

Chapter Four

The Means of Abandoning Tadbir with Allah

Summary

After demonstrating the importance of the theme of the book in the first three chapters, the author gives a series of means or ways to actualize the ceasing of tadbir. He also illustrates certain lessons that can be derived from the stories of Adam peace be upon him and of the Children of Israel, and discusses the nature of servitude.

Text

Understand that there are certain means which enable you to abandon and cease *tadbir* and personal choice with Allah ﷻ.

First Cause:

Your knowledge of the previous *tadbir* of Allah ﷻ for you: namely, that you know Allah ﷻ was for you before you were for yourself. So just as He managed your affairs before you were and before you had any *tadbir* with Him, likewise He manages for you after your coming into existence. So be with Him now just as you were with Him before; He will be for you now as He was for you before. Because of that, Husayn al-Hallaj said: "Be for me as you were for me, when I was not." He asked from Allah that He be for him in *tadbir* after his coming into existence, just as He was for him in *tadbir* before his existence. For before the existence of the slave, the slave was already managed in the foreknowledge of Allah ﷻ, and the slave has no independent existence of his own that he should pretentiously claim any *tadbir* for himself, and thus fall into fooling himself. And if you said: "When he was previously nothing, how could *tadbir* be applied to him?" know that things have a certain being in the foreknowledge of Allah (as archetypal essences), even if they cannot be said to possess any existence of their own in their essences. And the Real takes charge and regulates its affairs while it is in His foreknowledge. In this question there is great deception, and this book is not the place for it.

Know that the Real ﷻ has always taken the best of care for you throughout all of the stages of your life since He brought you into existence on the Day of the Decree, the Day of, "Am I not your Lord?" and you said. "Yes, we bear witness!" Among the signs of His excellent care for you on that Day is that He caused you to know Him and so you came to know Him. He revealed Himself to you and you witnessed Him. It was He who made you speak and inspired you to affirm His Lordship and so you confirmed His Oneness. Then He made you into a drop of sperm placed in the loins, and took care of you with His management therein, protecting you and guarding you in the state that you were in. He took you from Adam peace be upon him to your father through the intermediaries of fathers between them, then ejected you into the womb of your mother. He continued to take excellent care of you by making the womb like an earth for you, providing you with your sustenance from it and giving you life in it. He combined the two (sperm and ovum), so that you became a sign of His Divine Wisdom, in that all of existence is based on the secret of the pairing of the two opposite sexes.

Then He made you after the drop of sperm into a blood clot, ready and prepared for what He desired to move you to. Then after that into a fetus lump, from which He cleft your form, and established your constitution, and then breathed into you of the Spirit. He nurtured you and fed you with the blood of the womb and provided for you your nourishment before He brought you out to the world. He kept you in the womb until your muscles and joints were strengthened so that you could be

ready for delivery to what He allotted for you or against you, and so that He might take you out into an abode in which He makes Himself known to you through His bounteous favors and justice.

Then when He placed you upon the Earth, He knew that you were not able to eat rough foods because you did not have any teeth to use. So He fed you through the breasts with a soft gentle food, and made them a means for the mercy in the heart of your mother to care for you with unending care even after the milk stopped. Moreover, He moved your father and mother to search for that which would be wholesome for you, and to be compassionate towards you, looking towards you with the eye of love. It is nothing except the compassion that He sent to you and to the servants through the outward manifestations of father and mother, as a means of making you come to know of His love. In reality, nothing cared for you except His Lordship, and nothing nurtured you and satisfied you except His Divinity.

Then He compelled the father to bring you up to your coming of age, out of compassion from Him for you. Moreover, He lifted away the pen of duty and responsibility from you until the time of the completion of your understanding and your maturity. And when you reached a mature age He did not cease bringing to you His favors and graces. And then when you end in old age, and go before Him, and are resurrected to Him and brought before His Hands, He makes you safe from His punishment, and causes you to enter the abode of His reward, and lifts His veils from you, and sits you down with His friends and lovers, as He said: "Indeed, the god-wary ones are in gardens and rivers, in an assembly of Truth in the Presence of an Almighty King" (Q54:54-55).

So which of His favors do you give thanks for, and which of His bounties do you mention?

Listen to the saying of Allah ﷻ: "And you have no blessing nor favor except that it is from Allah" (Q16:53), and you will know that you have never left, nor will you ever come out of the circle of His beneficence, and never will the existence of His favors and blessings leave you. And if you seek an explication of the evolving of your stages and states of life, then listen to His saying: "We created man from a quintessence of clay, then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed. Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a fetus lump; then We made out of that lump, bones, and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, the best of creators! After that, at length, you will die. Then, on the Day of Resurrection you will be raised back" (Q23:12-16). You will catch a glimpse of those stages and their illuminations upon you will increase. All of that, O slave, calls for your utter surrender to Him, and complete reliance upon Him, and compels you to leave *tadbir* and the contesting of the decrees of fate. And 'Anglo, is the grantor of success.

