

ALLAH

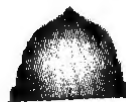


AN EXPLANATION
OF THE DIVINE NAMES
AND ATTRIBUTES

BY

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CONTENTS



Note from the Publisher ix

The Life & Legacy of Shaykh Ahmad ibn 'Ajība xi

Allah 3

al-Rahmān *The All-Merciful* 10

al-Rahīm *The Compassionate* 10

Al-Malik *The King* 19

al-Quddūs *The Holy* 21

al-Salām *The Flawless* 24

al-Mu'min *The Faithful* 26

Al-Muhaymin *The Guardian* 29

Al-'Azīz *The Almighty* 31

Al-Jabbār *The Compeller* 33

al-Mutakabbir *The Proud* 36

Al-Khāliq *The Creator* 38

al-Bārī *The Maker* 38

al-Muṣawwir *The Fashioner* 38

al-Ghaffār *The Oft-Forgiving* 41

Al-Qaḥḥār *The Dominator* 43

al-Waḥḥāb *The Bestower* 45

Al-Razzāq *The Provider* 47

al-Fattāḥ *The Opener* 50

al-'Alīm *The All-Knowing* 52




al-Qābiḍ *He Who Contracts* 54

al-Bāsiṭ	He Who Expands	54
al-Khafīd	The Exalter	57
al-Rāfiʿ	The Abaser	57
al-Muʿizz	The Honorer	59
al-Mudhill	The Humbler	59
al-Samīʿ	The All-Hearing	62
al-Baṣīr	The All-Seeing	62
Al-Ḥakam	The Judge	64
al-ʿAdl	The Just	64
al-Laṭīf	The Benevolent	69
al-Khabīr	The Totally Aware	74
Al-ʿAzīm	The Tremendous	78
al-Ghafūr	The All-Forgiving	80
al-Shakūr	The Gracious	82
al-ʿAlī	The Most High	85
al-Kabīr	The Great	87
al-Ḥafīẓ	The Guardian	88
al-Muqīt	The Nourisher	91
al-Ḥasīb	The Reckoner	93
al-Jalīl	The Majestic	96
al-Karīm	The Generous	99
al-Raqīb	The Watcher	102
al-Mujīb	The Answerer of Prayers	105
al-Wāsiʿ	The Vast	108
al-Ḥakīm	The Wise	110
al-Wadūd	The Loving	112
al-Majīd	The Glorious	115

al-Ba'ith	The Raiser	117
al-Shahid	The Witness	119
al-Haqq	The Real	121
al-Wakil	The Trustee	124
al-Qawi	The Strong	127
al-Matin	The Firm	129
al-Wali	The Patron	131
al-Hamid	The Praised	134
al-Muhsi	The Knower of Each Separate Thing	136
al-Mubdi	The Beginner	136
al-Mu'id	The Restorer	136
al-Muhyi	The Giver of Life	138
al-Mumit	The Giver of Death	138
al-Hayy	The Living	142
al-Qayyum	The Self-subsistent	145
al-Wajid	The Resourceful	147
al-Majid	The Magnificent	150
al-Wahid	The One	152
al-Ahad	The Alone	154
al-Samad	The Alone	156
al-Qadir	The All-Powerful	158
al-Muqtadir	The Determiner	158
al-Muqaddim	The Alone	160
al-Mu'akhir	The Alone	160
al-Awwal	The First	162
al-Akhir	The Last	162
al-Zahir	The Outward	164

- al-Bāṭin *The Inward* 164
 al-Wālī *The Ruler* 167
 al-Mutaʿālī *The Exalted* 169
 al-Barr *The Kind* 171
 al-Tawwāb *The Oft-Relenting* 173
 al-Muntaqim *The Avenger* 175
 al-ʿAfū *The Pardoner* 177
 al-Raʿūf *The One Who Shows Pity* 179
 Mālik al-Mulk *The Absolute Sovereign* 181
 Dhū al-Jalāl wa al-Ikrām
The Possessor of Majesty and Generosity 183
 al-Muqsit *The Equitable* 184
 al-Jāmiʿ *The Gatherer* 185
 al-Ghanī *The Rich* 187
 al-Mughnī *The Enricher* 189
 al-Muʿṭī *The Giver* 190
 al-Māniʿ *The Withholder* 190
 al-Dārr *The One Who Harms* 192
 al-Nāfiʿ *The One Who Benefits* 192
 al-Badīʿ *The Originator* 194
 al-Bāqī *The Everlasting* 196
 al-Nūr *The Light* 198
 al-Hādī *The Guide* 200
 al-Wārith *The Inheritor* 202
 al-Rashīd *The One Who Guides* 204
 al-Ṣabūr *The Patient* 206

A Note From Translator

THE PURPOSE OF our creation, as Allah tells us in the Qur'an, is worship: "*And I have not created jinn or mankind except to worship Me.*" (51:56) The Companion 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas , the preeminent exegete for whom the Prophet Muhammad  prayed "O Allah, teach him the interpretation of the Scripture," said about this verse, "*Except to worship me means: Except to know Me.*" To endeavor to know Allah is to fulfill the very purpose of our existence, and to know Him is to know His beautiful names, attributes, and acts. In this work, taken from his large exegesis of Sura al-Fatiha, Ibn 'Ajiba details the meanings of Allah's Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names (*al-Asma' al-Husna*) and shows readers how to come closer to Allah through the three-fold path of connection, inculcation, and realization: to connect to each of the divine names; to inculcate their meanings in ethics and character; and to attain realization of them, beyond repetition, rote memory, or theoretical discussion. In this commentary, readers can get a glimpse of the transformative power of knowing the Creator through His Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names, about which the Prophet Muhammad  has said, "*To Allah belongs ninety-nine names; whosoever enumerates them fully shall enter the Garden.*" (*al-Bukhari*)

ABDUL AZIZ SURAQAH

The Life & Legacy of Shaykh Aḥmad ibn ‘Ajība

“Whoever reads his commentary upon the Ḥikam* [of Shaykh Ibn ‘Atā’ Allāh al-Sakandarī] knows full well the extent of his mastery and his status with his Lord.” (Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Kūhin al-Fāsī (d. 1347/1938), *Ṭabaqāt al-Shādhiliyya al-Kubra.*)

Abu al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Mahdī ibn ‘Ajība al-Ḥasanī was born in 1160 or 61 (1746 or 1747) in al-Khamīs, a Moroccan village which lies along the Mediterranean coast between Tangier and Tetuan. An earnest student from a very young age, Ibn ‘Ajība began his studies with local scholars before traveling to the cities of Tetuan, Qaḍr al-Kebīr, and then later Fez. In Tetuan, he studied with ‘Abd al-Karīm Ibn Qurrish, Muḥammad Janwī, and Muḥammad Warzizī, while in Fez he received ijāzas (licenses to teach) from Tawdī ibn Sūda and Muḥammad Bannīs. While still in his early twenties, Ibn ‘Ajība returned to Tetuan where he taught fiqh and produced numerous works in Islamic jurisprudence, ḥadīth, and commentaries on Sufi texts.

Ibn ‘Ajība’s transformation into one of the most important figures in Sufi history, however, was not to occur until he happened upon both the Ḥikam of Ibn ‘Atā’ Allāh al-Sakandarī (d. 709/1309) as well as the commentary upon them by Ibn ‘Abbād al-Rundī (d. 792/1390). Profoundly sensitive to the deepest meanings

of these two texts – as evinced by his own, later commentary on the *Hikam* – Ibn ‘Ajība was compelled to give himself unreservedly to the spiritual path, renouncing all of his worldly possessions as well as his esteemed teaching position in exchange for solitude and prolonged periods of seclusion on the mountainside of Jabal ‘Alam.

After a period of time, and at the behest of a spiritual guide from whom he sought regular counsel, Ibn ‘Ajība reassumed his scholarly responsibilities. His desire to give himself entirely to the spiritual path never left him, but Ibn ‘Ajība was beholden to his shaykh’s word and continued to offer scholarly instruction for ten years. At this point in time Ibn ‘Ajība would experience the second spiritual milestone in his life, this time in the form of a visitation to the *zāwiya* (Sufi lodge) of Mawlāy al-Darqāwī (d. 1238/1823). Ibn ‘Ajība was formally inducted into the Sufi path in 1208/1794 and became a committed pupil of Mawlāy al-Darqāwī’s direct disciple, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Būzīdī (d. 1814). This discipleship was exceedingly difficult and taxing; even though he was, at this point, an esteemed scholar in his own right, Ibn ‘Ajība was ordered to exchange his dignified scholarly garb for a patched garment and to undertake a series of arduous, menial tasks meant to subjugate his lower ego and vanquish his pride.

Although he encountered great trials during this period – including imprisonment on charges of being religiously subversive – he emerged to become a spiritual guide whose popularity was attested to by the numerous Sufi lodges (*zāwiyas*) he founded across the *Jabāla* region of northern Morocco. Ibn ‘Ajība eventually settled in Djimmīj, a village in northern Morocco where he would spend the last ten years of his life, immersed in

the composition of spiritual works and in the unceasing remembrance of God. His saintly qualities were patently evident to his contemporaries, and an entire branch of the Shādhilī ṭarīqa bearing his name would later emerge — al-Ṭarīqa al-Darqāwiyya al-‘Ajībiyya. Shaykh Aḥmad ibn ‘Ajība passed away in Ghumāra on the 7th of Shawwāl 1224/15th of November 1809, having been struck down by the plague. A widely popular spiritual gathering (mawsim) takes place every year at his former zāwiya and tomb in Djimmij.

Shaykh Aḥmad ibn ‘Ajība composed over forty works during his lifetime on a wide array of subjects, though much of his life’s work remains in manuscript form and still awaits publication. Among his more renowned works are his tafsīr, entitled al-Baḥr al-Madīd; his commentary on the Kitāb al-Ḥikam (Book of Aphorisms) of Shaykh Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Sakandarī, entitled Iqādh al-Himam fī Sharḥ al-Ḥikam; three separate commentaries on Ṣūrat al-Fātiḥa (each of varied length—short, medium, and long); commentaries on the various litanies (aḥzāb and awrād) of some of the most important Shādhilī masters, beginning with those of Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 656/1258) and his teacher Shaykh Ibn Mashīsh (d. 565/1355), and including a commentary on the wadhīfa of Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493); as well as an array of commentaries on some of the most important poems in the Sufi tradition, including the Hamziyya and Burda of al-Būṣīrī and Khamriyya of Ibn al-Fāriḍ.

A number of Shaykh Aḥmad ibn ‘Ajība’s works are available in translation, including *The Autobiography of the Moroccan Sufi Ibn Ajiba*, translated by Jean-Louis Michon, and *David Streight; Two Treatises on the One-*

ness of Existence, also translated by Michon and Streight; The Book of Ascension to the Essential Truths of Sufism – *Mi'rāj Al-Tashawwuf Ilā Ḥaqā'iq Al-Taṣawwuf*; a Lexicon of Sufic Terminology, translated and edited by Mohamed Fouad Aresmouk and Michael Abdurrahman Fitzgerald; and The Immense Ocean: *Al-Bahr al-Madid*: A Thirteenth/Eighteenth Century Quranic Commentary on the Chapters of the The all-Merciful, The Event, and Iron, also translated by Aresmouk and Fitzgerald.

