." I then said to Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him), "I will never surpass you in anything."³⁷

Abdullah bin Jafar (May Allah have mercy on him) says, "Once I came across an African slave who was tending a flock of goats. As he sat down to take his meal, a dog arrived and sat nearby. He threw a piece of bread to the dog, which ate the bread quickly and started looking at him. He threw another piece at the dog, which was eaten up in the same haste. On this I asked the man, "How much bread do you get from your master?" He replied, "No more than what you have seen." "Then why did you give all the bread to the dog?" I asked. He replied, "This is not a place for dogs to live. It seems to be a strange dog that has come from a far off place, and I did not like to deprive him of food and eat all the bread myself." This pleased Abdullah bin Jafar (may Allah have mercy on him), who purchased the entire flock and gave it to the slave. The slave gave all the goats in charity and left.



Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (may Allah be pleased with him) says,

There are two kinds charity: that charity which is prescribed by the religion, and spiritual charity, which is of a different nature. The donations prescribed by the religion are the lawfully gained goods of this world. After deduction of a certain amount allocated for the use of one's family, a specific percentage of the excess is distributed to those who are in need. Spiritual charity, however, is taken from that which one has obtained of the goods of the hereafter. It also is given to the ones who are in need of it, to the spiritually poor.

³⁷ Abu Dawood

Those who are close to Allah devote the spiritual rewards of their good deeds to sinners. Allah in His mercy covers and hides the sins of sinners as a reward for the devotion of His good servants. The generosity of these faithful ones is such that they keep nothing for themselves, neither the reputation of being good nor the hope of a reward in the hereafter. For the one who takes this path has lost even his own existence. He is in the state of total bankruptcy, because he is truly generous. Allah loves those who are generous up to the point of being totally bankrupt to this world. Our Master the Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says, “The one who has spent all he has and does not hope to have anything is in the care of Allah in this world and in the hereafter.

Another benefit of charity is its cleansing effect. It cleanses one’s property and it cleanses one’s being. If one’s being is cleansed of egotistical attributes, the spiritual purpose of charity is accomplished.

Charity, the ‘beautiful gift’³⁸, is a good deed, a portion of what you have received, both material and spiritual. Give it for God’s sake, to God’s servants. Even though manifold rewards are promised, do not do it for the return. Give all gifts and charity accompanied by care, love, compassion and not as favor, expecting thanks, making the recipient feel under obligation, indebted, or grateful.³⁹



Charity is the third pillar of Islam. The obligation is fulfilled by giving away two and a half percent of surplus wealth, which must reach a certain amount, to the poor each year after deducting debts and expenses. This charity is called *zakaat*. Anything above and beyond this is excellence and is

³⁸ Quran (Hadid: 2)

³⁹ Kitab Sirr al-Asra (tr. By Shaykh Tosun as Secret of Secrets)

encouraged. This sort of charity may be given at any time and is called *sadaqah*. The Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said in response to a needy man who felt that he was not capable of such a noble endeavor, “Charity is a smile to your believing brother.” He (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also once said: “Charity is to remove a harmful object from the road.”

As for spiritual charity, Shaykh Abdul Qadir (may Allah be pleased with him) has given the best explanation I have seen. May Allah give us all the benefit of giving for the sake of His pleasure and good opinion and not for the sake of His displeasure and disdain – Ameen!



CHAPTER FOUR

Seeking the Face of the Lord by Fasting

The Prophet David (peace be upon him) fasted every other day. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) has said: "The most beloved fasting to Allah was the fasting of the Prophet David, who used to fast alternate days. And the most beloved prayer to Allah was the prayer of David (peace be upon him), who used to sleep for the first half of the night and pray for one third of it and again sleep for a sixth of it."⁴⁰



The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) said to one of his Companions, "I have been informed that you pray all night and fast each day; is this true?" His companion replied, "Yes." He then said, "If you do so, your eyes will be weak and boredom will set in. So fast three days a month, for this will be like the fasting of a whole year." When the Companion (may Allah be pleased with him) indicated that he could do more, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) gave him this advice, "Then fast like the fasting of the Prophet David (peace be upon him) who used to fast on alternate days and would not flee on facing the enemy."⁴¹



⁴⁰ Sahih al-Bukhari ('Abdullah Ibn 'Amr Ibn Al-'As narrated that Allah's Apostle (PBUH) said him'

⁴¹ Sahih al-Bukhari ('Abdullah Ibn 'Amr Ibn Al-'As narrated that Allah's Apostle (PBUH) said him'

Allah has praised the Prophet Enoch (Idries – peace be upon him), describing him as being a Prophet and truthful. He was born and raised in Babylon following the teachings and religion of Prophet Adam and his son Seth (peace be upon them both). He was the fifth generation of the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). He called the people back to his forefathers' religion, but only a few listened to him, while the majority turned away. The Prophet Enoch (peace be upon him) and his followers left Babylon for Egypt. There he carried on his mission, calling people to what is just and fair, teaching them certain prayers and instructing them to fast on certain days and to give a portion of their wealth to the poor.⁴²



With the issue of the Divine command, calm returned to earth, the water retreated, and the dry land shone once again in the rays of the sun.

The Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) released the birds and the beasts, which scattered over the earth. After that the believers disembarked. The Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) put his forehead to the ground in prostration. The survivors kindled a fire and sat around it. Lighting a fire had been prohibited on board so as not to ignite the ship's wood and burn it up. None of them had eaten hot food during the entire period of the flood. Following the disembarkation there was a day of fasting in thanks to Allah.⁴³

The Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) advised his sons: “Indeed I would give you far-reaching advice, commanding you to do two things, and warning you against doing two as well. I charge you to believe that there is no god but Allah and that if the seven heavens and the seven earths were put on one side of a scale and the words “There is no god but Allah” were

⁴² Qisas al-Anbiya (Ibn Katheer)

⁴³ Qisas al-Anbiya (Ibn Katheer)

put on the other, the latter would outweigh the former. And I warn you against associating partners with God and guard against pride.”⁴⁴

Some traditions said that the grave of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) is in the Sacred Mosque in Mecca, while others said that he was buried in Baalabak, a city in Iraq.⁴⁵



A miracle is a break in the normal pattern of events that incapacitates the intellect resulting in the strengthening of the faith, in most cases, of one who witnesses the miracle. All Prophets of God (peace be upon them) were given to miracles. Saints (or the Friends of God – the *Awliyah*), on the other hand are gifted with *Karamaat*⁴⁶ as opposed to *Mu’jizaat* (Prophetic Miracles). The difference between the two is that one must necessarily be proclaimed (in Prophethood), whereas the other is to be concealed (in Sainthood), unless when Allah chooses to reveal it. This is the difference between a *karamaat* (singular) and a *mu’jizah* (singular).

Some of the miracles that Jesus (peace be upon him) performed had been requested by his disciples, such as their wish for a holy table with food to be sent down from Heaven.

The Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) commanded his disciples to fast for thirty days; at the end of it, they asked the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) to request food from heaven to break their fast. The Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) prayed to Allah after his disciples had doubted the power of Allah. The great table came down between two clouds, one above and one below, while they all watched. The Prophet

⁴⁴ Sahih al-Bukhari

⁴⁵ Sahih al-Bukhari

⁴⁶ A *karamat* (singular) is a miracle performed by a Saint (Wali) or Friend of Allah.

Jesus (peace be upon him) asked Allah to make this miracle a mercy and not a cause of distress for his followers. So the entire table fell between the hands of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), covered with a napkin.

Suddenly, he prostrated to God and his disciples followed with him. They sensed a fragrance that they had never smelled before. The Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) then proclaimed: "The one who is the most devout and most righteous may uncover the table, that we might eat of it to thank Allah for it." So they unanimously responded: "O Spirit of Allah, you are the most deserving."

The Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) then stood up, performed a ritual ablution and prayed before uncovering the table, and behold, there was a roasted fish. The Disciples questioned: "O Spirit of Allah, is this the food of the world or of Paradise?" "Did not Allah forbid you to ask these questions? It is the Divine power of Allah the Almighty Who said: 'Be,' and it was. It is a sign from Almighty Allah warning of great punishment for unbelieving mortals of the world. This is the crux of the matter," replied the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him).

It is said that thousands of people partook of it, and yet they never exhausted it. Other miracles performed by the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) were the miraculous healing of the blind and the lepers.

The Day of the Table became one of the holy days for the Disciples and followers of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). Later, the essence of such miracles was forgotten, and people took to worshipping the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) as a god.⁴⁷



⁴⁷ Qisas al-Anbiya (Ibn Katheer)

The Mother of the Believers⁴⁸, Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) once said,

The Prophet's stomach (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was never full but he did not complain to anyone. He preferred poverty to wealth. If he remained doubled-up from hunger for the entire night, it did not prevent him from fasting the next day. If he wanted, he could have asked His Lord for all the treasures and fruits of the earth and a life of plenty. I used to weep for him because of the state in which I saw him and rubbed his stomach with my hand because of his hunger. I said, "May I be your ransom! If only you had enough of this world to feed you!" He replied, "Aisha, what do I have to do with this world? My brothers among the resolute Messengers were patient and steadfast in the face of worse than this. They died as they were and went on to their Lord and how honored they were! Allah was very generous in rewarding them. Therefore, I am too shy to enjoy a life of ease if it means that tomorrow I will fall short in comparison to them. There is nothing I want more than to be joined to my brothers and bosom friends." She said that he died before a month had passed.⁴⁹

Kul jahan mil kar jo ki roti ghizaa

For the one who owned the world, yet lived on barley bread

⁴⁸ The wives of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are referred to as the Mothers of the Believers to show respect and honor in the same way one shows respect to his or her mother. Like mothers, they are the teachers of the Believers because of their close proximity to the daily activities and character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family). We honor them all, each extraordinary in the lives they lived.