Second cause:

That you understand that your *tadbir* for yourself implies your ignorance of what is best for it, for the believer knows that if he leaves the *tadbir* to Allah ﷻ, then Allah ﷻ will be for him by His excellent management. "Whoever relies on Allah ﷻ, He is enough for him" (Q65:3). After this understanding you plan to stop planning, and your looking after the good of your self lies in not looking after it. Understand from this saying from Allah ﷻ: "Enter the houses by their doors" (Q2:189), for the door to the *tadbir* of Allah ﷻ for you is the ceasing of your *tadbir* for yourself.

Third cause:

Your knowledge that what happens by fate does not happen by or according to what you intend or decide, and that most of what occurs does so without your *tadbir*, and little of what you plan actually takes place. The intelligent person does not build his house on shaky ground. Tell me, when will your house be completed and all the while the Decrees destroy it? As the poet said:

"When will the day come when the building reaches its completion if you build it and other than you destroys it?"

And if the *tadbir* is from you, and the Decree goes against what you decide and plan, then what is the benefit of *tadbir* which the Decrees do not support? It is more befitting that the *tadbir* be with the One in Whose Hands are the reigns of fate, as the poet said:

*"When I saw the Fate proceeding on its course
without doubt in it and without suspicion,
I relied truthfully upon my Creator
and cast myself with the flow (of the Decree)."*

Fourth cause:

Your knowledge that Allah ﷻ is in full charge of managing His Kingdom, its high parts and low parts, its hidden parts and manifest parts. And just as you submit to Him His *tadbir* of the Throne, Footstool, Heavens, and Earth, then similarly submit to Him His control of your existence in these worlds. For the relation of your existence in comparison with these tremendous worlds necessarily mandates your diminishing and disappearing. Just as the relation of the seven heavens and seven earths in comparison with the Footstool, is as a ring flung in the vast desert; and the Footstool, seven heavens and seven earths are in relation to the Divine Throne as a ring flung in the vast desert. So what are you in His vast Kingdom? Therefore, your anxious concern with yourself, and your *tadbir* for it, is in ignorance of Allah ﷻ, as He said: "They did not measure with His true measure" (Q6:91), i.e., they did not know Allah ﷻ as He should be known.

Had the servant known his Lord, he would have shied away from *tadbir* with Him. And nothing casts you into the sea of *tadbir* except that it veils you from Allah ﷻ. Because the people of certainty, when the faculties of insight in their hearts were unveiled, saw themselves (already) managed, not managing; and controlled, not controlling; and moved, not moving.

Also, those in the Highest Assembly (of archangels and prophets and saints) witness the direct manifestation of the Decree, and the enactment of the Divine Will. For them, the Decree is directly attached to the decreed, and the Divine Will, to the willed, and the secondary causes (*asbab*) are removed from their sight. Because of this, they have been purified from pretension and making claims, due to what they are in of the existence of providential Divine care, and the establishment of face-to-face communion. Because of that, He .0 said: "It is We who inherit the earth and what is upon it, and to Us do they all return" (Q19:40). In that is a purification for the angels from the stain of any selfish notion, and an indication that they do not claim for themselves what "Allah ﷻ has given them, and do not refer to themselves with what He has attached to them of greatness. If it had not been so, He would have said: "It is We who inherit the earth and the heaven." But their connection to Him, and their awe of Him, and their infatuation with His Immensity, prevents them from leaning towards other than Him.

So just as you surrendered the management of heaven and earth to Him, surrender the management of your existence to Him. "The creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of the people" (Q40:57).

Fifth cause:

It is your knowledge that you are a property of Allah and you do not have the right of *tadbir* for what belongs to Someone Else. You have no management or authority over what you do not own.

And if you, O servant, do not contend in what you own, and you have no possession except what He placed under your possession, (and in truth you have no possession or kingdom at all, but rather it is only tied to you by the Shari'ah which has established the right of property and dominion for you even though there is nothing in you that would necessitate any right for you to have any dominion), then not to contend with Allah ﷻ in what He owns is more appropriate and more suitable. Especially since Allah has said: "Verily Allah ﷻ has bought from the believers their selves and their wealth..." (Q9:111). Therefore, it is not fit that the servant, after this selling and contract, should have any contention or management or right of direction, because what you sold to Him is what you submitted and gave up control over (*taslim*); and the *tadbir* in it nullifies the contract.