It is hoped that the present volume will mark a significant contribution in the continued effort of making Shaykh Aḥmad ibn 'Ajība's profound spiritual insights accessible to English-speaking audiences throughout the world.

ALLAH



AN EXPLANATION
OF THE DIVINE NAMES
AND ATTRIBUTES

Allah

THE SOUNDEST POSITION is that the Name Allah is not derived [from a root word]. Khalīl [b. Ishāq] was seen in a dream after his death and he was asked, "What did Allah do to you?" He replied, "He forgave me on account of saying that the Majestic Name [Allah] is not derived." Sibawayhi was seen in a dream after his death and he too said, "He forgave me," and he mentioned a tremendous honor bestowed on him. When asked what caused him to earn such an honor, he replied, "Because I said that He is the Most Definite of Those That are Known [*A'raf al-Ma'arif*]!"

The Proof of Islam, al-Ghazālī (may Allah have mercy upon him!) said:

Allah is the Name for the true existent, the one who unites the attributes of divinity, is subject of the attributes of lordship, and unique in true existence. For no existent thing other than Him may claim to exist of itself, but rather it gains existence from Him: it is perishing insofar as it exists of itself, and exists insofar as it faces Him.... It is most likely that in indicating this meaning [Allah] is analogous to a proper name, so everything which has been said about its derivation and definition is arbitrary and artificial. This name is the greatest of the Ninety-nine Names,

for it points to the Entity that gathers all of the Divine Attributes, unlike the other Names. It is the most specific of the Divine Names, hence it cannot be applied to others besides Him, Most High, neither literally nor figuratively.

Al-‘Aḍud al-Ījī said in *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*:

[Allah] is a Name specific for His Entity. No others can be described with it—that is to say, it cannot be applied to anyone besides Him in the first place. It is said that the Name Allah is a definite and non-derivative [‘alam jāmid] noun that is not taken from a root word. This is one of the two views of Khalīl and Sibawayhi, and also related from Abū Ḥanīfa, al-Shāfi‘ī, al-Khaṭṭābī, and al-Ghazālī—may Allah be pleased with them. It is also said to be derivative, coming from the word *ilāh*, with the *hamza* omitted due to its heaviness, and with a merging of the [double enunciation] of the letter *lām*. The correct position is that the expression “Allah”—assuming that it was originally an attribute [*sifa*—has become a proper noun that signifies the divine attributes of perfection.

Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq  said:

It is possible to cultivate within one’s self the character of all of the Divine Names except for this name, for it is only for attachment [*ta‘alluq*]. All of the Divine names go back to this Name, so to know it is to know them all. This Name, in its written form [*ṣīgha*], indicates the

tremendousness of the One Named with it [*al-Musammā bihi*] in Entity, Attributes, and acts.

For the gnostics [*ʿĀrifīn*], knowing this Name brings about annihilation; for the spiritual aspirants [*murīdīn*] it evokes reverence, exaltation, awe, and intimacy, and drawing near through forgoing base desires and loving the Master [*al-Mawlā*]. This cannot be soundly aspired to save with a heart that is singularly dedicated to Him, with pure and unmitigated oneness that is divested of all else, which includes divestment from all states, stations, and miracles. That is why Junayd رحمه الله, when asked about the path that must be taken for one to dedicate his all to Allah Most High, replied, "With a repentance that eliminates persistence [in sin], a fear that eliminates procrastination, a hope that drives one to the paths of righteous works, and a scorn for the ego by reminding it of the nearness of demise and the lengthiness of its hopes." And when asked "With what does the servant attain unto this?" he replied, "With a heart that is singularly dedicated to Him, with pure and unmitigated oneness that is divested of all else."

I say: Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq's statement that this Name is only for connection [*taʿalluq*] and not for cultivation in one's character is only according to the way of those of the outward [*Ahl al-Zāhir*]. As for the way of those of realization from the people of the inward [*Ahl al-Bāṭin*], this Name is for both connection and cultivation as a character. Cultivation of it as a character means to become annihilated in

it, to become completely absorbed in the Ultimate Reality where "that which is naught" is annihilated and "He who is Ever-Abiding" remains.


Alternatively, you can say: Cultivating it in one's character means to plunge the attributes of servitude into the immensity of Lordship, whereby Allah covers your quality with His, and your attribute with His, enfolding your being in His, and your witnessing into His witnessing...

Shaykh Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Mursī رحمہ اللہ said, "To Allah belongs servants who have effaced their actions with His actions, and their attributes with His attributes, and their essences with His—and He has conferred upon them such secrets that the saints are utterly incapable of carrying."


Once when speaking about love, the *Quṭb* and Shaykh of our Shaykh and the succor of our path, our master ʿAbd al-Salām Ibn Mashīsh (may Allah be pleased with him and allow us to benefit from him!), said, "Love entails the mixing of traits into traits, character into character, lights into lights, names into names, qualities into qualities, and acts into acts."¹ This is the

¹ One should not take this statement as an affirmation of indwelling (*ḥulūl*) or union (*ittiḥād*) with the Divine—a belief that is contrary to the doctrine of Muslims and repudiated by Ibn ʿAjība himself. To explain: There is general agreement that the name (*ism*) is not the named (*musammā*). Since the names point to realities beyond themselves, the "mixing" spoken of by the author is to become a human whose traits, character, lights, names, qualities, and acts all point to a transcendent reality. For this reason—and as will be seen in this commentary—many of the Sufīs believe that the Supreme Name of Allah is the perfected human servant, because his being points to Allah and reflects His beautiful names completely. As such, they maintain

annihilation that refers to replacing the qualities of servitude with the lights of Lordship and the qualities of contingency with the qualities of pre-eternality. Abū Sa'īd al-A'rābī was asked about annihilation and he said, "It is when divine magnitude and majesty manifest upon the servant, causing him to forget this world and the Hereafter, and to forget spiritual states and levels, and stations and invocations, annihilating him utterly from all things: from his intellect, from his ego, from 'things,' and even from his own sense of annihilation, since he has plunged into reverence."

So the upshot is that "cultivating the character" of the Majestic Name [Allah] means to become annihilated in it and absent from all else besides Him. Al-Ghazālī  said:

Man's share in this Name should be for him to become god-like [*ta'alluh*], by which I mean that his heart and his aspiration be taken up with Allah Most High, that he not look toward anything other than Him nor pay attention to what is not He, that he neither implore nor fear anyone but Him. How can it be otherwise? For it has already been understood from His Name that He is the truly actual Existent, and that everything other than Him is ephemeral, perishing, and worthless except in relation to Him. [The servant] sees himself first of all as the first

that the Prophet Muḥammad  is the ultimate mirror in which the realities of the Divine Names manifest (*Majlā zuhūr haqā'iq al-asmā'*). [t]

Summary of how to
cultivate Name of Allah

of the perishing and worthless, as did the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he said, "The truest statement uttered by the Arabs was Labīd's saying:

*Lo, everything other than Allah is naught,
And every happiness is doubtless ephemeral!*

Some of those who explained the meanings of the Divine Names have said that "cultivating this Name in one's character means to adopt every trait of perfection; as much as is within the [common] servant's capacity, and in proportion to the readiness of the elect such as the Prophets and the enraptured [*majdhūbīn*] and lovers among the saints. This could come through arduous spiritual struggles, grueling discipline, refinement of character, and replacement of qualities—or it could come as a result of divine self-disclosures [*tajalliyāt*] and as the fruits of divine witnessing...As for actualizing within one's self the realities of this Name, it is for its sun to dawn on the servant's heart and illuminate him completely, internally and externally, annihilating him from his name and very identity, from his heart and spirit, and even his own body, whereby contingency is replaced by pre-eternity and shadows of darkness are replaced by radiant lights, and the night of the veil is exchanged for the brilliance of the day. He is annihilated and then made subsistent with the existence of the True Being. The servant becomes hidden, and then he remains with a noble and lordly attribute: the Real then becomes his hearing, his sight, his hand; by Him he hears, sees, and grasps, and indeed he is

Allah

entirely annihilated in Him such that he cannot be described by those gifted at describing and cannot be encompassed by the gnostics!"

al-Raḥmān–al-Raḥīm

(The All-Merciful–The Compassionate)



The original meaning of mercy [*rahma*] is delicateness and affection, whence the Name Raḥīm for one who is affectionate. But this is inconceivable [*muḥāl*] for Allah Most High, so its intended meaning [with respect to Him] is its outcome, which is grace and largesse. That is because when a sovereign king shows his affection to his subjects he treats them with kindness and munificence, and when he is angry he displays harshness and severity.

Allah's Names are only understood by considering the outcomes of how they manifest. These outcomes are actions and not reactions [*infī'ālāt*].² Some have objected to the view here, namely that these two Names are derived from *rahma*, which means delicateness. Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq said in his explanation of the Divine Names:

When derivation [*ishtiqāt*] is mentioned with regards to the Divine Names, what it means is that the meaning cited for it is evident within the Name—for otherwise, a condition of a derived

² Allah's mercy refers to His will to bestow favor and largesse upon someone. This is an action of Allah and therefore, Allah is not "acted upon" or "reacting" when He bestows His mercy upon someone. {t}

noun is that it follows the noun from which it is derived, but Allah's names are pre-eternal because they are from His Speech. Some have criticised the use of the term derivation [with respect to Allah's Names] because of the misleading impression that it gives. They have said, "One should only say about His Name al-Salām [the Flawless], for instance, that it contains the meaning of *salāma* [flawlessness], and that His Name al-Rahmān contains the meaning of *rahma* [mercy]."