⁴⁹ Ash-Shifa of Qadi Iyad

Us shilam ki qana'at pe lakon salaam
Peace be upon that most content self-restraint⁵⁰



The honorable mother of the venerable Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani relates,

My son Abdul Qadir was born in the month of *Ramadan* (the month of fasting for Muslims). No matter how hard I tried, he refused to suckle in the daytime. Throughout his infancy he would never take food during the month of fasting.

One Ramadan during his infancy the start of the month fell on a cloudy day when people could not see the new moon. Not knowing if the month of fasting had actually begun, they came to Umm ul-Khayr (the mother of Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani) and asked if the child had taken food that day. As he had not, they surmised that the fast had begun.⁵¹

There have been other *Awliyah* of Allah that had this quality that Shaykh Abdul Qadir (may Allah be pleased with him) possessed, such as Sahl bin Abdullah Tustari⁵² (may Allah have mercy on him) who was born fasting and died fasting. The day he was born he did not take milk till sunset. And when he died, he was also keeping the fast.⁵³

Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhe raji'oun

⁵⁰ A verse from Salaam-e-Raza of Ahmed Raza Khan Bareilwi (may Allah hev mercy on him)

⁵¹ Translators Introduction Kitab Sirr al-Asrar (Secret of Secrets)

⁵² A famous man of right action, unique in knowledge and scrupulousness and a Sufi shaykh and ascetic, he had famous miracles (karamaat) and kept the company of Dhun Nun al-Misri (may Allah have mercy on him) in Makka. He was born in 200 (Hijri – Islamic Calendar) in Tustar and died in Basra un 273 (Hijri).

⁵³ Kashf ul-Mahjub

Certainly, we are from Allah, and unto Allah is our return⁵⁴



Hasan al-Basri⁵⁵ (may Allah be pleased with him) once passed a group of people who were laughing merrily. He said, “God, Great and Glorious is He, has made the month of Ramadan a race course, on which His creation competes in His worship. Some have come in first and have won, while others have lagged behind and lost. It is absolutely amazing to find anybody laughing on the day when success attends the victors, and failure the wastrels. By God, if the veil were lifted, the doer of good would surely be preoccupied with his good works and the evildoer with his evil deeds. In other words, the man whose fast has been accepted will be too full of joy to be indulged in idle sport, while the one who has suffered rejection will be precluded by remorse.”⁵⁶



Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani has said,

The fasting prescribed by the religion is to abstain from eating and drinking and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset, while spiritual fasting is, in addition, to protect all the senses and thoughts from all that is unlawful. It is to abandon all that is disharmonious, inwardly as well as outwardly.

⁵⁴ Qur'an

⁵⁵ This great Imam of Basra, the leader of saints and scholars in his day, was known for his strict and encompassing embodiment of the way of the Prophet. He was also famous for his immense knowledge, his austerity and asceticism, his fearless remonstrations of the authorities, and his power of attraction both in discourse and appearance. He passed away about hundred years after the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) passed on to the Realm of Divine Beauty.

⁵⁶ *Ihya Ulum ud-Din* (tr. Book Inner Dimensions of Islamic Worship)

Religious fasting is limited by time, while spiritual fasting is forever and lasts throughout one's temporal and eternal life. This is true fasting.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) has said: "The one who fasts has two satisfactions. One is when he breaks his fast at the end of the day. The other is when he sees."

Those who know the outer form of the religion say that the first satisfaction of the one who fasts is the pleasure of eating after a day of fasting, and the meaning of satisfaction "when he sees" is when someone who fasted the whole month of Ramadan sees the new moon marking the end of the fast and beginning the festivities of the holiday.

Worthier than these two kinds of fasting is the fast of truth, which is in preventing the heart from worshipping any other than the Essence of Allah. It is performed by rendering the eye of the heart blind to all that exists, even in the secret realms outside of this world, except the love of Allah. For although Allah has created all and everything for man, He has created man only for Himself, and He says: "Man is my secret and I am his secret." That secret is from the divine light of Allah. It is the center of the heart, made out of the finest matter. It is the soul, which knows all the secret truths; it is the secret connection between the created one and his Creator. That secret does not love nor lean towards anything other than Allah.

There is nothing worthy to wish for, there is no other goal, no other beloved in this world and in the hereafter, except Allah. If an atom of anything other than the love of Allah enters the heart, the fast of truth, the true fast, is broken. Then one has to make it up, to revive the wish or intention, to return back to His love, here and in the hereafter. For Allah says "Fasting is only for Me, and only I give its reward."