I entered one time into the presence of my Shaykh, Sidi Abu-I 'Abbas al-Mursi may Allah be pleased with him, and I complained to him about some of my problems. He stopped me and said: "If your self belongs to you, then do with it as you please, but you will never be able to do that. And if it belongs to its Maker then submit it to Him, letting Him do with it as He pleases and wills." Then he said, "Ease from troubles is in complete and utter submission to Allah ﷻ, and the abandoning of *tadbir* with Him; and that is true servitude."

Ibrahim ibn Adham may Allah be pleased with him said: "I slept one night and missed my daily devotional exercise (*wird*), then I awoke and was regretful; then I slept after that for three days and neglected the obligatory actions (*fara'id*), and when I awoke I heard a voice saying to me in poetry:

*'Everything is forgiven you save your negligence
and forgetfulness of Us,
We have pardoned for you what has passed,
but what has come from Us has remained.'*

Then the voice said to me: 'O Ibrahim, be a slave.' So I became a slave and found peace."

Sixth cause:

Your knowledge that you are a guest of Allah ﷻ, for this world is the abode of Allah, and you are a visiting guest to Him in it. And among what is incumbent upon the guest is that he not trouble himself worrying about whether the host will give him his right. It was once said to Shaykh Abu Madyan may Allah be pleased with him: "Our Master, why is it we see the other Shaykhs entering into the secondary causes and means (*asbab*), while you do not?" He replied: "My brother, judge our cases. I say that this world is the house of Allah ﷻ, and we are His guests in it. And the Messenger ﷺ said, 'guesthood is three days,' so Allah ﷻ is our host and we are His guests for three days. Allah ﷻ has also said: 'Indeed one day with your Lord is as 1000 years of your reckoning' (Q22:47). So we are the guests of Allah for 3000 years, from which comes our duration here on earth, and He will complete it by His favor in the Final Abode, and will add upon that term the life everlasting."

Seventh cause:

The servant's consideration and understanding of the establishment (*qayyumiyya*) of all things by Allah ﷻ. Have you not heard His saying: "Allah, none other than He, the Living, the Eternally Subsisting" (Q3:2). So He is the One by Whom subsist the world and the hereafter, Who establishes the world with His freely given sustenance, and the hereafter with His rewarding. Therefore, if the servant recognizes his Lord's supporting and establishing him, he throws his reigns to Him, and casts himself in submission between His Hands, considering what comes upon him of the Decrees of Allah ﷻ.

Eighth cause:

The servant's busying himself with the commands and exercises of servitude, which is the goal of life, as He said: "And serve your Lord until the certain death comes to you" (Q15:99). If his energy and aspiration are spent in maintaining his servitude, then that preoccupies him from *tadbir* for himself or anxiety over it. Shaykh Abu-I Hasan ash-Shadhili said: "For each moment there is an allotted portion for the duties of servanthood that the Real ﷻ requires of you by the right of Lordship, which you are held responsible for. The same applies for each breath you take, which is a trust of the Real given to you. So where is the 'free time' for the people of spiritual insight from the rights of Allah the Exalted, that they should be able to manage and direct themselves, and that they should consider its well-being from the view of its personal gratifications and desires? No one attains to the Grant of Allah ﷻ except by his being absent from his self, and doing without it, directing his eager determination and aspiration (*himmah*) towards Allah, alert to fulfill whatever He calls for diligently persistent in His service. In accordance with your absence from yourself, and your annihilation from it, Allah ﷻ will cause you to submit through Himself." He also said: "O you who race on the way of success by Him, yearning ardently for His Presence, diminish your attention to your outer self if you desire the opening of your inner self to the secrets of the dominion (*malakut*) of your Lord."

Ninth cause:

You are a vassal-slave (*marbub*), and it is incumbent upon the servant that he not have any misgivings or suspicions about his Master, Who is characterized by bountiful nobility and the lack of negligence and carelessness. In truth the spirit of the station of servitude is confidence in Allah ﷻ and complete surrender to Him ﷻ. Each of these two characteristics is opposed to self-management, direction, and choosing with Allah ﷻ. For the servant, instead of these, should establish his service to Him, and the Master will establish him with His bountiful grace and apportioned sustenance. Understand the saying of Allah ﷻ "And command your family to the devotional prayer and stick steadfastly to it; We do not ask you for sustenance, for We sustain you" (Q20:132). In other words, 'Rise to Our service, and We will support you by bringing to you Our pre-apportioned sustenance for you.'