They say that things are derived from nouns because of the hadith "Allah—the Exalted and Sublime—says, 'I am Allah, and I am al-Rahmān. I created the womb [*al-rahim*] and gave it from My Name...'"³ also because Hassān [b. Thābit]  recited in front of the Prophet  the following line:

*He portioned out to him from His Name,
in order that he be exalted
For He is the Possessor of the Throne, the one who is
Praised
And this is Muḥammad [the Oft-Praised]*

I say: The preferred explanation of al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm is that al-Rahmān is the One who bestows the grace of existence [*ni'mat al-tjād*], and al-Rahīm is the One who bestows the grace of sustenance [*ni'mat al-imdād*]. It states in the Aphorisms [of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh]: "There are two graces that every being must have:

³ Narrated by al-Bayhaqī in *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* (§13216).

the grace of existence, and the grace of sustenance."⁴ Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq رحمته said in his explanation of the Name al-Raḥmān:

The Name al-Raḥmān is on the morphological pattern of *fa'lān*, from the word *rahma* [mercy], which is the manifestation of His divine command in creation that appears with a form of gentleness and beneficence. The reason why this Name has been paired with the Majestic Name [Allah] in His statement "Say: *Invoke Allah or invoke al-Raḥmān...*" (Quran 17:110) is because it, like the Majestic Name, is exclusively His, as it indicates a specific meaning of mercy that is exclusive to Him, the Most High, namely the existentialization of creation, and that can only be taken literally with respect to Him and none else, whence the meaning of "rising" [*istiwā'*] in the verse "The All-Merciful rose above the Throne." (Quran 20:5) For *istiwā'* takes the meaning of "manifestation" [*zuhūr*]⁵—meaning the manifestation of all of existence except mercy, because the Real (Exalted is He!) is free of needing creation, while their utter need of Him is absolute. So it is His mercy that manifests for them and that manifests within them from first to last, always, "And for that reason He created them." (Quran 11:119) It is said [with regard to this verse] that [Allah created] them for differing. Some say they were created for mercy and others say for both. The truth of the matter is that differing is the essence

⁴ Ibn 'Aṣā'illah, *al-Hikam* §97.

of mercy because it is through differences that their existence is established. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh ~~the~~ brought attention to this point when he said, "O He who rose above His Throne with His mercy [*rahmāniyya*], so that the Throne became hidden in His mercy just as the created realms became hidden in His Throne! You have annihilated created things with [other] created things...!" This means: You have annihilated the created realms in the Throne to the point that they, in comparison to it, were like a ring cast into a vast desert, "and You obliterated alterities" which are the created realms and the Throne, "with the encompassing spheres of light," which are the meanings of the Divine Names and the effects of the Divine Attributes. Understand this.⁵

I say: The mercy of the Real [Allah], Exalted is He, is an attribute that subsists with the exaltedness of His Essence. Now an attribute is inseparable from the one it describes, so being hidden in His mercy is to be hidden in the exaltedness of His Essence, which are the spheres of light that obliterate alterities and annihilate created things. Thus "the cosmos is permanent [*thābita*] through His making it so, and it is effaced by the Unity of His Essence."⁶

⁵ Ibid (entreaty 24). The full entreaty reads as follows: "O He who rose above His Throne with His mercy [*rahmāniyya*], so that the Throne became hidden in His mercy just as the created realms became hidden in His Throne! You have annihilated created things with [other] created things and You obliterated alterities with the encompassing spheres of lights...!"

⁶ Ibid §124.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name through seeking a downpour of mercy from Allah Most High and by taking its means, such as repentance and contrition, since the Most High says, "*Your Lord had decreed Mercy upon Himself. Certainly, whosoever among you does evil out of ignorance and repents immediately thereafter and mends [himself], indeed He is All-Forgiving, Compassionate.*" (Quran 7:54) One also connects with this Name by observing the expansiveness of divine mercy and its manifestation in created things, for that strengthens hope and causes faith to be actualized.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by looking upon all of creation with the eye of mercy, just as one of the masters said:

Show mercy to creation entirely;

Look upon them with the eye of tenderness and kindness

Respect their elderly and show mercy to their young

Tend carefully to the rights of all creatures!

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

The realization of this Name is through you having mercy and natural lenience, so that through you Allah shows mercy to your enemies and all who oppose you. You will then become a mercy for servants and a source of refuge for creation, following in the footsteps of His Messenger ﷺ.



As for the Name al-Raḥīm, it is on the morphological pattern of faʿīl, from the word *rahma* [mercy]. It is said to be more intense in meaning [*ablagh*] than the Name al-Raḥmān because it implies sustenance [*imdād*], which comes after existence [*tjād*]. It therefore has two linkages: a linkage to the physical and a linkage to the spiritual sustenance of humans. It also has two angles of meaning: compassion through repelling [harm] and compassion through securing benefit, since it is through these two that the grace of sustenance is acquired.


Because the effects of this sustenance appear among creation, it is permitted to apply this Name figuratively to creation; so it can be said that So-and-so is Raḥīm. On the other hand, one should not say So-and-so is Raḥmān, because its meaning points to the grace of existence, which cannot come from servants (unlike sustenance, whose form can manifest through them).

In the words of the Most Exalted *“And He is Compassionate [Raḥīm] toward the believers”* (Quran 33:43) the Name Raḥīm is exclusively for the believers, and that is because the true sustenance—that is, the spiritual sustenance—is reserved for them. As for physical sustenance, it is shared among animals and others equally, so there is no distinction for humans in it. In fact, the sustenance that Allah grants to a disbeliever is but an increase in that person’s torment, as He says, *“And let not the disbelievers think that Our postponing of their punishment is good for them. Rather, it is worse for them; we only postpone their punishment so that they may increase in sin. And for them is a disgracing torment.”* (Quran 3:178) So sustenance for the disbeliever is a tribula-

tion while sustenance for a believer is an increase in his reward, and thus a mercy for him. Both believer and disbeliever are equal with respect to existence, as there is no divine reward or punishment based upon it, even though the manifestation of reward and punishment is *through* their existence.

NOTICE

Gnosis of Allah's All-Mercifulness [*Rahmāniyya*] is only manifested through His compassionateness [*Rahīmiyya*], because the grace of existence is dependent on the grace of sustenance, as there is no continued existence for created things in the second moment after their initial existence save through the grace of sustenance. Allah says, "*Indeed, Allah holds the heavens and the earth lest they perish.*" (Quran 35:41)

Shaykh Abū Madyan  says, "The Real [Allah] is independent of existence, while existence draws its sustenance from Him. The primal material comes from the essence of existence, so were that material to be cut off, existence would collapse."

Others have said, "there is naught except His bounty. We could not live were it not for His concealment—and had He lifted the veil He would have uncovered for us a tremendous matter!"

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name through seeking a downpour of physical and spiritual sustenance, and by preparing for spiritual sustenance through emptying yourself of alterities and purifying yourself from spiritual grime [*akdār*]"—"Empty your heart

of alterities and it will fill up with mystical sciences [ma'ārif] and secrets [asrār]."⁷ And "The arrival of sustenance is commensurate with one's receptivity."⁸

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by providing relief to the poor and assisting those in need, and by treating all of Allah's creation with gentleness, whether they are obedient or sinful, religious or irreligious. This should be done as a show of gratitude for Allah's blessings and the favors He has bestowed upon you, and a means of opening yourself up to the gentle breezes of His generosity.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

This Name will be realized by ensuring that it is a firmly embedded character trait that does not falter or vacillate between extremes, as Allah says, "*And do not make your hand chained to your neck [being miserly] or extend it completely [being extravagant].*" (Quran 17:29) He also says, "*Those who, when they spend, do so neither extravagantly nor sparingly, and instead adopt a middle way between them.*" (Quran 25:67)



Know that all of Allah's Beautiful Names are fitting for connection, cultivation, and realization. Connection [ta'alluq] is seeking the meaning of that Name; cultivation [takhalluq] is striving in works that will bring about the meaning of that Name [in one's character]; and realization [tahaqquq] is obtaining the reality of

⁷ Ibid., §206.

⁸ Ibid., §113.

that Name and having it rooted firmly in the heart so that it is fixed and rarely, if ever, leaves it. I have explained this in my discussion on the Majestic Name [Allah] and the Names al-Raḥmān and al-Raḥīm—and here I shall discuss connection, cultivation, and realization through the remaining Divine Names.

Al-Malik

(The King)

The King is the one who, with the attributes of Majesty and Grandeur, possesses sovereignty. Sovereignty is to have free-disposal over creation through judgments and management without need or limitation, and without partnership or co-sharing. Some of the masters have said that this Name encompasses the meanings of all the Divine Attributes, and includes knowledge and omnipotence; nothing in His dominion escapes His knowledge, and nothing can render Him incapable of carrying out what is necessitated by divine wisdom, be it reward or punishment.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name in accordance to its meaning: by the subject [*mamlūk*] connecting with the King by fulfilling His commands and abstaining from His prohibitions; by surrendering to Divine Power; by forgetting the "other"; and by drawing strength from the King and the Great [al-Malik al-Kabīr] to arrive unto Him and be in His presence.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by taking possession [*yamlīk*] of your ego and desires. That is achieved by liberating the self from bondage

to cravings, and by adorning it with scrupulousness [*wara'*]. You should also cultivate this Name in your character by possessing spiritual states [*mālikan li al-ahwāl*] and being rich in Allah, the Great and Exalted [finding sufficiency through Him].

Some have said that whosoever knows that Allah is the King and the Real and the One in whom all hopes should be placed—he will make Him his supreme aspiration. As a result, this person—in a state of surrendering to Allah's wisdom and seeking sufficiency with Him from all else—will not take his needs to any other besides Him. It is also said that whosoever knows Allah (the Glorified and Exalted!) as the only Sovereign will refuse to humiliate himself before a created being, since knowledge of his King necessitates detachment [from others] and a complete turning to Him, and requires that he take pride in Allah over all else and suffice with His sovereignty and authority.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by annihilating your own being in His Being. In this way you will be His vicegerent [*khalīfa*] in His kingdom and your command will be His command and your authority will be His authority. "*And Allah grants his kingdom to whom He wills. And Allah is the Vast, the All-Knowing.*" (Quran 2:247)

al-Quddūs

(The Holy)

The Name al-Quddūs is a hyperbolic form of the word *quds*. *Quds* means purity and hallowedness. The word *taqdīs* means sanctification, and the *al-Arḍ al-Muqaddasa* [Jerusalem] means the consecrated land. With respect to Allah Most High, the Name al-Quddūs means the One who is sanctified and transcendent beyond flaws and deficiencies, and who deserves being described with every attribute of perfection. It is also said that al-Quddūs means the One whom imaginations cannot envisage in a form and whose sublimity minds can never grasp. This Name, therefore, refers back to a negating-attribute [*ṣifat salb*].⁹ Some have suggested that it is more fitting to say that al-Quddūs is “the One who is transcendent beyond every perfection that does not befit Him.” That is because the first sentence is far from proper manners—just as it should not be said, for instance, that “the king is not a butcher.”

