

Chapter 2: Concerning Cordial Considerations Of Covering The Nakedness

The traveler to Allah finds himself present in the Holy Presence [*mahdar*] of Allah, the Almighty and Most High, or rather, he sees that his interior and exterior, his covertness and overtness are the very presence [*hudur*], as it is narrated in *al-Kif* and *at-Tawhid* that Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) said: “The spirit of a believer is more connected to the spirit of Allah than the connection of the sunbeam to the sun.”¹

Yet, strong evidential arguments in the high sciences stress that the entire circle of existence, from the highest invisible stages to the lowest visible ones, is the very connection and mere dependence and want (poverty) in its relation to the Absolute Self-Existent, the Glorified and Most High. It is probable that the reference is to this in the *ayah*:

“O men! It is you who are in need of Allah, and it is Allah Who is the Self-Sufficient, the Praised One.”²

because if a being among the beings, in a state of states, in a moment of the moments and in an aspect of the aspects, had no connection to the Might of the Holy Lord, it would be out of the spot of self-potentiality and poverty, and into the sanctuary of Self-Necessity and Self-Sufficiency.

The one who knows Allah and is journeying to Him will have to engrave this true evidential subject, this divine gnostic delicacy, by way of cordial austerities, disregarding the limits of reason and argument, on the face of the heart, in order to bring it to the borders of gnosis [*irfan*], so that the truth of faith and its light become manifest in his heart. The people of heart and of Allah step past the limit of faith onto the stage of revelation [*kashf*] and vision [*shuhūd*]. This would be possible through intense self-mortification [*mujahadah*], privacy with Allah and loving Him.

It is stated in *Misbah ash-Shar‘ah* that Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) said:

“The informed one (the gnostic), his person is with the people and his heart is with Allah. Should his heart be inattentive of Allah for a twinkle of an eye, he would have died of craving for Him.

“The informed one (the gnostic) is the entrusted with Allah's trusts. He is the treasure of His secrets, the source of His light, the evidence of His mercy on His creatures, the mount of His knowledge, and the criterion of His favor and justice. He is not dependent on the people, nor is he in need of them for his wants and the world. He feels intimate only with Allah, and gives no utterance, makes no gesture and draws no breath except by Allah, for Allah, from Allah and with Allah.”³

In short, when the *sālik* finds himself, in all aspects (affairs, states = *shuʿn*), being the very Presence [*hudūr*], he covers all his internal and external kinds of nakedness [*ʿawrāt*] in order to observe the Presence and the discipline of Presence. He realizes that the exposure of the internal nakedness in the Presence of Allah is much more hideous and disgracing than the exposure of the external nakedness, as in the *ḥadīth*: “Allah does not look at your forms, but He looks into your hearts.”⁴

The internal kinds of nakedness [*ʿawrāt*] are the dispraised characters, vile customs and immoralities, which deprive man of being worthy of the Presence [*mahdar*] and of the discipline of Presence [*hudūr*]. This is the first stage of violating the covers and the exposure of the nakedness [*ʿawrāt*].

It must be noted that if one does not cover himself with Allah's veiling and forgiveness, and if he does not put himself under the Names of “the Concealer” and “the Forgiver,” demanding concealment and forgiveness, it frequently happens that when the visible curtain is rolled up, and the worldly veil is removed, they cause his exposure in the presence of the favorable angels and the appointed prophets (ʿa). Allah alone knows how much the exposed internal nakedness is ugly, disgraceful, stinking and scandalous.

O dear, do not compare the conditions of the Hereafter with this world, as this world can never have the capacity of the appearance of a single blessing or punishment of that world. This world, with all its vast heavens and kingdoms [*ʿāwālim*], cannot take in the appearance of a low invisible world such as the world of the grave, let alone the high kingdom of heaven, of which the resurrection world is a sample.

In a detailed *ḥadīth* narrated by the Shaykh ash-Shahīd ath-Thānī (may Allah be pleased with him) in *Munyat al-Murīd* quoting Fātimah as-Siddīqah (ʿa), who, quoting the Messenger of Allah (s), said: “The Messenger of Allah (s) said: “The scholars of our followers will be resurrected wearing coats of honor according to their knowledge and to their efficiency in guiding the servants of Allah, such that some of them are given thousands of coats of light.”

Then he added: “Some of those gifts are better than the best thing on which the sun may shine, by thousands of times”.⁵ So much for its blessings. As to its punishments, Fayd (may Allah have mercy upon him), in *ʿIlm al-Yaqīn*, has quoted a *ḥadīth* from the late as-Sadīq, on his authority, quoting Imām as-Sādiq (ʿa) who said that in a *ḥadīth* Gabriel said to the Messenger of Allah (s): “If a single link of the chain, whose length is seventy cubits, is placed on the world, the world will melt by its heat. Or if a

drop of the *Zaqq* and *Dar*' (repulsive stinking drink) is dropped into the waters of this world, the people will die of its bad smell.”⁶ We take refuge with Allah from the wrath of *ar-Rahm*.