Tenth cause:

Your lack of knowledge concerning the outcome of events. For it might be that you planned for an affair which you thought was for your benefit, whereas it turned out to be against you; or that benefits came to you through hardships, and hardships and trials through benefits; or harm through ease, or ease through harm. It might be that gifts are hidden in trials, and trials hidden in gifts, or that you benefited from the hands of enemies, or were harmed from the hands of friends. If the situation is as we said, then how could the understanding person make *tadbir* with Allah ﷻ, since he doesn't know where true felicity lies that he should go to it by himself, or where true harm lies that he should avoid it by himself? For that reason Shaykh Abu-I Hasan may Allah be pleased with him prayed: "O Allah ﷻ, we are powerless to thwart from ourselves the harm that comes from a source and in a manner we know. So how could we not be powerless to do it from whence we know not, in a manner we are not aware of?" And it is enough for you to reflect on the saying of Allah ﷻ: "It might be that you despise something but it is good for you, or that you love something and it is harmful to you, and Allah ﷻ knows and you do not know" (Q2:216).

How many times did you desire something that He kept away from you, which caused inner hatred and rancor to enter your heart and your self and thus you became agitated (at Him!) — only that when He unveiled for you the result or outcome of that thing you understood that He ﷻ was all along looking after you with His excellent care in a way you could not fathom, and choosing for you in a way you did not know? How despicable is the seeker (murid) without understanding, a slave who does not surrender to his Master! So be as the poet said:

"After how many things did I desire

*which You chose to avert from me,
and You have not stopped being
more kind and merciful to me than myself!
I have resolved that I not have a thought occur to my heart,
except that I place You before it in consideration,
and that You never see me in what You have forbidden me, for You
are in my heart Most Great and Immensely Tremendous!"*

It was related of someone that if he were afflicted or tried with something, he would say: 'Good, God willing.' On a certain night a fox came and ate his rooster, and when he was told about it, he only said: 'Good.' Then in the same night his dog died, and he said, 'Good will come out of it, God-willing.' Then his donkey died, and he again said, 'Good.' So his family were very annoyed with his repeating that word without any apparent sadness showing upon him. Later that night, a band of raiders came to his town and killed all the people there, except him and his family. That was because the raiders could only find out where a certain family lived from the crowing of the rooster, or the barking of the dog, or the braying of the donkey, since it was night and they could not see. So the deaths of his animals saved him and his family from being killed. So glorified be the Wise Regulator of affairs!

The servant does not witness the excellence of the *tadbir* of Allah except after the outcome of a situation is revealed to him. As for the elect of the servants of Allah, those who understand by Allah ﷻ they witness first hand the excellence of the *tadbir* of Allah before the end of the situation, and they occupy varying groups and stages in regards to that witnessing.

Of them are those who made their opinion of Allah ﷻ beautiful and good, so they submitted fully to Him when He made them used to the beauty of His dealings and the existence of His hidden subtle mercy and kindness.

Of them are those who made their opinion of Allah ﷻ beautiful and perfect after they realized that their zeal, *tadbir*, or contesting (the Divine Will) did not prevent what was decreed already allotted for them.

Of them are those who perfected their opinion of Allah ﷻ due to His saying to the Prophet ﷺ: "I am with My servant according to his opinion of Me." So if they had a good opinion of Him, He would be good to them, according to their opinion of Him. And Allah ﷻ has made the way to His bounties and grants easy for the believers, since He was with them according to the opinion they had of Him (namely, that He is Generous). He said: "Allah, desires for you ease and does not desire for you any hardship" (Q2:185).

And the stage which is more exalted than all of these stages is the complete submission, selfless utter surrender, and commitment to Him, only because the Real deserves that (and it is His right), and not because of any motive or reason originating from the slave. As for the first group, they are not free from indulgence in entertaining their wishes, in that they only submit sincerely when He first treats them kindly (since that is what they are used to), so their submission is dependent upon His prior giving. And if that is not the case, they will not submit fully. The second group is similar, since leaving *tadbir* with Allah ﷻ only because you are unable to have an influence in causing things to happen, does not mean you are leaving it for Allah. For if this servant knew that his *tadbir* could cause something to take place, then he would not abandon it. As for the one who submits to Allah and perfects his opinion of Him so that He could be for him as his opinion dictates, he is only striving for his own selfish desires, looking after his own portions, fearing for it lest he not arrive at what he wants. As for the one who surrenders to Allah and perfects his opinion of Allah due to the Immensity of His Divinity and the Qualities of his Lordship, then this is the servant who has truly hit the mark. It is more

appropriate that these are the ones referred to when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Allah has servants whose one glorification (of Allah) is weightier than the mountain of Uhud."