Because one of the Names of Allah is al-Quddūs, He, with His enabling grace, has sanctified the souls of the devout worshippers from the impurity of contraventions [of His Law]; He has purified, with

⁹ These negating-attributes—beginninglessness, endlessness, transcendence, self-subsistence, and oneness—negate all descriptions that do not apply to Allah, and by them we know what He is *not* in order to affirm what He is. [r]

His goodly support, the hearts of the ascetics from pining after the world and craving after base desires; and He has cleansed, with the light of His Oneness, the innermost secrets of the Gnostics from witnessing anything in the cosmos besides Him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking divine protection from the impurity of contraventions [of His Law], both the inward and outward thereof, and by seeking to secure the heart from offenses and protect the innermost secret from tepidity.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by purifying your bodily limbs from the stains of sinfulness and offenses, purifying yourself from following caprice, purifying your wealth from the forbidden and doubtful, purifying your heart from the sullyng effects of heedlessness, purifying your soul from excess comforts and habits, and purifying your innermost self from glances here and there and taking notice [of others besides Allah]. You should never stand before a created being and humiliate your self [*nafs*], by which you worship Allah; never revere a created being with your heart (merely on account of him being created), the heart by which witnesses Allah; do not attach concern to what has been lost after finding [Allah]; and do not return before your arrival unto Him after seeking Him.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by sanctifying [your] soul and innermost secret from the darkness of the

al-Quddūs

physical, till that sanctification flows throughout your entire being and your [base] humanity slinks away and the secret of your spirituality manifests, causing you to be of the sanctified spiritual beings [*al-rūḥāniyyīn al-muqaddasīn*]. And Allah Most High knows best.

al-Salām

(The Flawless)

The meaning of the name al-Salām refers to Allah's transcendence beyond faults and His sanctification from the qualities of created beings. So on this basis, the name al-Salām has the meaning of al-Quddūs (the Holy). It is also said that al-Salām means the One who confers safety [*salāma*] to His servants. In the case of the former the name al-Salām is a name designating an attribute of negation [*salb*], and in the case of the latter it designates an attribute of action [*ṣifat fi'l*]. It is also said that al-Salām means the One who greets His servants with salutations—in which case it refers to the attribute of speech [*kalām*].

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning to Him, the Most High, in every matter, and submitting to Him in everything.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by keeping others safe from your tongue and hand [verbal and physical harm]. Someone was once asked, "Who is the truly pious person?" He replied, "The one who does not conceal evil within himself and does not harm anyone or anything, not even an ant." It is

said that Abū Yazīd [al-Bisṭāmī] once attended the congregational prayer in the main mosque and stood next to an elderly man who had stuck his walking staff into the ground. When Abū Yazīd stuck his staff in the ground it fell and knocked over the elderly man's staff, causing the man to bend forward and retrieve it. When the man made his way home, Abū Yazīd caught up with him and said, "You needed to bend forward to retrieve your staff and fatigued yourself because of me, so please forgive me!"

It is related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Are any of you incapable of being like Abū ḌamḌam?" The Companions asked, "Who is Abu ḌamḌam, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "Whenever he left from his home he would supplicate, 'O Allah, I give my honor in charity to your servants.'"¹⁰

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by constantly having a clean heart and rancor-free breast, so that you meet Allah with a healthy heart that is free of sicknesses such as malice, hatred, fraudulence, envy, and other blameworthy qualities of character, having replaced them with praiseworthy qualities. And Allah Most High knows best.

¹⁰ Narrated by Abū Ḍawūd, *al-Sunan*, §§4886–4887.

al-Mu'min

(The Faithful)

It is said that al-Mu'min means the One who confirms the veracity of His Messengers through inimitable miracles. It is also said that al-Mu'min is the One who grants His servants security from the Great Terror [of the Last Day], or the One who creates security and calm within them.

The Proof of Islam [al-Ghazālī] said, "There is no security in the world save that it is derived from intermediaries which He alone creates and guides people to utilize—thus He is the absolute Faithful One."

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

Insofar as the first meaning of this Name is concerned, you should connect with it by beseeching Him to grant you conviction in Him and His divine threats and promises, and sure belief in His Prophets and Messengers and friends. Insofar as the second meaning of this Name is concerned, you should connect with it by seeking security from His chastisement—through actualizing repentance, conforming to the Sunna, and eschewing blameworthy innovation.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by making sure that your trustworthiness is so great, and

your faith so powerful that no doubt or illusion mixes within your heart, no anxiety or unease descends upon it, and all of creation feel safe from you—for the Prophet ﷺ said, "By Allah, one does not truly believe if his neighbor does not feel safe from his harm."¹¹ You should also cultivate this Name in your character by acknowledging every person who conveys to you sincere counsel and informs you of what is in your best interest and what will guide you aright.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

This Name will be realized within you when the light of certainty shines in your heart so powerfully that you see the Hereafter too close to warrant travelling to it, and you see the world and its fleeting nature plainly; when what was once unseen is manifest to you, and the Hereafter becomes the Now; and when your truthfulness grows so powerful that you believe what is conventionally impossible.¹² It is narrated that

11 Narrated by al-Bukhārī §6016.

12 Judgments are divided into three categories: legal judgments (*hukm shar'ī*) conventional judgments (*hukm 'ādī*), and rational judgments (*hukm 'aqlī*). Legal judgments are found in the books of jurisprudence; conventional judgments are known through experimentation, testing, and repetition; and rational judgments are understood by the intellect ('*aql*') without repetition or requiring a coined definition. Regarding conventional judgments, Imam al-Bājūrī stated in his marginalia upon al-Sanūsī's *Umm al-Barāhīn*: A conventional judgment is to affirm one thing for another, or to deny one thing from another, by way of repetition. It is of four categories:

1. A correlation between the presence of something and the presence of something else, such as the correlation between the presence of satiety and the presence of food.
2. A correlation between the presence of something and the

our master 'Isā (may prayers and salutations be upon him and our Prophet) once saw a man stealing. He called out to him, "You have stolen!" but the man said, "No, O Spirit of Allah [*yā Rūḥallāh*], I swear by Allah that I have not stolen!" 'Isā replied, "I believe in Allah, and my eyes have lied!" So when your truthfulness is realized and you gain firmness in it, you will be written among the veracious and those brought nigh in the sight of Allah—may Allah resurrect us in their company, *āmin!*

absence of something else, such as the correlation between the presence of cold and the absence of warm coverings.

3. A correlation between the absence of something and the presence of something else, such as the correlation between the absence of burning and the presence of water.

4. A correlation between the absence of something and the absence of something else, such as the correlation between the absence of satiety and the absence of food. [t]

Al-Muhaymin

(The Guardian)

It is said that the Name al-Muhaymin means the Witness [al-Shāhid], which refers to knowledge, and it is also said to mean the Watchful [al-Raqīb] or the Protector [al-Hafīz]... The best that has been said concerning its meaning is the statement of those who say "Al-Muhaymin is the witness that encompasses the internal depths of what He witnesses—hence its rarity among those of creation who bear witness. This quality belongs exclusively to the Real Witness [Allah], due to His absolute and encompassing knowledge of what He witnesses and His perfect conveyance of it. Hence this is a comprehensive Name that refers to the meaning of knowledge and speech..."

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by asking Allah for faith that will make you vigilant of Him and beget within you shame that prevents you from contravening His commands. In one of the sacred scriptures of old it is recorded that Allah Most High said, "If you believe that I do not see you then the fault lies in your faith, and if you know that I see you, then why have you made Me the most insignificant of those who observe you?"

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by standing as a guardian over yourself: by taking it to account and watching over it vigilantly in all of its states, knowing that nothing is hidden to Him; by taking all of your needs to Him and being sufficed by His observance of you, knowing that He is a watcher over you and a protector.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name within you when vigilance settles firmly in your heart to the point that you almost never have an evil thought. Abū Muḥammad al-Jarīrī said, "He who fails to take mindfulness [*taqwā*] and vigilance [*murāqaba*] between him and Allah will never arrive unto mystical unveiling and witnessing." And with Allah is enabling grace!

Al-‘Azīz

(The Almighty)

It is said that the Name al-‘Azīz means the Almighty. Other meanings include: the Exalted, the Glorious, the Incomparable, the One who overpowers all beings, the Ineffable, the One who has full power and control over all affairs, the One who is transcendent beyond the qualities of creation.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking guidance to the means of honor, and by attaching yourself to the company of those whose honor is by Allah. They are the people of obedience and faith, the people of love and gnosis. Allah Most High says, *"Whosoever desires honor, then to Allah belongs all honor."* (Quran 35:10) Some have said, "Let him who desires honor obey al-‘Azīz!" One of the gnostics said, "The presence of Allah's honor in the hearts dictates that they possess submissiveness to Him, as well as awe, reverence, and glory. It is through these qualities that one may attain eternal honor. The carpet-spread of sainthood consists of receiving honor from Allah and forgetting 'other than Him,' as Allah says, *'And whosoever takes Allah, His Messenger, and the believers as his intimate friends—then indeed the party of Allah are the victorious!'*" (Quran 5:56)

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by placing your ambition beyond the domain of creation, while relying upon the True King [Allah]—for that is the result of having honor by Allah and a cause of receiving increase from Him. Shaykh Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Mursī رحمته الله said, "By Allah! I have only seen honor in placing ambitions beyond the domain of creation!" He was also quoted as saying in *al-Tanwīr* [*fī isqāt al-tadbīr*], "When you depend upon other than Allah and that thing is obliterated, or when you rely upon other than Him and that thing is lost, it is said to you: 'And look at your god to which you remained utterly devoted. We will surely burn it and scatter its dust into the sea.'" (Quran 20:97)

[Ibn ʿAtāʾillāh] said in *al-Hikam*, "If you want a glory that does not vanish, do not exult in a glory that vanishes." Others have said, "Whoever expresses pride in a created thing, his pride dies." And in poetry:

*Let your pride be in your Lord;
Do that, and you will be firm and stable
If you exult in one who shall die
Then your pride is dead!*

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by becoming annihilated in the One in whom you take pride, so that you do not give even a furtive glance to the glory of any other besides Him, no matter who it may be. And Allah the Most High knows best.

Al-Jabbār

(The Compeller)

It is said that the Name al-Jabbār means the One who mends something with a degree of force. It is taken from the phrase *jabbartu al-kasr*, meaning "I mended the break." It can be used to convey the meaning of mending and repair alone, and can also be used to convey the meaning of force alone. Accordingly, al-Jabbār is the One who rectifies the affairs of His servants and takes it upon Himself to care for their needs. It is also said that it comes from the word *ijbār* [to compel], which is to forcefully carry out judgments upon the servants. Some of the Shaykhs have said, "To explain it as a predicate—that is, the One who carries out His will—is more fitting than saying it means rectification. That is because this Name follows a sequence of Names that indicate divine rigor [*Asmā' al-Jalāl*], might, sovereignty, so it too must have a similar meaning."

Whosoever knows that He is al-Jabbār will deem every tyrant insignificant, and will turn to Him in all affairs while adopting the quality of utter neediness to Him, and He will mend what is broken of his works, and complete what is lacking in his hopes.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning to Allah, asking Him to mend your faults and perfect

you where you are lacking. Or you should connect with this Name by taking possession of your states and compelling your ego and overpowering your base desires and the devil, so that you take a portion of everything, while nothing decreases your portion in the least.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by mending hearts, forsaking all but your ultimate objective, eschewing selfish calculation [*tadbīr*] in everything cherished or hated, or by overpowering your base desire out of love for the Master.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

In line with the first meaning of the Name [the One Who Mends], it is realized when you possess a light that penetrates the inward of things, so that all who come into contact with you have their brokenness mended and their spiritual state uplifted; thus you repair what has been corrupted in the hearts till you are ready [to enter] the presence of the Knower of the Unseen.

