

Chapter 3: Connecting to the metaphysical realm and the secrets of the unseen are not restricted to the Prophets, but are possible for all

There is no doubt among the followers of Divine religions that the prophets (a.s.) have connections with the supernatural realm and knowledge of hidden matters in accordance to their different levels.

However, is this status theirs alone and exclusive to them as a Divine gift? Or it is not restricted to them and it is possible for others to have it as well?

In other words: Is this matter something specifically for them and cannot be found with anyone else in this world until after death, or is it something that can be acquired?

It is the second point that is correct.

We say: This is because the relation between this realm and the realm beyond it is a relationship of cause and effect and perfection and deficiency, and this is what we call the relation of the *outward* (*al-zahir*) and the *inward* (*al-batin*). As the outward is witnessed by necessity and witnessing the outward cannot be without witnessing the inward because its existence [the outward] is one dimension of the existence of the inward and is medium in relation to it.

Therefore the inward is also actually witnessed when witnessing the outward. Moreover, as the outward is the limit of the inward and its entification (*the action of giving objective existence to something*), then if a human was to disregard the limit by forgetting it through the performance of acts and spiritual exercises, he will certainly witness the inner, and this is the point we have desired to establish.

Explanation: The attachment of the soul (*nafs*) to the body and its uniting with it is what leads the self to

concede that it is the very body itself. What the body witnesses through the senses it considers as separate in existence from its soul. This is because it sees what it is seeing as separate from the body (and thus separate from itself since it identifies with the body).

Being fixated on the level of the body necessarily results in the soul's forgetfulness of its own level which is higher than the level of the body. This level of the soul is the imaginal level and other levels higher than that.

With the self forgetting each level, it forgets all its special qualities and the existents in its realm, but even so, it still witnesses its own piety (*inayah*), which is what is expressed as the 'I' which is a necessary witnessing inseparable from the soul itself.

Moreover, the detachment of the soul from the body means that no veil or obstacle will remain for it [the soul]. Therefore, if a person was to return to his soul and his piety through acquiring beneficial knowledge and performing righteous deeds, he would certainly witness the reality of his soul, its level, the entities inhabiting its world and the inner secrets of the existents of that world.

It has become clear that it is possible for a human in this material world to become acquainted with the concealed hidden realities that he will generally encounter after his death.

Addendum

There are numerous Quranic verses and traditions that support this view which we will narrate by the will of Allah Almighty.

However, the main argument most of the deniers have against this bliss is directed at the witnessing of the Almighty Truth. They claim that it is impossible and their evidence for this is that the existence of the Almighty Truth is an existence free of accidents, dimensions and locations, and it is therefore impossible for Him to be physically seen because it will necessitate Him having a body, characterized by qualities, modality and a particular positioning.

Their advocates hold on to traditions that negate the possibility of vision and they interpret all the verses and traditions that affirm the possibility as being metaphorical, and so on.

You surely know that their evidence is specifically focused on negating the possibility of physically seeing Allah which no one has claimed other than a few sunni theologians and the literalists among them, according to what has been attributed to them. These negating traditions refute them, as it would be clear for whoever refers to the debates and arguments of the infallibles (a.s.)

Those who maintain that Allah can be seen and witnessed want to prove something else, which is that a possible existent that is needy and totally dependent is able to witness the existence of its absolutely self-sufficient Originator with all its possible existence, not with actual sight or by acquired mental

thinking.

This is something that indisputable rational arguments prove, along with evidence from the literal meanings of the book [Quran] and the Traditions. Moreover, the general conclusion of these rational demonstrations is that it is impossible to separate possible existence from such witnessing, and that which is sought after is knowledge by witnessing, which is inner-knowledge (*marifat*), and not the necessary witnessing of itself, which is knowledge by presence.

In summary, as their refutations of witnessing is mainly founded on this [idea of vision], we have limited ourselves only to mention some of its arguments and the rest will be presented later, by the will of Allah Almighty.

Allah Almighty said:

“Some faces will be fresh on that day, looking at their Lord.” Quran 75:22–23.

“And that the terminus is towards your Lord.” Quran 53:42.

“And to Him you will be returned.” Quran 29:21.

“Indeed we shall return to Our Lord.” Quran 43: 14.

“And toward Him is the destination.” Quran 5: 18, 42: 15, 64:3.

“Verily! To Allah do all matters return.” Quran 42:53

“And to Him you shall be brought back.” Quran 2:245, 41:21, 43:85.