Indeed, Allah ﷻ has entered into a covenant with all of His servants that they cease all *tadbir* with Him, as He said: "And your Lord took forth from the children of 'Adam, from their loins, their seeds (or essences), and made them witness concerning themselves, saying, 'Am I not your Lord?' and they answered, 'Yes indeed, we witness— (Q7:172). Their agreeing that He is their Lord (*rabb*) calls for their abandoning and ceasing of their own *tadbir* with Him. And this contract was before the creation of their selves, which are the places of agitation and which contend with Allah ﷻ in *tadbir*. Had the servant remained in that previous state, which is the unveiling of the covering and being in the Divine Presence, it would be impossible for him to have any *tadbir* for himself alongside of Allah ﷻ. When the veil was lowered, agitation and *tadbir* came to be. For that reason, the people of direct gnosis of Allah, those who contemplate the secrets of the spiritual dominion (*malakut*), have no *tadbir* with Allah ﷻ for themselves. Their being face to face with Allah utterly destroyed the resolutions of their *tadbir*; and how could the servant in the Presence of Allah have any *tadbir* with Allah, when he witnesses the Tremendous Greatness and Immense Majesty of Allah ﷻ.

Section One

The consequence of *tadbir* with Allah ﷻ.

Know that self-management and choice are a great danger and affliction.

We reflected upon the story of 'Adam peace be upon him and found that what caused him to eat of the forbidden tree was his *tadbir* for himself. Shaytan said to 'Adam and Hawa peace be upon them, as is reported in the Qur'an: "Allah has forbidden you both the tree only because (by eating it) you would become like angels or of those who live forever" (Q7:20). So 'Adam peace be upon him thought to himself that eternity with his Beloved is the highest aim, and his going from the human state to the angelic state of being, either because the angelic state is superior or because 'Adam peace be upon him thought that the angelic state was superior. So when he made this *tadbir* with himself, he went to the tree and ate from it. That was only out of his own planning, whereas the desire of the Real was to cause him to descend to the earth by that action, and make him His Representative (*khalifa*) on it. It was a fall in form, but an ascent in meaning. For this reason Shaykh Abu-I Hasan may Allah be pleased with him said: "By Allah, Allah did not place 'Adam on earth to demean his status or make him deficient, but rather to perfect him." And 'Adam peace be upon him still continues to ascend to Allah ﷻ, one moment in the ascension of nearness and election, and one moment in the ascension of humility and lowliness, and in reality the latter is more complete.

Every believer must believe that the prophets and messengers do not move from a state except to a more perfect state. Understand from that what Allah ﷻ says: "And indeed the end is better than the beginning" (Q93:4). Ibn Atiyya commented: "In other words, the final state is better than the first." If you know this, then know that the Real possesses the Will and the *tadbir*, and that His *tadbir* came before and willed that the earth would be occupied with the children of 'Adam peace be upon him, and that they would be as He wills, "Some of them excelling, and others clear oppressors of themselves" (Q37:113). Among that which His Wisdom decreed was that this intention must be completed and manifested in the visible world. So Allah ﷻ willed that his eating from the tree would cause his descent to earth, which would cause the manifestation of the degree of vicegerency, which He granted to him. Shaykh Abu-I Hasan may Allah be pleased with him said: "The noblest of misdeeds was the one that bequeathed the Divine vicegerency and established the way of repentance for those after him until the Day of Rising." Also, his descent to the earth was by the command of the Decree of Allah before the creation of the heavens and the earth. Shaykh Abu-I Hasan may Allah be pleased with him also said: "By Allah, Allah ﷻ indeed sent 'Adam down upon the earth before He created him, because He said: 'I will place upon the earth a representative'" (Q2:30). Therefore, the eating of the

tree, and his descent to earth, and Allah's ennobling him through the vicegerency and leadership, are from the excellence of the *tadbir* of Allah for 'Adam peace be upon him.

Section Two

Allah's providential care for 'Adam peace be upon him

Let us now delineate the benefits and lessons given to 'Adam peace be upon him in this event, so that we can know that the people of election have with Allah ﷻ a special state not shared with other than them, and that Allah ﷻ has for them a *tadbir* that He does not have for other than them. In 'Adam's eating of the tree, peace be upon him, and his descent to the earth there are many beneficial lessons. Among those lessons:

That when 'Adam and Hawa' peace be upon them were in Paradise, Allah ﷻ made Himself known to them through provision, gifts, blessings, and beneficence. So the Real willed (from His secret hidden tender mercy in His *tadbir*) that they would eat of the tree, so that He could make Himself known to them through forbearance, covering-up of deeds, forgiveness, relenting, and choosing.