In line with the second meaning of the Name [the Compeller], it is realized by actualizing annihilation till all of your movements and interactions are by Allah, and your affair is by Allah's command, thereby compelling the creation to do your bidding, there being nothing save what you want, as the vicegerent of the All-Powerful and Willer [*al-Qādir al-Murīd*]! In some of the sacred scriptures of old it is recorded that Allah Most High said, "My servant! It is I who, when I want something, say only 'be' and it is; obey me

Al-Jabbar

and I will make it so that when you say to something
'be' it will be." And with Allah is enabling grace!

al-Mutakabbir (The Proud)

It is said that al-Mutakabbir means the Possessor of Majesty, the One who sees everything as inconsiderable [*ḥaqīr*] in relation to Himself, and who thereby looks upon others as a king looks upon his servants. It is also said that al-Mutakabbir means the One who manifests His majesty to His servants. Al-Qushayri said:

Al-Mutakabbir is one of Allah's Names mentioned in the Quran. His pride refers to His supreme majesty, greatness, exaltedness, glory, grandeur, magnificence, and resplendence—all of these adjectives refer to His deserving the qualities of majesty and being transcendent beyond faults and deficiencies.... In creation the quality of pride is blameworthy, and it is stated in the sacred hadith [*ḥadīth qudsī*] "Pride is my upper garment and greatness my lower garment; whosoever contends with Me in either of them I shall break him!" This means He will destroy him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by humbling yourself before His greatness and submitting to His divine decrees, where the meekness and submissiveness of servitude [*ʿubūdiyya*] encounter the magnifi-

cence and greatness of Lordship [*rubūbiyya*] and you call out from the aperture of meekness and submissiveness: "O Mutakabbir! Make me of those who humble themselves before Your greatness, who submit humbly to Your wisdoms and divine judgments!"

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by behaving arrogantly with every arrogant tyrant, for arrogance toward them is in fact humility. You should also cultivate this Name in your character by raising your ambition over every created thing. But the cultivation of this Name in your character will not be complete until you humble yourself before His greatness and submit to His wisdoms and divine judgments, so much that your humility becomes noticeable among your peers. Whosoever humbles himself below his true rank, Allah will elevate him beyond his rank, and whosoever raises high his ego, Allah will humiliate him, and whosoever acts arrogantly, Allah will break him!

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when all of your affairs are by Allah. It will also be realized when your understanding is through Allah. So if Allah manifests His Name al-Mutakabbir through you, you break through all of existence, and if He brings you back to your [true] quality [of servitude], He suspends it, leaving you humbler than the Jews.¹³ And with Allah is enabling grace!

¹³ That is to say, humbler than Jews or other religious minorities in an Islamic land. [r]

Al-Khāliq

(The Creator)

al-Bārī

(The Maker)

al-Muṣawwir

(The Fashioner)

It is said that al-Khāliq means the One who creates entities. Creating is synonymous with originating, and it means to bring something into existence out of nothing. Al-Khāliq is, therefore, the One who existentiates all things and provides for them and sustains their continued existence. The act of creation [*takhlīq*] is to bring a [rationally] possible thing into existence, and thus has the same meaning as omnipotence [*qudra*].

The Name al-Bārī means the One who arranges every possible existent and prepares it to receive the form in which He creates it. It is thus one of the meanings of Will [*irāda*], since Will is linked with specification [*takhsīṣ*].

Al-Muṣawwir is the One who, through His infinite wisdom, gives every created thing its particular form. It is thus one of the meanings of His Name al-Ḥakīm (The Wise).

It is by these three Names that existence has mani-

fested. With divine will there is specification; with divine knowledge there is mastery; and with omnipotence there is manifestation. The upshot of all of this is that al-Khāliq makes things manifest, al-Bārī specifies their shape and appearance and time, and al-Muṣawwir fashions them in accordance with divine will as understood from the Name al-Bārī. And Allah Most High knows best!

CONNECTION WITH THESE NAMES

You should connect with these Names by casting yourself before the One who is singularly described with the acts of creating and fashioning, and who alone brings things into existence and disposes of their affairs. By doing this, you shall extricate yourself from selfish calculation [*tadbīr*] and purify your time from disturbance and commotion (for the real cultivator of a tree is the one waters it!) and you will turn to your Creator and relinquish all claims to power and strength.

CULTIVATION OF THESE NAMES IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate these Names in your character by purifying your meditation [*fikra*] and sharpening it till it bestows you with multiple forms of knowledge and you yield from it wisdoms and sciences. You should also cultivate these Names in your character by perfecting your works so that you become one of the people of spiritual excellence [*muḥsinīn*],

REALIZATION OF THESE NAMES

You will realize these Names by actualizing the station of *Ihsān* [spiritual excellence], which is that "You

worship Allah as though you see Him,"¹⁴ and thus become Allah's vicegerent on His earth, whereby His creation receive their provision through your hands, and your acts are His acts, and your command is His command—*Allah selects for His mercy whom He wills, and Allah is the Possessor of Immense Bounty!* (Quran 3:74)

¹⁴ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī.

al-Ghaffār

(The Oft-Forgiving)

The Name al-Ghaffār is a hyperbolic of the word *ghufrān*, which means to cover and conceal. Allah covers His servant by concealing his sins and not taking him to task for them. Allah Most High says, "Indeed, Allah forgives all sins." (Quran 39:53) And in a hadith, the Prophet ﷺ related, "Allah—Blessed and Exalted is He!—says, 'O son of Ādam! Were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth, and were you then to face Me having ascribed no partner to Me, I would bring you a similar amount of forgiveness.'"¹⁵

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning to Allah and asking Him to forgive your sins and conceal your faults.

¹⁵ *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-da'awāt* (§3540). The full narration reads as follows: "O son of Ādam! So long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Ādam! Were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Ādam! Were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth, and were you then to face Me having ascribed no partner to Me, I would bring you a similar amount of forgiveness."

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by forgiving Allah's servants. Do not make demands of them if they wrong you, and do not harbor hatred against them if they insult you; rather, be like Abū Damdam and offer your honor as charity for the Muslims.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when forgiveness becomes an intrinsic part of your character and a natural disposition within you that never abates. So when you are injured, say as your Prophet ﷺ said, "O Allah, forgive my people, for they know not!"¹⁶ And Allah Most High knows best.

¹⁶ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.

Al-Qahhār

(The Dominator)

Al-Qahhār is the One who vanquishes and is never vanquished. Some Shaykhs have said that the Name al-Qahhār comes from the word *qahr*, which means to dominate over something outwardly through power and authority, and inwardly through exalted status and the establishment of proofs.

He who knows Allah's domination over His servants will forget his own wants by Allah's wants, thus he will be for Allah and by Allah and nothing and no one else.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME


You should connect with this Name by turning to Him for domination over your enemies, which are the ego, caprice, Satan, the world, and everything that comes between you and your Lord and erects itself as an obstacle to His Holy Presence. You should also connect with this Name by being afraid of Allah's overpowering onslaughts and cautious of His hidden plots—being apprehensive of heart and isolated from your countrymen.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by dominating over those things that you are obliged to overcome, such as caprice. This is accomplished

by forsaking self-aggrandisement and by turning sincerely to the One, the Dominator. Alternatively, you can say: It is by submitting in every small and great matter to the One who has power over all things.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

Realizing this Name only comes after union¹⁷, and with union comes the realization of evanescence [zawāl]. After that you become a sword among Allah's swords, and through you He vanquishes the tyrants and helps His friends—as Abū al-Hasan al-Shādhilī  said, "And make us a means of richness for Your friends, and a barrier between them and Your enemies. Indeed, You have power over all things!"

¹⁷ Sīdī Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Sakandarī says in his *Aphorisms*, "Your union with Allah is union through knowledge of Him—otherwise, Allah is beyond being united with anything or anything being united with Him." [t]

al-Wahhāb

(The Bestower)

The Name al-Wahhāb means the exceptionally bountiful and ever-giving who confers favors without recompense or external cause, and gives without [the recipient] deserving it or receiving it as a reward. Without doubt, the Real (Exalted is He!) gives generously with great benevolence and concern. He is magnanimous, bestowing favors before being asked, and showering unique graces.

He who knows that He is al-Wahhāb will express gratitude for His blessings, seek a downpour of His mercy, and will not be too proud to beg of Him.

CONNECTING WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking a downpour of His gifts and exposing yourself to His gentle breezes—and that is by constantly thanking Him for His bounties and serving [worshipping] Him with excellence. You should say in your beseeching of Him, “O Wahhāb! Bestow upon me of Your generous gifts what will cause me to attain Your good pleasure!”

CULTIVATING THIS NAME IN ONE’S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being *wahhābī* by bestowing upon servants what they need of wealth, knowledge, or spiritual states. You

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

should feel too shy before Allah to take what He has given you and use it unlawfully.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you give like one who does not fear poverty, and when you give your soul and self to the One who created you and proportioned you. And with Allah is enabling grace!

Al-Razzāq

(The Provider)

The Name al-Razzāq means the Creator of provision and the One who grants all created things the sustenance needed to preserve their frame and physical constitution. Provision [*rizq*] is anything from which benefit is derived. It is divided into lawful provision and unlawful provision. That which corresponds to [divine] permission is lawful, and that which does not correspond to it is unlawful—but according to the position of the people of the truth [*Ahl al-Haqq*] all of it is provision from Allah.

He who knows that Allah is al-Razzāq will turn to Him alone and seek to draw near to Him by constant reliance upon Him. Allah Most High says, “Allah extends provision for whom He wills, and restricts it.” (Quran 13:26)

Someone was once asked, “From where do you get your food?” He replied, “Ever since I knew my Creator I have never doubted about His provision!” A man once came to Ḥātim al-Aṣamm and asked him, “From where do you get your food?” He replied, “From Allah’s treasure-stores.” The man inquired, “So you get your daily bread from the heavens?” Ḥātim replied, “Had the earth not been His, I would have received it from the heavens!” Another person was asked, “From where do you get your food?” He

replied, "From the King's treasure-stores that are never pilfered by thieves, and never consumed by worms!"

Al-Qushayrī said:

The lower selves [*nufūs*] have sustenance which, once they are secure, causes them to feel at ease. The heart too has sustenance, as does the innermost secret and soul. The sustenance of the heart is tranquillity; the sustenance of the innermost secret is invocation; and the sustenance of the soul is audition [*samāʿ*], because it comes from the Real and goes back to Him.

Better still is to say: Humanity has physical sustenance in the form of food and drink. And the self, the intellect, the heart, the soul, and the innermost secret all have a spiritual sustenance by which they have eternal life without death. The sustenance of the self is in the act of opposing its base desires and doing the opposite of what it wants. That is the food and medicine for the self. The sustenance of the intellect is knowledge; the sustenance of the heart is invocation; the sustenance of the soul is meditation and introspection; and the sustenance of the innermost secret is gaining stability and firmness in the Divine Presence, followed by constant ascension in gnosis.