Fasting is the fourth pillar of Islam. During the month of Ramadan from dawn to dusk, the believer refrains from food, drink, and intercourse. Special attention is paid to guarding the tongue from profanity and backbiting, the eye from obscenity, the ear from listening to backbiting and slander. Believers gather in the mosques during the night and offer congregational night vigil prayers. Since it is the month in which the Holy Qur'an was sent down, Muslims take to reciting and studying this book more than any other time of the year. Rewards for deeds are multiplied manifold during this month so believers are encouraged to feed the poor, take special care of the orphans, give out in poor-due and charity, and perform good and praiseworthy actions. The last ten days and nights become the climax of the month where seclusion and intense devotion to the Creator of the Universe become the prime objective. The believer feels remorse at the end of the month in bidding farewell, not knowing if he will ever get to see the next Ramadan. The end of Ramadan is marked by the sighting of the new crescent for *Eid ul-Fitr* (Festival of the Breaking of the Fast). Muslims are urged to carry on their good and praiseworthy actions throughout the year.



CHAPTER FIVE

Pilgrimage to the House

One day, the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) awoke and asked his wife Hajira (may Allah be pleased with her) to get her son and prepare for a long journey. In a few days, the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) started out with his wife and their son Isma'il (peace be upon him). The child was still nursing and not yet weaned.

The Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) walked through cultivated land, desert, and mountains until he reached the desert of the Arabian Peninsula and came to an uncultivated valley that had no fruit, no trees, no food, nor water. The valley had no sign of life. After the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) had helped his wife and child to dismount, he left them with a small amount of food and water, which was hardly enough for two days. He turned around and walked away. His wife hurried after him asking: "Where are you going, Ibrahim, leaving us in this barren valley?"

The Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) did not answer her, but continued walking. She repeated what she had said, but he remained silent. Finally, she understood that he was not acting on his own initiative. She realized that Allah had commanded him to do this. She asked him: "Did Allah command you to do so?" He replied: "Yes." Then his honorable wife said: "We are not going to be lost, since Allah, Who has commanded you, is with us."

The Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) then supplicated to Almighty Allah to establish by the means of his offspring those who will establish the prayer at the location near the ancient house (that was first built by the Prophet Adam – peace be upon him) and that he had left them at His Mercy. He

implored his Lord to fill some hearts among the people in the area with love towards his family, and provide them with sustenance so that they may give thanks to Allah.⁵⁷

The Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) left some dates and the water in the water-skin had all been used up. The mother soon became thirsty and so followed the thirst of the child. She started looking at him tossing in agony. She left him, for she could not endure looking at him, and found that the mountain of As-Safa was the nearest mountain to her. She stood on it and started looking at the valley keenly so that she might see somebody, but she could not see anybody. Then she descended from As-Safa and when she reached the valley, she tucked up her robe and ran in the valley like a person in distress and trouble, till she crossed the valley and reached the mountain of Al-Marwa. There she stood and started looking, expecting to see somebody, but she could not see anybody. She repeated the running between Safa and Marwa seven times.⁵⁸

When she reached Al-Marwa (for the last time) she heard a voice and she asked herself to be quiet and listened attentively. She heard the voice again and said: “O, (whoever you may be)! You have made me hear your voice; have you got something to help me?” And behold! She saw an angel digging the earth till water flowed from it. She started to make something like a basin around it, using her, and started filling her water-skin with water using her hands, and the water was flowing out after she had scooped some of it (this was to become the well of Zam-zam that still exists and flows to this day). Then she drank and suckled her child. The angel said to her: “Don't be afraid of being neglected, for this is the House of Allah which will be built by this boy and his father, and Allah never neglects His people.

⁵⁷ Qur'an (14: 37-38)

⁵⁸ Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him)

She lived in that way till some people from the tribe of Jurhum were passing by. They saw a bird that had the habit of flying around water and not leaving it. They thought: "This bird must be flying around water, though we know that there is no water in this valley." They sent one or two messengers who discovered the source of water and returned to inform them of the water. So, they all came (towards the water). Hajira (may Allah be pleased with her) was sitting near the water. They asked her: "Do you allow us to stay with you?" She replied: "Yes, but you will have no right to possess the water." They agreed to that. So, they settled there, and later on they sent for their families, who came and settled with them so that some families became permanent residents there. The child Isma'il (peace be upon him) grew up and learned Arabic from them and (his virtues) caused them to love and admire him as he grew, and when he reached the age of puberty they made him marry a woman from amongst them.

After Hajira (may Allah be pleased with her) had died, the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) came after the marriage of the Prophet Isma'il (peace be upon him) in order to see his family that he had left before, but he did not find him there. When he asked his wife about him, she replied: "He has gone in search of our livelihood." Then he asked her about their way of living and their condition, and she replied: "We are living in misery; we are living in hardship and destitution," complaining to him. He said, "When your husband returns, convey my salutation to him and tell him to change the threshold of the gate (of his house)."