As for forbearance, that is apparent in the fact that He did not immediately punish them for their action. For the forbearing is the one who does not punish you immediately for what you did but withholds and indulges you until your appointed term, when He either takes you to His graceful blessing and pardon, or to the awesome domination and force of His vengeance.

Secondly, Allah ﷻ made Himself known to them through His attribute of covering-up and hiding. For when they ate from the tree and their private parts were exposed to them because the garments of Paradise fell from them, He covered their shame and body with the leaves of Paradise. "And they began to sew together the leaves of the Garden over their bodies (to cover their shame)" (Q7:22). That was from the existence of His covering-up.

Thirdly, Allah ﷻ wanted to make 'Adam know of His choosing Him, and to form from that choosing two stations: returning to Him repentant, and guidance from Him. In this way Allah ﷻ desired to make Himself known to 'Adam peace be upon him through His direct choosing and His previous providential care for him. So He decreed the eating of the tree, but did not make his eating a cause for His leaving him in neglect, nor the cutting off of His support from Him. In fact, in that was the manifestation of His great love and care for him, as it is commonly said:

*"For those for whom the providential care has gone before,
their offenses will not harm them in the least."*

It is not true love that is broken by opposition or disobedience, but true love is what remains for you whether you are compliant or a contender. As for the saying of Allah ﷻ "His Lord chose him (for His Grace)" (Q20:122), that does not mean that the choosing was new or that it came after, but that it was there even before he was. As for what happened after the sin, that was the outward manifestation of the effect of the election of Allah for him. And that is the reason for His saying: "His Lord chose him..." And part of that effect was the facilitating for him of his turning to Allah, and the provision of direct guidance. So in this verse are three affairs: the choosing, the repentance that results from that choosing, and the divine guidance that is a result of that repentance...so understand!

When He made him descend to the Earth He made Himself known to him through His wisdom, as He made Himself known to him in Paradise by the splendors of His power. For this world is the place of intermediaries and secondary causes (*asbab*). So when 'Adam peace be upon him descended to the earth he learned farming and planting and other skills needed for his survival; and all this so that

Allah ﷻ could make real His promise to him before his action when He warned him: "So let him (Shaytan) not cause you both to leave the Garden so that you are loaded in misery" (Q20:117).

The intended meaning of His saying 'misery' (*tashqa*) is the tiring of the outer body, not the misery that is the opposite of happiness and felicity. And the proof of that is in His saying 'or you might end up miserable', and not 'you might both end up miserable.' Because the strenuous obligations and tiring duties are for men, and not women, as He said: "Men are caretakers of women due to what they have been favored with from Allah" (Q4:34). Had He intended by 'misery' the separation from Him or the existence of veils, He would have said, 'or you will both be miserable.' His singling out 'Adam *peace be upon him* in this address is a proof that the misery is not a separation or distancing. Even if it had been revealed in that manner, we would have interpreted it in a most respectful way, and explained it to mean the tiring of the outward body in its obligations.

Another beneficial lesson:

Know that his eating from the tree was not out of opposition or disobedient transgression, but was either out of forgetfulness of the command not to eat from it, as some point to, because of the saying of Allah ﷻ "We had already, beforehand, taken the covenant with 'Adam but he forgot, and We found on his part no firm resolve" (Q20:115); or, that he ate from it while heedful of the command, but probably did it anyway because he was told: "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you would become angels or such beings as live forever" (Q7:20). So out of his love for Allah go and passionate ardor for Him, he wanted what would make him dwell eternally next to Him, remaining with Him, or what would make him an angel. Because 'Adam *peace be upon him* saw the nearness of the angelic state to Allah he therefore wanted to eat from the tree so that he could attain to the angelic rank, since he conceived it would be better (than his current state of being) — especially after Shaytan told him "I swear to you both that I am giving you sincere advice" (Q7:21). He later said: "I never thought that anyone would swear by Allah and lie." But Shaytan "led them on in error and deceit..." (Q7:22).

Another Beneficial Lesson:

Know that whenever 'Adam *peace be upon him* would eat something, he would never have a need to relieve himself. Instead, he would perspire with a perspiration that would smell like musk, just like the inhabitants of Paradise. However, when he ate from the forbidden tree, he felt that he needed to relieve himself. So it was said to him: "O 'Adam, where? In the groves, or on the shores of the rivers? Descend to the earth wherein such a thing would be appropriate," So if the sin (in his excrement) would have an effect on the Garden, then how could the sin not affect its perpetrator? So understand!