Someone was once asked, "What is true sustenance?" He replied, "Remembering the Living who shall never die!"

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking provision from Him—both the physical and the

spiritual thereof—and by relying on His guarantee and casting aside feelings of unease [over provision]. Out of reliance upon the Occasioner of secondary causes [*Musabbib al-Asbāb*], one should not stop short at the material causes. Some have said, "All knowledge is found in two phrases: 'Do not exert undue effort in that which you have been guaranteed,' and 'Do not waste what you have been given.'"

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by providing for those whom you are obliged to spend upon, and spending your provision on those whose provisions are straightened, whether near or far.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you are annihilated from your own existence by witnessing the Real Provider. As a result, you will give without selfish concern, and when that happens, both physical and spiritual provision will come through you, since you will be the Axis of Existence and all beings will draw their sustenance through you! The reality, however, is that there is only the Necessary Being [*Wājib al-Wujūd*] and no other. And with Allah is enabling grace!

al-Fattāḥ

(The Opener)

It is said that al-Fattāḥ means the Judge [al-Hākim]; the Arabs call a judge a *fattāḥ*. Allah Most High says, *"Our Lord! Grant an opening of truth between us and our folk! Indeed, You are the Best of Openers!"* (Quran 7:89) This is because Allah opens with His judgement what was previously in a deadlock between them.

It is also said that al-Fattāḥ means the One who opens the treasure-stores of provision and mercy for the various forms of creation, or the One who creates openings (victory) and is the Benefactor who brings divine aid and expansiveness immediately after dejection, and brings worldly or afterworldly openings to the bodies and souls after they have suffered constriction.

He who knows that Allah is al-Fattāḥ will be sure to rely upon Him in every affair, and will be at ease by turning to Him in every matter of concern, and will seek recourse in Him for everything.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning constantly to Him and expressing utter neediness before Him, asking that He open what has been shut of either physical or spiritual matters. At every moment one should seek a new opening that is beyond

what he knows, for Allah's knowledge is endless, and therefore the perfected gnostic rises to a new form of knowledge and an expansive opening at every hour and moment.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by bestowing upon the servants what Allah has bestowed upon you: knowledge, action, wealth, spiritual reality, focus, or spiritual state.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will attain realization of this Name through the Supreme Opening, which is when you extricate yourself from the constriction of the physical and enter the vast expanse of the realm of souls [*‘alam al-arwāh*]*—*or you can say, when you go from witnessing the physical realm [*‘alam al-mulk*] to witnessing the spiritual realm [*‘alam al-malakūt*]. After this, you will be able to grant spiritual openings to servants by your [mere] gaze [*naẓra*] and spiritual focus [*himma*].

It is mentioned in a report: "To Allah belongs men, whosoever looks at them will enjoy total happiness and will never suffer damnation. They are the knowers of Allah, by whom the lands and servants receive life."

And a poet said:

*Every land upon which you dismount comes to life;
As if you are rain covering the earth
The eye desires to behold your fair beauty
As if you are moons in the eyes of men!*

al-‘Alīm (The All-Knowing)

Al-‘Alīm is an intensified Name for one who possesses knowledge. The All-Knowing is He who encompasses with His knowledge all things that are known [*ma‘lūmāt*], whether possible, necessary, or impossible. Not even an atom’s weight in the earth or the heavens escapes His knowledge. He knows the creeping of a black ant on a black stone on a dark night; He is aware of the movement of the smallest particles in existence as they move in the heavens; He knows what is secret and what is even more concealed; He knows man’s inner apprehensions and passing thoughts. His knowledge is pre-eternal and beginningless [*qadīm aza-lī*], and He has always been described with knowledge in beginningless eternity—not with a knowledge that is renewed and obtained through indwelling [*ḥulūl*] and displacement [*intiqāl*].

He who is aware that Allah has knowledge of all things will be sufficed with His knowledge in every matter, and as a result he will rely upon Him and turn to Him in every matter.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking support from His hidden knowledge and striving to seek it as much as possible.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by gaining proficiency in knowledge of the Law [Shariah] and the Spiritual Path [Ṭarīqa], and by plunging deeply into knowledge of the ultimate reality [Ḥaqīqa], expressed through spiritual taste [dhawq], state, and station. When you attain this, you will be an heir to the Prophets (peace be upon them!) and will have received the full inheritance!

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you become the essence of knowledge [‘ayn al-‘ilm] and its substance. The mystical sciences shall be acquired through you as the medium, and from your countenance the treasure-stores of understandings will be opened. And Allah is the possessor of immense grace!

al-Qābiḍ–al-Bāsiṭ

(He Who Contracts–He Who Expands)

Allah Most High says, "*And Allah contracts and expands.*" (Quran 2:245) It is said that al-Qābiḍ is the One who seizes the souls at the time of death, and al-Bāsiṭ is the One who grants them life. It is also said that Allah is the Qābiḍ of hearts, making them lonely and forlorn, and the Bāsiṭ of the hearts, making them happy and joyful. It is also said that Allah is the Qābiḍ of provision, constricting it, and the Bāsiṭ of provision, expanding it.

According to the Sufis, contraction and expansion are two spiritual states that rise and settle upon the hearts, each one succeeding the other just as the night succeeds the day. When one is dominated by the state of fear he is subjected to contraction, and when he is dominated by the state of hope he is subjected to expansion. This is how it applies to the wayfarers to Allah [*al-sā'irūn*]. As for those who have arrived [*al-wāṣilūn*], their fear and hope are balanced in equal measure, and thus they are unaffected by either contraction or expansion. That is why [Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh] said in his *Aphorisms*, "He expanded you so as not to leave you in the state of contraction, and He contracted you so as not to leave you in the state of expansion, and He took you out of both so that you belong to Him and nothing else besides."¹⁸

¹⁸ Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Sakandarī, *al-Hikam*, §80.

Al-Qushayrī ؒ said:

When Allah discloses Himself to the servant with the quality of His beauty He expands him, and when He discloses Himself to the servant with the quality of His majesty He contracts him—so contraction brings with it lonesomeness, and expansion brings with it intimacy.... Understand: sometimes Allah will bring the servant back to his human states and then contract him with such intensity that he cannot bear even a single atom, and then suddenly he will remove him from his human qualities, and he will find strength and ability to bear the divine impression [*wārid*].

Al-Shiblī ؒ said, "The knower of Allah can carry the heavens and the earths on a single eyelash, while the one who does not know Allah will scream if a gnat's wing lands on him." The gnostics also say, "When Allah causes contraction, He contracts till there is no strength, and when He causes expansion, He expands till there is no want—all are from Him and to Him!"

He who knows that Allah is al-Qābiḍ and al-Bāsiṭ will never blame any of creation, and will not incline toward them trustingly (before or after approaching them). Likewise he will not despair on account of a created being when he is tested with misfortune, nor will he pin his hopes in the giving of a fellow creature. In short, he will not engage in selfish calculation.

CONNECTION WITH THESE TWO NAMES

You should connect with these two Names by gathering yourself toward Him, asking Allah to take

you unto Himself and to hold you back from what displeases Him, such as following caprice and base desires. You should ask Allah to grant you expansion in what pleases Him and expansion in what will draw you closer to His good pleasure. You should also connect with these two Names by showing propriety when experiencing constriction or expansion from Him, and then transcend them to direct witnessing and gnosis of Him.

CULTIVATION OF THESE TWO NAMES IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate these two Names in your character by contracting yourself away from everything besides Allah, and by expanding yourself in everything that pleases Him. If this is achieved by way of struggle then it is cultivation, and if it comes by way of your nature then it is realization. And Allah Most High knows best.

REALIZATION OF THESE TWO NAMES

You will have realized these two Names when your contraction and expansion are by Allah: when you are constricted in your expansion and expanded in your constriction, for then you are by Allah, for Allah and nothing else besides Him. May Allah guide you. Āmīn!

al-Khāfiḍ–al-Rāfiʿ

(The Abaser–The Exalter)

Both al-Khāfiḍ and al-Rāfiʿ are mentioned in the authentic hadith: “He lowers [*yakhfiḍ*] the Scale and lifts [*yarfaʿ*] it...” Allah abases whom He wills by exacting vengeance, and exalts whom He wills by bestowing favor; He exalts the truth and its advocates and abases falsehood and its supporters; He exalts the religion and its distinguishing features [*shīʿār*] and abases disbelief and its traces; He exalts Islam and its lights and abases those who are pleased with disbelief and choose it for themselves; and He exalts the hearts by bringing them near to Him and abases the egos by His decree of punishment. He exalts His friends [*awliyāʾ*] with the safeguard of His covenant, the excellence of His love, the beauty of His support, and the truthfulness of His promise; He abases His enemies by preventing them, rejecting them, and casting them out. He abases the one who follows his caprice and exalts the one who follows His good pleasure.

It is said, “For the one who is satisfied with less than what his rank would accord him, Allah shall elevate him beyond his rank.”

He who knows that Allah is al-Khāfiḍ and al-Rāfiʿ will never rely on any of his transient spiritual states, and will not depend on any of his knowledge or works.

He will never reject any abasement or exaltation, since neither are acquired except through Allah. Let such a person, therefore, attach his aspirations to Allah alone, for then he will obtain richness in this life and the Next.

CONNECTION WITH THESE TWO NAMES

You should connect with these two Names by turning to Allah and beseeching Him to abase your ego and caprice, and to elevate your rank among those He has chosen and taken as friends.

CULTIVATION OF THESE TWO NAMES IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate these two Names in your character by abasing what Allah has ordered you to abase and exalting what Allah has ordered you to exalt.

REALIZATION OF THESE TWO NAMES

You will realize these two Names when your exalting is by Allah and your abasement is by Allah—not by your mere surmise and whim. And Allah Most High knows best.

al-Mu'izz-al-Mudhill

(The Honorer—The Humbler)

Allah Most High says, *"And You honor whom You will, and humiliate whom You will."* (Quran 3:26) When Allah honors His servant in this world it is through means of wealth and inner conditions. Wealth is for the purpose of beautifying the outward, and inner conditions are for the purpose of illuminating the innermost secrets. Through wealth one frees himself from needing those like himself, and through inner states he obtains richness through the Great and Exalted.

Understand: The Real (Exalted is He!) honors the ascetics [*zāhidīn*] by making them averse to the world; He honors the devotees [*ʿābidīn*] by safeguarding them from cravings and selfish longings; He honors the spiritual aspirants [*murīdīn*] by granting them sincerity in turning toward Him, the Master; and He honors the gnostics by readying them for delight and intimate discourse with Him, along with unveiling, meeting, and gaining sufficiency through Him from all "other".

When Allah wants to honor His servant, He brings him close to His carpet-spread and readies him for intimate conversation with Him. And when He wants to humiliate His servant, He drives him away from His presence and entangles him in his base desires—

he will not be protected by the flock, nor will the eye of divine concern take notice of him. The sign of such a person is that he is left to his own devices and desires... The servant's humiliation lies in him being enslaved to his ego and in bondage to his passions, where avidity settles in his heart and he is filled with anxiety and restlessness.