When The Prophet Isma'il (peace be upon him) came, he felt something unusual, so he asked his wife: "Has anyone visited you?" She replied: "Yes, an old man of such-and-such description came and asked me about you, and I informed him, and he asked about our state of living, and I told him that we were living in a hardship and poverty." On that he said: "Did he advise you anything?" She replied: "Yes, he told me to

convey his salutation to you and to tell you to change the threshold of your gate.” The Prophet Isma’il (peace be upon him) said: “It was my father, and he has ordered me to leave you. Go back to your family.” So, the Prophet Isma’il (peace be upon him) divorced her and married another woman from among them (i.e. Jurhum).⁵⁹

Then Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) stayed away from them for a period as long as Allah wished and called on them again but did not find the Prophet Isma’il (peace be upon him) again. So he came to his wife and asked her about him. She said: “He has gone in search of our livelihood.” The Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) asked her: “How are you getting on?” asking her about their sustenance and living. She replied: “We are prosperous and well-off (that is, we have everything in abundance).” Then she thanked Allah. The Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon her) then asked: “What kind of food do you eat?” She said: “Meat.” He asked her: “What do you drink?” She said: “Water.” He then said: “O Allah! Bless their meat and water.”

Then the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) stayed away from them for a period as long as Allah wished and called on them afterwards. He saw The Prophet Isma’il (peace be upon him) under a tree near Zam-Zam, sharpening his arrows. When he saw his father, the Prophet Isma’il (peace be upon him) rose to welcome him. He said: “O Isma’il! Allah has given me an order.” The Prophet Isma’il (peace be upon him) said: “Do what your Lord has ordered you to do.” The Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) asked: “Will you help me?” The Prophet Isma’il (peace be upon him) replied: “I will help you.” He then

⁵⁹ This incident is how the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) related the story. It should not be considered a license to divorce ones wife on the account of her complaining. The Prophets of God (may the peace of Allah be upon all of them) are tried with extreme difficulty, hardship, and persecution that require absolute dedication, patience, perseverance, and support.

said: "Allah has ordered me to build a house here," pointing to a hillock higher than the land surrounding it. Then they raised the foundations of the House (the Ka'ba). The Prophet Isma'il (peace be upon him) brought the stones while the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) built, and when the walls became high, the Prophet Isma'il (peace be upon him) brought this stone and put it for the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him), who stood over it and continued building. While the Prophet Isma'il (peace be upon him) was handing him the stones, both of them were reciting: "O our Lord! Accept (this service) from us, verily, You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower."⁶⁰ Then both of them went on building and going round the Ka'ba said: "O our Lord! Accept (this service) from us, verily, You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower."⁶¹



Earlier when the Prophet Isma'il (peace be upon him) was old enough to walk with him, he said⁶²: "O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you (offer you in sacrifice to Allah), so look what do you think!" He said: "O my father! Do that which you are commanded, If Allah wills, you shall find me of the patient." Then, when they had both submitted themselves (to the Will of Allah) and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (or on the side of his forehead for slaughtering); and We called out to him: "O Ibrahim! You have fulfilled the dream (vision)!" Verily! Thus do We reward those who perform good deeds totally for Allah's sake only. Verily, that indeed was a manifest trial -and We ransomed him with a great sacrifice (i.e. a ram); and We left for him (a goodly remembrance) among generations (to come) in later

⁶⁰ Qur'an (2:127)

⁶¹ Sahih al-Bukhari as related in Qisas al-Anbiya (Ibn Katheer) with slight change to reduce the size. Refer to original version in Sahih al-Bukhari

⁶² Qisas al-Anbiya

times. "Peace be upon Ibrahim!" Thus indeed do We reward those in Excellence. Verily, he was one of Our believing slaves"⁶³



There was once a man who always wanted to go for the Pilgrimage. He collected his entire life savings to make the trip. The day before he was ready to leave with his companions, he went out to his neighbor's house to greet him. When he knocked on the door, no one came to answer. Immediately he realized that something was not right. It was odd that his neighbor and friend had not come to see him. After he realized something was not right he announced himself and entered the house. There he found his neighbor in bed, sick and suffering from fever. With much difficulty, his neighbor told him that he is suffering from an illness that requires a great deal of money to cure. The physicians informed him that if he did not get the medical attention for this illness, he would probably die soon. This disturbed the man quite a bit. All night he tossed and turned but his friends face kept appearing in front of him.

Next morning when his friends came to get him for the trip, they did not find him and thought that he had left, so they also continued on to their journey to the House of Allah. None of them knew that the man had turned his savings that he had collected all his life for the Pilgrimage over to his sick neighbor. The neighbor now healed was ever so thankful and didn't know how to repay his friend. He thought to himself that my reward is with my Lord, Most High, Who makes the means for every possible event and action.