“Certainly We gave Moses the Book, [declaring], ‘Do be not be in doubt about the encounter with Him.’” Quran 32:23.

“Whoever expects to encounter Allah [should know that] Allah’s [appointment] time will indeed come.” Quran 29:5.

I say: These two words, meeting (*liqa*) and returning (*ruju*) have been constantly used in the Quran and in traditions.

“Soon We will show them Our Signs in the horizons, and in their own souls, until it becomes clear to them that He is the Real. Is it not sufficient that your Lord is witness to all things? Verily! They are indeed in doubt about the meeting with their Lord! Verily! He indeed comprehends all things!” Quran 41:53–54.

The context of the first verse, which is: “We will show them Our Signs in the universe” up to “until it become manifest” shows that the meaning of a witness is the witnessed and not the witnesser.

Similarly, His saying: *“Verily! They are in doubt about the meeting with their Lord?”* This is like an objection, and its answer is: *“Verily! He indeed comprehends all things!”*

The context of the last verse, which is: *“Verily! They are...”* contradicts those who say that the meeting (liqa) is metaphorically used to mean death or the resurrection. The reason for this contradiction is because of the emergence of His signs and the manifestation of His Almighty Truth that will occur on that day in such a way that without doubt He will be seen and witnessed.

He the Exalted has refuted their doubts about meeting Him by His encompassment of everything and this encompassment is the same whether it be in this world, at the time of death or on Judgement day. Therefore, there is no reason why they should interpret ‘meeting’ as meaning His encompassment of death or Resurrection.

This verse is therefore not related to the previous verse, but rather the meaning of the verse – and Allah knows best – is that it suffices that in His reality and immutability Allah the Almighty is witnessed over everything, but He shows them His signs in the universe and in their selves because of the doubts they have in witnessing and meeting Him.

Such a doubt is not permissible, for how can they have doubt and suspicion when He encompasses everything? He is the First, the Last, the Manifest, the Hidden in all things, and whichever way you turn, there is the face of Allah. There is no secret conversation among three, but He is their fourth [companion], nor among five but He is their sixth, and He is with you wherever you may be.

One who has such a position can never be doubted with regard to being witnessed or met. However, it is permissible to have doubt that His signs will manifest in an undoubted manifestation, so understand.

What we mention here does not contradict what is narrated in *al-Tawhid* in a tradition from Imam Ali (a.s.), stating that the meaning of the term encountering/meeting in the Quran means Resurrection.

What we are saying here falls within the operational concept in the verse as, for example, when we look at the literal import of a word and not its referent. It thus becomes clear that Resurrection is one of the denotations of ‘meeting’, as some of the verse and traditions to follow will show such, as the literal meaning of His words:

“...and warning you of the encounter of this Day?” Quran 6: 130

And,

“When we have been lost in the dust, shall we indeed be created anew? Rather they disbelieve in the encounter with their Lord!” Quran 32: 10

There are many denotations in the traditions, such as what has been narrated from Imam Ali (a.s.) as the Path (*sirat*), the Way (*sabil*), the Trustworthy (*al-sadiq*), the Credible (*al-musadaq*) and the believer

in the Quran.

Among these traditions it is narrated in al-Mahasin, narrating from Zurarah from Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) concerning Allah's saying:

“When your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants and made them bear witness over themselves.” Quran 7: 172

The Imam said:

It was seeing Allah, and He made them forget what they saw. He established acknowledgement in their breasts and without this no one would have been able to know their Creator and Provider, which is Allah's saying:

“If you ask them, ‘Who created them?’ they will surely say, ‘Allah’.” Quran 43:87.

Another tradition is stated in Tafsir al Qummi, narrating from Ibn Muskan, from Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) in relation to Allah's saying:

“When your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins... ‘Yes indeed!’”

He asked the Imam: “Was this seeing?”

The Imam said: “Yes. Knowledge was retained and they forgot the position, but they will remember it and if this was not the case no one would have known who their Creator and Provider was. Some of them had only acknowledged Him with their tongues in the realm of the Atom (al-zaar) and did not believe with their hearts, thus Allah said:

“...but they would not believe something they had denied before.” Quran 10:74

Another tradition is stated in Tafsir al-Ayyashi, narrating from Zurarah who said:

“I asked Abu Jafar [al-Baqir] (a.s.) about Allah's saying: *When your Lord took from the children of Adam...,until, themselves.*”

He said: “Allah had taken from the loin of Adam his offspring until the Day of Judgement, and they came out like tiny particles, so He introduced and showed Himself to them, and had it not been the for this no one would have known his Lord, as He Almighty says:

“And if you ask them, ‘Who created the heavens and the earth?’ they will surely say, ‘Allah’.” Quran 31:25.