It states in the *Aphorisms*, "Were it not for the seeds of avidity, the branches of humiliation would not be lofty."¹⁹ And the poet says:

*The servant is free as long as he is contented
And the freeman is enslaved as long as he avidly craves*

He who knows that Allah is al-Mu'izz will not seek honor through other than Him, and he who knows that Allah is al-Mudhill will not humiliate himself before any other besides Him.

CONNECTION WITH THESE TWO NAMES

You should connect with these two Names by turning to Allah and asking Him to honor you in being among those who are honored in His sight, and by banishing humiliation and its causes from yourself.

CULTIVATION OF THESE TWO NAMES IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate these two Names in your character by honoring what Allah has commanded you to honor, such as the Prophets and Messengers, the saints and gnostics, the righteous, and indeed

¹⁹ Ibn 'Aṣā'illāh al-Sakandarī, *al-Hikam*, §60.

everyone who ascribe themselves to the Lord of the worlds. You should humiliate everything that Allah has commanded you to humiliate, in general and in specific, such as the ego, by forcing it to obey its Master, and so on. Understand this.

REALIZATION OF THESE TWO NAMES

You will realize these two Names when all of your interactions are by Allah, from Allah, and as a vicegerent of Allah; when your act of honoring is His act of honoring, and your act of humiliating is His act of humiliating; when you are annihilated from yourself and subsistent through your Lord. And to Allah belongs immense bounty!

al-Samī^c—al-Baṣīr

(The All-Hearing—The All-Seeing)

Hearing and Sight are two attributes superadded to the attribute of knowledge, and both of them are mentioned in the Quran and the Sunna and supported by scholarly consensus. As for their reality, they are attributes by which all seen and heard things—and indeed all existing things—are disclosed, whether those things are possible or necessary. Nothing that is heard can escape Allah's hearing, even if it is hidden, and nothing that is seen can be concealed from His vision, even if it is miniscule. His hearing is not veiled by distance, and His sight is not encumbered by darkness. He sees without pupils or eyelids, and He hears without ears or auditory meatus, while His attributes (Exalted is He!) are veiled from minds, just like His Holy Essence, as indeed "The inability to comprehend [Him] is comprehension!"

He who knows that Allah is All-Hearing and All-Seeing will be vigilant in his movements and stillness, and will feel shy before Him when speaking or thinking. It is related that Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq ؓ said, "When I bath during a dark night, I stoop down out of shyness from my Lord." It has also been said, "If you want to disobey your Lord, do it in a place where He cannot see you!"

When the servant knows that his Master hears all

that is said and sees all that transpires, he will find sufficiency in His hearing and sight from needing to exact revenge or give victory to his self, for the help of the Real (Exalted is He!) to him is more complete.

CONNECTION WITH THESE TWO NAMES

You should connect with these two Names by turning to your Master and asking that He make you hearing and obedient to His commands—with insight into your religion and clarity from your Lord.

CULTIVATION OF THESE TWO NAMES IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate these two Names in your character by hearing [obeying] what you are commanded and seeing [with insight] what is sought from you.

REALIZATION OF THESE TWO NAMES

You will realize these two Names by drawing near to Allah till He loves you, whereupon He becomes your hearing and sight, and through Him you hear and see, as the sacred hadith [*ḥadīth qudsī*] states. This is the sign of the Supreme Sainthood. Al-Shushtarī said about this condition:

*It is by Allah that I speak
And by Allah that I hear!*

And with Allah is enabling grace!

Al-Hakam-al-‘Adl (The Judge-The Just)

Al-Hakam is the One who judges His servants as He wills: “*And it is Allah who judges; there is none to reverse His judgment.*” (Quran 13:41) Al-‘Adl is the One who is free of wrongdoing in His judgments, the One who is transcendent and exalted beyond oppression in His actions. Justice [‘adl] refers to the actions that a sovereign can perform without any opposition whatsoever.

He who knows that Allah is the Ultimate Judge will not seek judgment in any other besides Him, and when Allah’s divine ordainment becomes clear he will be pleased with His judgment. The Prophet ﷺ said in a supplication, “O Allah, to You I have submitted, in You I have believed, by You I have argued [against the rejecters of faith], and unto You I have sought judgment...”²⁰ He who knows that Allah is just in His ordainments will not find within himself any misgivings with His rulings, and as a result he will be at ease by submitting to the divine injunctions and decrees.

[Imam al-Qushayrī] said in *al-Tahbīr* [*fi al-Tadhkīr*], “Know that Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He!) has judged His servants as He willed in beginningless eter-

²⁰ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.

nity. Consequently, among them are the damned and the felicitous, and the near and the far. Whomsoever He judges to be damned will never enjoy felicity, and whomsoever He judges to be felicitous will never suffer damnation. Whosoever is made remote by antecedent decrees will not be drawn near through causal means, and whosoever is brought close by antecedent decrees will not be made distant by the blamers.

When it comes to how they view Allah's judgments, people are of four categories. The first category are the people of antecedent decrees [*aṣḥāb al-sawābiq*]. They use their faculties to think of what has been decreed for them by Allah Most High, and they know that the pre-eternal divine judgment cannot be changed through the acquisition [of good works] or obtained through stratagems or causal means.

The second category are the people of endings [*aṣḥāb al-awāqib*]. They use their faculties to think of the state in which they shall die—for matters are judged by their endings and the end results are concealed. Because of this it is said, "Do not let the purity of the moment delude you, for beneath it lie obscure pitfalls."

The third category are the people of the moment [*aṣḥāb al-waqt*]. They do not use their faculties to think of antecedent decrees or endings, but rather they tend carefully to the moment and fulfil the rulings that Allah has made incumbent on them at that time. For this reason it is said that the gnostic is the "son of his moment" [*ibn waqtihi*]. It is also said that the Sufi is the one without either a past or a future.

The fourth category are the people of invocation and witnessing [*aṣḥāb al-dhikr wa al-shuhād*]. They are

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

engaged in witnessing the Real [Allah] and invoking Him, and as a result they are prevented from observing the times. They do not focus their energies on observing time, and they do not look attentively to the temporal—since the One who determines the time [Allah] has occupied them away from witnessing time.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with the Name al-Ḥakam by submitting to His judgments in every condition (be they judgments of beauty [*jamāl*] or of rigor [*jalāl*]) and by relying upon Him in all affairs, and by avoiding complaints (to other than Him) in all matters [as the poet said]:

*You lay claim to the way of divine love yet complain!
Where, pray tell, is your claim to love?
Had We found you patient in enduring Our love
We would have given you all that you hope for!*

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate the Name al-Ḥakam in your character by being a person who judges fairly: over your ego, your heart, your soul, and over others. Allah Most High says, "O you who believe! Stand firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against your own selves..." (Quran 4:135)

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize the Name al-Ḥakam by judging by Allah while being absent from all-other-besides-Him. When you do this, you will have actualized your ephemerality and gained firmness in your

annihilation and perfection in your subsistence—to the point that all of your movements and acts are by Allah: your judgment is Allah’s judgment, and your command is His command, and you become one of Allah’s “eyes”. An example of this is found in the statement of our master ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭab رضي الله عنه. Our master ‘Alī (may Allah ennoble his countenance) had struck a man, and when ‘Umar asked him why he did it, ‘Alī said, “I saw him engaging in a private [intimate] conversation with a woman, and that angered me.” As he stood there with blood running down his face, ‘Umar said to the man, “You were struck by one of Allah’s eyes!”

In another incident, it was related that Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه said, “I am not wont to punish Allah’s judges [*hukkām Allāh*].” This is an allusion to the masters who grasp and dispose of affairs by Allah, and an allusion to the people of spiritual insight who are trustworthy bearers of Allah’s secrets within His creation and dominion—may Allah allow us to benefit from them, and may He join us with them, Āmīn!

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with the Name al-‘Adl by asking for enabling grace [*tawfiq*] and by asking to be set aright in all of your affairs, so that you become fair in your pronouncements or aspirations, balanced in all things, fearful of the irresistible force of Allah’s justice and hopeful of His grace and largesse.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE’S CHARACTER

You should cultivate the Name al-‘Adl in your character by being just in your decisions and balanced in your qualities—so let neither your separation

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

[*farq*]²¹ veil you from your gatheredness [*jama'*]²²,
nor your gatheredness veil you from your separation.
Render unto everything its right and due portion.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize the Name al-^cAdl when you witness
the judgment of the One whose judgment and justice
preside over you, making you absent from witnessing
your own judgment and justice. Allah Most High
knows best.

21 Separation (*farq*) is a Sufi term that means to witness the forms
of created beings while maintaining the requisite manners that such
witnessing entails, such as worship, servitude, and observance of the
Shariah. [t]

22 Gatheredness (*jam'*), the correlative to separation, is to witness
the spiritual meanings that subsist within the created beings
insomuch as they are connected to the Seas of Divine Infinity. [t]

al-Laṭīf

(The Benevolent)

It is said that al-Laṭīf means the Ineffable, or the One who has full knowledge of all hidden things, or the One who bestows His grace by providing favors and benefits [to others] from indiscernible and inconceivable doors. All of these explanations are correct. The first meaning refers to a negating attribute [*ṣifa salbiyya*]; the second refers to Allah's knowledge; and the third refers to an attribute of action [*ṣifa fi'l*].

He who knows that Allah in the Ineffable will magnify Him to the degree that such knowledge is firmly rooted within his heart. He who knows that Allah has full knowledge of all hidden things will be guarded in his actions, knowing that Allah is constantly observing him and what he is doing, and he will also be wary of relying on his personal knowledge or state. And he who knows that Allah is the bestower of grace who supplies benefit will turn resolutely to Him and will rely upon naught but Him.

Allah's benevolence toward His creation takes on diverse forms. The greatest forms of benevolence are: the ease and facilitation that are made for obedience and good works, the safeguarding of divine unity within the hearts and the unveiling of unseen realities within them, the protection of doctrinal beliefs from misgivings and doubts, and the security granted to the

hearts that renders them safe from turmoil. Allah Most High says, "For those who believe, Allah makes them firm with a firm word in this life and in the Next." (Quran 14:27)

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

With respect to the first meaning, you should connect with this Name by seeking from Him and turning wholeheartedly to Him, asking Him to unveil to you the secrets of His Essence and the lights of His Attributes—and this is by [Him] making your physical realm spiritually subtle and causing the lights of your spirit to dominate. With respect to the second meaning, you should connect with this Name by asking Him to disclose to you what is abstruse and hidden in the inner confines of the souls of others. And with respect to the third meaning, you should connect with this Name by asking [Him] to bring benefit to His servants through your hands. It is stated in a hadith: "Glad tidings to the one I have created for goodness and through whose hands I have caused goodness to flow."