⁶³ Qur'an (37:99-111)

After a month had passed, the man's neighbor now recovered and his friends returned from the journey. To their surprise, they asked him how he had returned so soon as they knew that they had left before him. The man said, "What do you mean, I never left this place?" They replied, "Oh yes you did! You performed the rites of all of the rituals together with us. How can you deny that?"

Allah so loved the action of this man who had sacrificed his physical journey and life savings to the House, that he granted him a spiritual journey to the House of God.

Such incidents are very common in the Muslim world where people find long gone relatives alive or no longer in this realm circumambulating the Ka'ba or visiting the blessed resting place of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him and his family."



Imam Ahmed Raza Khan⁶⁴ (may Allah have Mercy on him) performed his second Hajj in the year 1323 A.H. (1905 CE). He was 49 years old. On the 25th of the month of Hajj, he once again had the opportunity of meeting the great Imam, Shaykh Saleh Kamaal (may Allah have mercy on him). He also met Shaykh Sayed Isma'il (may Allah have mercy on him) and many other Noble scholars of the time, who showed great respect towards him.

⁶⁴ Ahmed Raza Khan of Bareilly, India is most noted for his unflinching defense of the honor and status of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). His was an extraordinarily brilliant theologian, mathematician, jurist, writer, and genius. His heartfelt poetry in praise of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) testify to the love and devotion that he held for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He passed on to the Divine Realm in 1921 CE.

It was on this occasion that Shaykh Saleh Kamaal (may Allah have mercy on him) presented A'la Hadrat (his title – may Allah have mercy on him) with five questions pertaining to the Knowledge of the Unseen. These questions were posed on behalf of some literalist scholars of Makka at that time. A'la Hadrat (may Allah have mercy on him) had to answer these five questions in two days.

In so happened that on the following day, A'la Hadrat (may Allah have mercy on him) suffered from heavy fever. In spite of his illness, he managed to answer all the questions. In fact, he presented such a detailed answer to the questions of Knowledge of the Unseen that it turned out to be a complete book on its own. He named this book *Ad-Daulatul Makkiyyah Bil Maadatil Ghaybiyya*.

The learned scholars of the two sacred precincts (in Makka and Medina) were totally astounded when he produced this book to them on time. He completed this book of approximately four hundred pages in only eight hours. It was also in fluent Arabic. If one totals the numerical value of the Arabic letters in the context of this book, he would discover that they amount to 1323. It was the same year that he had made the second Pilgrimage, in 1323 A.H.

It was during his second visit that his aspiration to see the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) became very great. Continuously reciting peace and blessings with great veneration and humility in front of the blessed resting place of the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family), he felt the certainty of witnessing the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family).

It was during the second night of his visit at the doorstep of Our Beloved Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him and his family) that he was given the opportunity of actually seeing the blessed personality of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family). On that night, in a state of total submission, he lifted his pen and began writing a *Naat* (poem in praise of the Prophet Muhammad – may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family). The first line of that *Naat* is

Wo Soo'e La'la Zaar Phirte hai ...

The poem continues praising the Beloved of Allah (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) and ends with the verse,

Koyi Kyu Pooch teri baat Raza, Tujh se kutte hazaar phirte hai

In the last verse, A'la Hadrat (may Allah have mercy on him) humbles himself to such a level addressing himself as the “dog” of the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family). It was at this time that Allah blessed him with the honor of witnessing with his naked eyes the true personality of the Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family), whose blessed personality was standing beside the Garden of the Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family). This is what he wrote thereafter,

Ar're Ai Raza tere dil ka pata chala ba mushkil
O Rida! With much difficulty did you regain your heart

Darre Roza Ke Muqaabil wo hume Nazar to Aaya
It was by the door of his Garden did I gaze upon him

Ye na pooch kaisa paaya, Ye Na pooch kaisa paaya

So don't ask me how I found him to be, don't ask me

Tu je humd he khuda ya, Tu je humd he khuda ya

My Lord! I have only praise for You, I have only Praise for
You

Ahmed Raza Khan (may Allah have mercy on him) spent every moment of his life praising the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family). Everything he did was for the Pleasure of Almighty Allah and His Beloved Messenger (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family).



Visiting the resting place of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is part of the *Sunna* (the exemplary way of the Prophet Muhammad – peace be upon him) and is both excellent and desirable. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) has said, “My intercession is assured for all who visit me.”⁶⁵ To journey to the House of Allah and not to visit to the resting place of the Beloved of Allah (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) is plain crude. Had it not been for the Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) we would not have arrived to understanding of the true meaning of His Unity.⁶⁶



Shaykh Abdul Qadi al-Jilani (may Allah be pleased with him) has said,

⁶⁵ Ash-Shifa (references Ibn Khuzayma, al-Bazzar and at-Tabarani)