Therefore, the traveler to Allah has to replace his bad characters and evil habits with the perfect ones, and to vanish them in the stormy and endless sea of Allah's perfect attributes, and to change the dark Satanic land of (his) nature [*tab'at*] to a white and bright land, and to find out in himself:

“And the earth shines with the light of its Lord,”⁷

and to bring about the state of the names of Beauty and Majesty of the Holy Essence in the kingdom of his existence. In this state he will be under the shelter of Beauty and Majesty, and will acquire the divine moralities; and the vices of “personal individuations” [*ta'ayyun-i nafsyyah*] and the darkness of fancy will be completely concealed.

Having attained this state, he will be favored with the special care of Allah, the Most High, Who will help him with His special secret protection (kindness) [*lutf*], and conceal him under the cover of His Majesty such that no one, except Himself will know him, and he will know none but Allah: “My friends are under My *qib* (domes); no one knows them except Me.”⁸

The sacred Book of Allah has many references to this point for those worthy of it, such as:

“Allah is the Protector of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light...”⁹

The people of knowledge and of past good records know that all the creational individuations [*ta'ayyun-i khalqiyyah*] and the essential multiplicities [*kathur-i 'ayniyyah*] are darkness [*zulum*], and the absolute light cannot happen except by discarding the annexations and breaking the individuations which are the idols in the way of the *slik*.

When the darkness of the actual and participial multiplicities is effaced and vanished in “the Essence of Union” [*ayn-i jam*], all the nakedness will be covered, and the absolute presence and the complete attainment will take place, and the *musall*, being concealed by the *Haqq* (Allah), will be performing the *Haqq's* (Allah's) *Salat*. The ascending *Salat* of the Seal of the Messengers (*s*) was probably of this type, in its particular states and stages. Allah knows better.

Connection

It is stated in *Misb* *ash-Shar'ah* that Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: “The most decorative clothing for the believer is the clothing of *taqw*, and the finest one is faith. Allah, the Almighty and Glorified, said: **“And the clothing of *taqw*, that is the best.”** As to the exterior clothing, it is a blessing from Allah, as it covers the nakedness of the children of Adam ('a). It is a grace granted by Allah to His servants, the children of Adam, which He did not grant to other than them.

To the believers, it is a means to perform the duties imposed by Allah upon them. The best of your clothing is that which does not distract you from Allah, the Almighty and Glorified, rather it brings you nearer to thanking, remembering and obeying Him, and it does not bear you to conceit, hypocrisy, decoration, taking pride and boasting, as these are among the pests of the religion and bring cruelty to the heart.

When you put on your dress, remember Allah, the concealer of your sins by His mercy. Clothe your interior with truthfulness, as you dressed your exterior with your dress. Let your interior be under the protection of fear, and your exterior under the protection of obedience. Take a lesson from the favor of Allah, the Almighty and Glorified, as He created the means for making clothes to conceal the apparent nakedness, and He opened the doors of repentance and imploring in order to cover the internal sins and evil characters.

Do not uncover anyone's faults, as Allah has covered your greater faults. Attend to your own faults, and forgive that whose state and affair do not concern you. Beware of perishing your life for the action of others, letting the others trade with your capital, while you destroy yourself. Forgetting the sins is of the gravest punishments from Allah in this world, and of the most effective causes for the punishments in the Hereafter.

As long as the servant is engaged in his obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in recognizing his own defects and abandoning what is disgraceful in the religion of Allah, he will be isolated from the plagues, plunging in the sea of the mercy of Allah, the Almighty and Glorified, and will win the gems of the advantages of wisdom and expression. But as long as he is forgetting his sins, unfamiliar with his defects, resorting to his own might and force, he will never be successful.”¹⁰

¹. Usūl al-Kḥf, vol. 3, “Book of Faith and Infidelity,” ch. on “The Believers’ Brotherhood to One Another,” hadīth 4, p. 242.

². Sūrah Fṭir 35:15.

³. Misbḥ ash-Sharḥ, ch. 95, on “Knowledge”.

⁴. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 67, p. 248, quoting Jami’ al-Akḥḥ, p. 117 (with a slight addition).

⁵. Munyat al-Murīd, p. 24.

⁶. ‘Ilm al-Yaqīn, vol. 2, p. 1033.

⁷. Sūrah az-Zumar 39:69.

⁸. A hadīth al-quds (divine saying) in Iḥy’ ‘Ulūm ud-dīn, vol. 4, p. 256. In the MS (manuscript) both the words qibḥ and qibḥ are stated.

⁹. Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:257.

¹⁰. Misbḥ ash-Sharḥ, sec. 7, on “Clothing”.

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