Subtle point: Know that everything forbidden is a tree, and the Garden of Paradise is the Presence of Allah ﷻ so it is said to the 'Adam of your heart, and the Eve of your self, "Do not come near this tree or else you oppress yourselves."

As for 'Adam *peace be upon him*, he was specifically surrounded by special care, when he ate of the tree and descended to earth to become a Representative. But you, on the other hand, if you eat from the tree of forbidden things, fall to the Earth of Separation from Allah ﷻ, so understand! If you eat from the tree of prohibition, you are taken out of the Garden of Obedience to the Earth of Separation, and your heart is made miserable. Because misery is found at the moment of the heart's separation, and not the self's, because in that moment of separation are found the self's passions and desires, and its diving fully into heedless forgetfulness.

Section Three

How Allah ﷻ made Himself known to 'Adam peace be upon him:

Know that Allah ﷻ made Himself known to 'Adam through His originating him, so he called Him: 'o Powerful' (Ya Qadir)!

Then, He made Himself known to him through His special Will, so he called Him: 'o One Who Wills' (Ya Murid)!

Then He made Himself known to him through His decision of prohibiting the tree, so he called Him: 'O Judge' (Ya Hakim)!

Then He decreed that he should eat from it so he called Him: 'O Irresistible Compeller' (Ya Qahir)!

Then He did not punish him immediately when he ate, so he called Him: 'O Forbearing' (Ya Hakim)!

Then He did not humiliate him in that so he called Him: 'O Coverer of sins' (Ya Sattar)!

Then He relented to him after that so he called Him: 'O Relenting' (Ya Tawwab)!

Then He caused him to see that his eating from the tree did not separate him from His great Love so he called Him: 'O Lover' (Ya Wadud)!

Then He caused him to descend to the earth, and facilitated for him the means of his living, so he called Him: 'O Tenderly Merciful' (Ya Latif)!

Then He strengthened him in preparation for what He would demand of him so he called Him: 'O Helper' (Ya Main)!

Then He caused him to behold the secret behind the eating and the prohibition and the descent, so he called Him: 'O Wise' (Ya Hakim)!

Then He gave him victory over his enemy (Shaytan) and his tricks, so he called Him: 'O Grantor of Victory' (Ya Nasir)!

Then He helped him in the difficulties of servitude, so he called Him: 'O Helper' (Ya DHahir)!

Therefore, He did not cause him to descend to earth except to perfect for him His authority (*tasrif*), and to establish for him the duties of His appointment (*taklif*). So when these two forms of servitude were perfected in him, the Grant of Allah ﷻ was magnified upon him, and His Generosity to him became abundant...So understand!

Section Four

The Station of Servitude ('Ubudiyyah):

Know that the most sublime abiding station in which the servant could be established is the station of servitude; and know also that all the other stations of the Path are a way to it, 'serving' it. The proof that servitude is the noblest of stations are the sayings of Allah ﷻ: "Glorified be the One Who

made His servant ascend by night..." (Q17:1), and: "And what We made to descend upon Our servant..." (Q8:41), and: "A recital of the mercy of your Lord, on His servant Zakariyya..." (Q19:2), and: "Yet when the servant of Allah stands forth to invoke Him." (Q72:19). And when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was given the choice between being a servant-prophet or an angel-prophet, he chose servanthood to Allah the Exalted; and in this is an indication that it is indeed the most blessed of stations, and the greatest means to draw near to Allah. And he said: "I am a servant, I do not eat while reclining. I am indeed a servant of Allah, I eat as the servants eat."

In reference to the saying of the Prophet ﷺ: "I am the master of all the children of 'Adam, and I say this without boasting," we heard our Shaykh Abu-I Abbas may Allah be pleased with him say: "Meaning, I do not boast of that leadership but rather the pride is because of my servitude to Allah, and that is the purpose of existence." Allah ﷻ said: "I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me" (Q51:56). Worship (*ibada*) is the outer form of servitude, and servitude is its spirit.

If you understand this, then understand that the spirit of servitude and its secret is to abandon self-choice (*ikhtiyar*), and not to contest the Divine Decrees. It is clear from this that the reality of servitude is the ceasing of *tadbir* and personal choice alongside of the Lordship. Furthermore, if the station of servitude, which is the noblest of the stations of the Path, is not complete without the ceasing of *tadbir*, then this means the servant is obliged to abandon it, and to walk the path of utter submission and commitment (*tafwid*) to Allah ﷻ. By this he can reach the Perfect Station and the noblest pathway.