⁶⁶ Sunnidawateislami.net

Pilgrimage according to the religious percepts is the visitation of the Ka'ba in the city of Makka. There are certain requirements connected with this pilgrimage: to wear the pilgrims garb – two wrappers of seamless white cloth which represent leaving behind of all worldly ties⁶⁷, to arrive in Makka in the state of ablution; to perform seven circumambulations around the Ka'ba – a sign of complete surrender; to run seven times between Safa and Marwa⁶⁸; to go to the plain of Arafat standing and waiting until sunset; to spend the night in Muzdalifa; to make a sacrifice at Mina⁶⁹; to make another seven circumambulations around the Ka'ba; to drink from the well of Zamzam⁷⁰; and to make two cycles of prayer near the place where the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) stood near the Ka'ba. When these are done, the Pilgrimage is complete and its reward, and if anything is lacking in this ritual its reward is cancelled.

Whoever can perform the Pilgrimage will find safety from the hellfire. That is his reward.⁷¹

The inner Pilgrimage necessitates a great deal of preparation and gathering of provisions prior to undertaking the voyage. The first thing is to find a guide, a teacher, whom one loves and respects, on whom one depends and whom one obeys. It is he who will furnish the pilgrim with the provisions he needs.

⁶⁷ When the Muslim is buried, the body is wrapped in two white seamless clothes.

⁶⁸ The tradition of Hajira (may Allah be pleased with her) when she searched for water

⁶⁹ The tradition of Ibrahim (peace be upon him) when he was commanded to sacrifice his son and God replaced him with a Sheep.

⁷⁰ The same well that the angel had dug when Hajira (may Allah be pleased with her) asked for help from the voice she heard in the desert.

⁷¹ See Qur'an (Al Imran: 96)

Then one must prepare one's heart. To awaken it, one recites "*La ilaha illa Llah*" – 'there is no god but Allah' – and remembers Allah in contemplating the meaning of that phrase. With this the heart awakens, becomes alive. It also remembers Allah and keeps remembering Allah until the whole inner being is purified and cleansed of all else but Him.

After the inner purification, one must recite the Names of the attributes of Allah, which will kindle the light of Allah's beauty and grace. It is in that light that one hopes to see the Ka'ba of the secret essence. Allah ordered His Prophets Ibrahim and Isma'il (peace be upon them) to this purification saying: "Associate not anything with Me, and purify My House for those who circumambulate it."⁷²

Indeed the material Ka'ba in the city of Makka is kept clean for the pilgrims. How much cleaner should one keep the inner Ka'ba upon which Truth will gaze!

After these preparations, the inner pilgrim wraps himself in the light of the holy spirit, transforming his material shape into the inner essence, and circumambulates the Ka'ba of the heart, inwardly reciting the second divine Name – *Allah*, the proper name of God. He moves in circles because the path of the essence is not straight but circular. Its end is its beginning.

Then he goes to the 'Arafat of the heart, that inner place of supplication, that place where one hopes to know the secret of 'There is no god but He, Who is One and Who has no partners.' There he stands reciting the third Name – *Hu* – not alone but with Him, for Allah says: "And He is with you wherever you are."⁷³ Then he recites the fourth Name – *Haqq* – the Truth, the Name of the light of Allah's Essence – and

⁷² Qur'an (Hajj: 26)

⁷³ Qur'an (Hadid: 4)

then the fifth Name – *Hayy* – the divine life, eternal, from which all temporal life derives. Then he joins the divine Name – *Qayyum* – the Self-exisiting One upon Whom all existence depends. This brings him to the Muzdalifa of the center of the heart.

Then he is brought to Mina of the sacred secret, the essence, where he recites the seventh Name – *Qahhar* – He Who overwhelms all, the All-compeller. With the power of that Name the self and selfishness are sacrificed. The veils of disbelief are blown away and the gates of the void are blown open.

Then the head of the body is shaved of all material attributes.

Reciting the eighth divine Name – *Wahhab* – the Donor of all, without limits, without conditions – he enters the sacred area of the Essence. Then he recites the ninth Name – *Fattah* – the Opener of all that is closed.

Entering the place of assiduosity, where he stays in retreat close to Allah, in intimacy with Him and away from everything else, he recites the tenth Name – *Waahid* – Allah the One Who has no equal, none like Him. Then he begins to see the manifestation of Allah's attribute *Samad* – the Source. He sees the beginning of the inexhaustible treasure. It is a sight without form or shape, resembling nothing.

Then the last circumambulation starts: seven circuits during which he recites the last six Names and adds the eleventh Name, *Ahad* – the Unique One, the Only One. Then he drinks from the hand of the intimacy of Allah. "And their Lord makes them drink a pure drink."⁷⁴ The cup in which this drink is

⁷⁴ Quran (Insan: 21)

offered is the twelfth Divine Name, *Samad*, the Source, the Satisfier of all needs, the Sole Recourse.