In al-Tawhid, narrating from Abu Basir, who narrates the following from Abu Abdullah [al-Sadiq] (a.s.):

I asked: “Tell me about Allah Almighty, will the believers see Him on Judgement Day?”

The Imam replied: “Yes, and they have seen Him before Judgement Day.”

I asked: “When?”

He said: “When He asked them, “Am I not your Lord?” They said: “Yes indeed.”

He kept quiet for a while and then said: “The believers see Him in this world before Judgement Day. Do you not see Him right now?”

Abu Basir then said: “So I said to Him: “May I be sacrificed for you, may I speak to others of what you have said?”

The Imam then said: “No, for if you narrate it a denier who does not know what you mean would deny it and presume what you say to be anthropomorphism (*tashbih*) and disbelief (*kufr*). Seeing with the heart is not like seeing with the eyes. Far be Allah from what the anthropomorphist and heretics describe Him to be.”

It says in al-Tawhid, narrating from Hisham in a tradition about an atheist who asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.) regarding what he said about the descending of Allah to the heaven of this world, and the Imam said that it is not like the descent of a material body or from a material body to another material body, until He said: “Rather, He descends to the heaven of this world without sufferance or motion.

He is the same way in the Seventh Heaven on the Throne as He is in the heavens of this world. He will only manifest His Magnitude and will show Himself however He wills to His vicegerents (*awliya*). He will display His Power as He wills, and seeing Him from close up or from far away would be the same.”

It is also stated in al-Tawhid in a tradition narrating the following saying from the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (a.s.):

“With the praise of Almighty flowing on His tongue Moses (a.s.) asked: *“My Lord, show [Yourself] to me, that I may look at you.”* His request was something incredible, and he asked for something physical, so he was punished. Allah Almighty said to him: “You will not see Me in this world until you die, but you will see Me in the hereafter.”

There are numerous traditions concerning heaven that Allah Almighty manifesting to His vicegerents in Heaven and will say to him: “And on every Friday you will be visited.”

In a tradition narrated in Jami al-jawami, it says:

“You will see your Lord like you see the full moon.”

There are other traditions concerning the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s) and the Imams (a.s.) that also speak in such tones, thus in al-Tawhid it is narrated from Muhammad ibn al-Fudayl who had said:

“I asked Abu al-Hasan [al-Reza] (a.s.): “Did the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) ever see his Almighty Lord?”

He (a.s.) said: “Yes, he saw Him with his heart. Have you not heard Allah Almighty say: “*The heart did not deny what it saw*” He did not see Him with His eyes, but rather He saw Him with his heart.

It is also narrated in al-Tawhid that Imam Reza (a.s.) has said in a tradition:

“When he [the Messenger of Allah] (s.a.w.s.) looked to his Lord with his heart, he would put it in a light like the light of veils until whatever was behind the veil became clear.”

In Ibn Qulawayh’s Kamil al-Ziyarat there is a narration from Ibn Abu Yafur who narrates from Abu Abdullah [al-Sadiq] (a.s.) as saying:

“While the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) was in the house of Fatima (s.a.) and Imam Husain (a.s.) was on His lap, He (s.a.w.s.) began to weep and fell prostrating to the ground and said: “O Fatima (s.a.), O Daughter of Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), The High most Exalted showed Himself to me in your house here, in this hour, in the best of forms and best of states and said to me: “O Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), do you love Husain (a.s.)?”

I said: “Yes, He is the delight of my eye, my sweet basil, the fruit of my heart and the skin between my eyes.”

Allah said to me: “O Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) and he [Muhammad] put His hand on the head of Husain (a.s.) when Allah continued and said: “Blessed be the newborn who has My blessings, prayers, mercy, and satisfaction.”

The Commander of faithful Imam Ali (a.s.) has said in an oft-narrated tradition:

“I have not worshipped a Lord I have not seen.”

He also said:

“I have never seen something without seeing Allah before it.”

In general, there are numerous traditions that refer to this meaning, reaching the stage of mustafid and mutawatir.

What is meant in the traditions regarding sight is not the power of discursive knowledge, for this is reflective knowledge [and not intuitive knowledge].

The many other traditions refute this seeing as being knowledge by reality let alone it being a sight and an intuitive witnessing. As a result, what has been sought for is affirmed, and praise is to Allah.

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