It is reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ heard Abu Bakr reading the Qur'an in a soft, low voice, and he heard 'Umar may Allah be pleased with him reading it in a raised, loud voice. So he said to Abu Bakr: "Why do you lower your voice in reading?" and he replied: "The One I speak to can hear me." And he said to 'Umar, "Why do you raise your voice?" and he answered, "To wake the sleeping, and drive away the Shaytan." So he said to Abu Bakr: "Raise your voice a little," and to 'Umar: "Lower your voice a little." In this respect, our Shaykh Abu-I 'Abbas said: "The Prophet ﷺ desired to take each of them out of what they wanted to what he wanted."

Reflect strongly on this hadith, and you will come to know from it that leaving personal will is the greatest worship. Because both Abu Bakr and Umar did what they were told to do, leaving what they personally desired for what he desired, purposefully following him.

Section Five

The *Tadbir* of the Children of Isra'il:

Know that when the Children of 'Isra'il entered the wilderness, and were provided with the manna and quails, (for Allah ﷻ chose that as a provision to sustain them with, coming from the spring of His Generosity, without toil or hardship on their part), their unrefined opaque selves reverted to the familiarity of their habits. They became absent from witnessing the *tadbir* of Allah for them and preferred what they themselves were used to eating. So they said, "Call upon your Lord that He may bring to us that which grows from the earth, from its pot-herbs, its cucumbers, its garlic, its lentils, and its onions. He (Musa) said, 'Will you exchange what is better for what is worse? Go back to Egypt, and you shall find what you want!' They were covered with humiliation and degradation, and drew upon themselves the wrath of Allah..." (Q2:61). That is due to the fact that they left what Allah ﷻ chose for them for what they wanted for themselves, so they were rebuked and reproached in this manner. The apparent meaning of what he said was 'Do you exchange the manna and quails for garlic and onions and lentils, when their taste is not the same, and one is much easier to come upon than the other?' And the secret meaning of what he said was: 'Do you exchange what Allah desires for you, which is better, for what you desire for yourselves, which is worse?' Go back to Egypt, for what you want can

only be found in the cities.' The secret meaning of that: 'Go down from the heaven of commitment to Allah and the perfection of His choice and *tadbir* for you to the earth of your *tadbir* and choosing for yourselves, characterized by humiliation and degradation, coming from your *tadbir* and choosing alongside Allah for yourselves.

Had this community of Muslims been situated in the wilderness, they would not have said what the children of 'Isra'il said, due to the translucency of their lights, and to the penetration of their innermost secrets. Do you not see that in the beginning of their affair the Children of 'Isra'il said to Musa peace be upon him (which was the cause of their wandering for 40 years): "Go, you and your Lord, and fight the battle, while we remain here and watch" (Q5:24); and they said in the end of their affair, "Supplicate your Lord for our sake..." (Q2:61)? So they refused in the beginning to comply with the orders of Allah ﷻ, and in the end, they chose for themselves orders of Allah ﷻ, and in the end, they chose for themselves what Allah did not choose for them. Many incidents of theirs that were reported in the Revelation show how far they were from the source of the Reality. As, for example, when they asked Musa to: "Show us Allah openly!" (Q4:153), or after they left the Red Sea and their feet had not yet dried from the wet sea-ground they walked on, they saw the people on the other side devoting themselves to idols they had with them, and they asked Musa peace be upon him: 'Give us gods as they have gods.' And they were as Musa rightly stated, "Indeed an ignorant people" (Q7:138).

Similarly, Allah ﷻ said: "When We shook the Mount over them, as if it were a canopy, and they thought it was going to fall on them, We said 'Hold firmly to what We have given you....Q7:171).

This community of 'Islam has, over their hearts, the mountains of Divine Awe and Tremendous Immensity, so they have held firmly to the Scripture with the strength of faith, and they were strengthened and helped in that, and were protected from the worship of the 'calf' because Allah ﷻ chose this nation and chose for it, and praised it in His saying: "You are the best of communities brought forth for the people" (Q3:110), and His saying: "And as such We have made you to be people of the center, (or middle)" (Q2:143), meaning balanced and righteous.

Chapter Five

The Abandonment of Tadbir is the Noblest of the Divine Miraculous Gifts (Karamat)

Summary

In this chapter the author calls the reader to cease self-management and self-direction, and explains why this is the noblest of the Divine charismatic gifts which are given to the friends (Zawliya3) of Allah ﷻ. He explains how, when one directs his or her aspirations to Allah and is content with His management, at that point Allah Himself takes charge of his safety, protection and well being.

Text

You have now understood from what preceded that *tadbir* and personal choice are from the greatest of evils and sins. So if you desire that Allah ﷻ choose for you, then cease choosing for Him. And if you similarly desire that He be for you with His Perfect *tadbir*, then do not pretentiously claim