In drinking from this Source one sees all the veils lifting from the eternal face. One looks upon It with the Light coming from It. That world has no likeness, no shape, no form. It is indescribable, unassociable, the world 'which no eyes have seen, no ears have heard its description, that no man's heart remembers.' The words of Allah are not heard by sound nor seen as the written word. The delight that no man's heart can ever taste is the delight in seeing the truth of Allah Most High, and hearing Him speak.

After the pilgrimage, all wrong turns into right. During the Pilgrimage all that was unlawful is transformed into lawful things (through the transformation of bad deeds into good deeds⁷⁵) and all that is within the now attained unity, which is continuous. Allah says: "He who repents and believes and does righteous deeds, for him Allah will change his evil deeds to good."⁷⁶

Then that pilgrim will be freed of all actions that are from himself and freed from all fear and grief. Allah says: "Now surely the friends of Allah, they have no fear, nor do they grief."⁷⁷

Then the pilgrim returns home, to the home of his origin, that holy land where Allah created man in the best and most beautiful pattern. In returning, he recites the twelfth divine Name – *Samad*. This is the world of Allah's proximity, that is,

⁷⁵ This should not be interpreted as unlawful actions becoming lawful, which is against the Shariah.

⁷⁶ Qur'an (Furqan: 70)

⁷⁷ Qur'an (Yunus: 62)

where the home of the inner pilgrim is, that is where he returns.⁷⁸

Pilgrimage to the House of the Lord is the fifth and final pillar of Islam. It represents a culmination of all the other pillars because all of them may be performed during the Pilgrimage at some point or another. Muslims from all over the world gather months before in Makka each year to begin the rites of the Pilgrimage. The Pilgrimage to Makka is a tradition of the Prophets Ibrahim and Isma'il (peace be upon them) and is performed solely for the face of the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

A poet once said,

**I desired to see my Beloved,
But when I saw Him,
I lost the power of Speech**

⁷⁸ Kitab Sirr al-Asrar (The Secret of Secrets)

Conclusion

The five pillars of Islam represent the first branch of the totality on which the faith of Islam is founded. The outward aspects of the five pillars are an absolute requirement in the religion and one is questioned on the Day of Judgment for not fulfilling these obligations.

The other branches on which the faith is founded are

- *Iman* (Faith) – Those tenants that each Muslim must believe in as a creed. The science of studying this is called *Aqidah*; and
- *Ihsan* (Excellence and Beauty) – The inward path to God. The experiential science of *Tasawwuf* (Islamic Spirituality, Mysticism, Sufism) is generally considered the means to threading this path.

The *Hadith Jibreel* narrated below touches on the remaining two branches and, Allah Willing, will be addressed in further detail in subsequent editions of this meager attempt.

Hadith Jibreel

On the authority of Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) who said,

One day while we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) there appeared before us a man whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black; no signs of journeying were to be seen on him and none of us knew him. He walked up and sat down by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Resting his knees against his and placing the palms of his hands on his thighs, he said “O Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), tell me about *Islam* (Submission).” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “Islam is to

testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to perform the prayers, to pay the Zakat (Poor Due), to fast in Ramadan, and to make the Pilgrimage to the House if you are able to do so. He said: "You have spoken rightly," and we were amazed at him asking him and saying that he had spoken rightly. He said: "Then tell me about *Iman* (Faith)." He (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "It is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in Divine Destiny, both the good and the evil thereof." He said: "You have spoken rightly." He said: "Then tell me about *Ihsan* (Excellence)." He (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "It is to worship Allah as though you are seeing Him, and while you see Him not yet truly, He sees you." He said: "Then tell me about the Hour (Day of Judgment)." He (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The one questioned about it knows no better than the questioner." He said: "Then tell me about its signs." He (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "That the slave girl will give birth to her mistress⁷⁹ and that you will see the barefooted, naked, destitute herdsman competing in constructing lofty buildings.⁸⁰" Then he took himself off and I stayed for a time. Then he (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "O Umar, do you know who the questioner was?" I said: "Allah and His

⁷⁹ This phrase is capable of more than one interpretation. Among those given by Imam an-Nawwawi is that slave-girls will give birth to sons and daughters who will become free and so be the masters of those who bore them. The words are capable of also meaning: "When a woman will give birth to her master," that is a time will come when children will have so little respect for their mothers that they will treat them like servants. The commentators point out that the word *rabba* (mistress) here includes the masculine *rabb* – **An-Nawwawi's Forty Hadith (Ibrahim/Davis)**

⁸⁰ This is a most recent interesting phenomenon especially in the Arabian Peninsula that brought nomadic Bedouins that had lived for centuries in the Desert in tents into positions of power, due to the discovery of oil. It is not uncommon to find competition among some of them in constructing tall buildings and palaces, something very unusual for a nomadic people.

Messenger knows best.” He (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “It was Jibreel (The Angel Gabriel), who came to you to teach you your religion.” – **Sahih Muslim**