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by strengthening your spirituality and seeing to it that your humanness is spiritually subtle, so that all material objects become spiritually subtle due to the overpowering nature of your witnessing of spiritual meanings. On this point, Ibn al-Fārīd has said:

*In reality, the subtlety of the utensils follow from
The subtlety of the meanings, while in utensils the meanings
ascend*

You should also cultivate this Name by obtaining knowledge of the secrets of the Divine Essence and the lights of the Divine Attributes, and by rescuing the distressed, guiding the lost, mending the broken, and giving to those of straightened means.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by gaining firmness and stability in the three meanings [outlined above]: to connect with it is to attempt; to cultivate it as a character trait is to strive and exert effort; and to realize it is to arrive and witness it directly. The same may be said with respect to all of the Divine Names. Allah Most High knows best.

al-Khabīr

(The Totally Aware)

It is said that al-Khabīr means the One who knows the minutia and inner realities of all things. It is also said that it means the One who informs others. It is also said that it means the One who examines others.

He who knows that Allah is totally aware of all things will be sufficed with His knowledge, and will abstain from ostentation and pretentious displays of piety to others, and will rely upon Him and His guarantee of provision.

It is related that someone said, "I was once struck by poverty and want, and I set out to ask one of the elect [saints]. But when his eyes fell upon me he said, 'Let me ask you, the need for which you have come to ask of me—does Allah know of it or not?' I replied, 'Of course He knows,' whereupon he said, 'So take your need to Him!' When he said that, I fell silent and made my way back home. When I arrived at my home, lo, Allah granted me provision that sufficed us!"

It is also related that one night in Baghdad a child was born to a man but the man had no food, so he set out to visit Ma'rūf al-Karkhī رحمہ اللہ. Ma'rūf was inside his local mosque, and when the man came in and mentioned his need, Ma'rūf said, "Sit over there." Suddenly there came a man that had disembarked from the Tigris river and who had made his way over

till he arrived at Ma'rūf's mosque. With him was a servant holding a money purse. The man said to Ma'rūf, "Qahrumān from the Caliph's residence has sent you these dinars for you to spend on whomever you wish." Ma'rūf said to him, "Give them to that man over there." Perhaps feeling that the amount was too much to be given to a single person, the man said, "But they are three hundred dinars!" Ma'rūf said, "That is how I wish to spend them."

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by pleading with Allah to make you aware of your faults, and to make you seek His forgiveness for your sins.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by gaining experience in various matters, worldly or otherworldly, as much as possible—in those things that are obligatory or recommended.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when such experience is firmly rooted within you, when you have clarity from your Lord in what you do or what you forsake. And Allah Most High knows best.

Al-Ḥalīm

(The Clement)

It is said that al-Ḥalīm means the One who does not hasten the punishment of the person who deserves it (in which case its meaning refers to Allah's transcendence beyond hastiness). It is also said that al-Ḥalīm is the One who wills to delay punishment (in which case its meaning refers to a qualitative attribute).

He who knows that Allah is the Clement will experience tranquility in His clemency without suffering delusion, and he will have strong hopes for those who are sinful and persistent in their disobedience.

It is related that a man said to one of the Prophets of old (peace be upon them all), "Say to my Lord how often do I disobey Him and go against His commands yet He does not punish me!" Soon thereafter Allah revealed to that Prophet, "Say to him, 'Know that I am who I am, and you are who you are!'"

It is possible that Allah acts with clemency [toward a servant] in a single moment due to His knowledge of the person's righteous condition. It is related that Mālik b. Dīnār (may Allah have mercy upon him) said, "I once had a neighbor who was extremely sinful against himself and who harmed his neighbors. The other neighbors complained to me about him so we confronted him and said, 'You must leave this area.' He replied, 'No! I will stay at my house!' We said,

'Then you must sell your house.' He said, 'No! I will not sell my property and I will not allow you to expel me from it!' We then said to him, 'In that case, we will submit a complaint about you to the Sultan.' He said, 'He knows me and I am one of his helpers!' I then said, 'We will pray to Allah against you.' He replied, 'Allah is more merciful to me than all of you!' I was angered by what he said, and when the evening arrived and I finished my night prayer I thought to pray against him, but then a caller [*hātif*] called out to me saying, 'Do not pray against the young man, for he is one of Allah's friends.' The next day I went to the front door of his home and knocked on it. When he came out and saw me he thought I had come to expel him from the area, so he spoke apologetically. I said to him, 'I have not come for that reason. Last night I saw such-and-such [he related the dream]'—and that caused him to weep. He then said to me, 'I repented after yesterday's incident.' He soon left the area and I did not see him after that, but sometime later it just so happened that I went to perform the Hajj and while there in the Sacred Mosque I saw a circle [of people crowded around something]. I made my way over to the circle, and lo and behold there was the young man, lying dead upon the ground! I did not leave till I heard those in the crowd say 'The young man fulfilled his promise!'"

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with the Name al-Halim by seeking His clemency so that your evil qualities are veiled and your good qualities are spread [known]. You should also connect with it by being thankful for His

blessings that He has placed in His creation, and by returning to Him [in repentance] before the manifestation of His divine command to exact His judgment.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by forgiving those who do wrong and pardoning them for the sins they commit. Indeed, you should go further and reward them with excellent character as an actualization of clemency and forgiveness, similar to what happened with al-Aḥnaf b. Qays. It is reported that when al-Aḥnaf's servant informed him that his neighbor had blinded his son [accidentally] he said, "You are free," and he did not stand up (so he would not frighten him). On another occasion a man was speaking disrespectfully about al-Aḥnaf and then said him, "I'm talking about you!" to which al-Aḥnaf replied, "I'm being clement toward you!" In a separate incident he said to a man who was insulting him, "Finish all the insults you want to say about me before the foolish ones of my people arrive and hurt you."

It is narrated that a man was sitting with his young child when his servant-girl entered with a hot metal skewer with braised meat on it. The skewer fell from her hands and landed on the boy's head, splitting it open. Her master looked at her and she said, "O master! Allah Most Exalted says '*And those who restrain their rage and pardon the people...*'" (Quran 3:134) He said to her, "I pardon you." Then she said, "And the Most Exalted also says, '*And Allah loves the people of excellence*'" (Quran 3:134) to which he said, "You are free for the sake of Allah!"

There are many stories like these.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

The realization of this Name comes after the ego's death, when praise and dispraise and kindness and meanness are equal in one's eyes. Indeed, such a person will pray for the one who harms him until Allah turns to the offender in repentance and takes him by the hand. And with Allah is enabling grace.

Al-‘Azīm (The Tremendous)

Tremendousness applies to one of two things: either the tremendousness of a body (in which case it refers to the abundance of its parts) or the tremendousness of rank and majestic qualities. Now, the former supposition—that is, it referring to tremendousness in parts—is inconceivable with respect to Allah because His tremendousness is one and indivisible; it precedes all things and remains eternally after all things, it encompasses all things and is hidden to all things. His tremendousness can be neither encompassed by the understandings of contemplatives, nor described by the tongue of those gifted at descriptions, nor can its essential reality be perceived by the thoughts of the gnostics.

For the one who knows that Allah is al-‘Azīm, all things will become paltry in his eyes—except those things that Allah Most Exalted has made tremendous.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with the Name al-‘Azīm by turning to Him with humility and brokenness and asking Him to magnify your spiritual rank by placing you in the ranks of the righteous and pious, and to magnify your spiritual ambition to ascend to the station of the gnostics, among the people of spiritual firmness and stability.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by honorably shunning every reprehensible quality and adopting every noble trait; you should set your spiritual sights high beyond created beings and be rich by the Lord of the Worlds...

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

The realization of this Name comes only when attributes are replaced by attributes, actions are replaced by actions, and character traits are replaced by character traits—when every base quality is obliterated from yourself and you adopt laudable and praiseworthy qualities. It is then that your spiritual rank will be magnified through Him, so that no trace of you remains before His Tremendousness. Allah Most High knows best.

al-Ghafūr

(The All-Forgiving)

The Name al-Ghafūr is an emphatic noun derived from the word *ghufrān* (forgiveness). It is similar to the Name al-Ghaffār; however, the Name al-Ghaffār implies encompassment of times and individuals, whereas His Name al-Ghafūr speaks of an amplitude in His forgiveness. This means that it speaks to the frequency at which He forgives. It is also said that al-Ghafūr is derived from the word *ghafr* which is a medicinal plant that heals wounds quickly when placed on the skin. So forgiveness heals the wounds of sins just as the *ghafr* plant heals the wounds of the body. It is also said that al-Ghafūr is derived from the word *mighfar* (helmet), which is placed upon the head in battle, because forgiveness covers up sins.

He who knows that Allah is al-Ghafūr (and for whom no sin is too great) will seek forgiveness abundantly. To seek forgiveness is to seek absolution from sin. If the act of seeking forgiveness is coupled with brokenness it is sound [*ṣaḥīḥ*]; if it is joined with repentance [*tawba*] it is perfect [*kāmil*]; and if it is stripped of both brokenness and repentance it is invalid [*bāṭil*].

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by consistently seeking forgiveness, with humility and brokenness.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by forgiving and pardoning transgressors, as that is the door to attaining forgiveness from Allah Most High. He says, *"Let him pardon and forgive; would you not love that Allah forgives you? Indeed, Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful."* (Quran 24:22) Allah also says, *"Say to those who have believed that they should forgive those who do not hope in the Days of Allah."* (Quran 45:14) So if the Real has encouraged us to forgive those who do not believe, then the encouragement to forgive those who do believe is even more emphatic!

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

The realization of this Name comes by being absent from your ego, till there no longer remains within you any remnant of self-aggrandizement—rather, through you Allah shows mercy to your enemies and forgives them because of your blessings. Allah Most High knows best

al-Shakūr

(The Gracious)

It is said that al-Shakūr means the One who rewards others for their gratitude. It is also said that it means the One who grants manifold rewards for a modicum of good works. It is also said to mean the One who lauds those who are obedient to Him. Some of the Shaykhs have said, "Al-Shakūr is derived from the word *shukr* (gratitude), which is to manifest, through actions or words, what is hidden."

He who knows that Allah is the Gracious and Appreciative (al-Shākīr) will be grateful for His blessings and will prefer obedience to Him [over all else], and will seek His mercy and witness His graces—he will be by Allah and for Allah.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking out [Allah's] enabling grace [*tawfīq*] and guidance to show gratitude as it is customarily understood: to apply the physical limbs and inner faculties in that which is pleasing to Allah, in order to secure what one already has [*qayd al-mawjūd*] and hunt for what is missing [*ṣayd al-maṣqūd*]. This is because showing gratitude is a sure guarantee of receiving increase, as the Most High says, "If you are thankful I will most certainly increase you." (Quran 14:7)

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by showing gratitude for Allah's blessings by serving Him with your body, remembering Him with your tongue, and thanking Him for the blessings that come at the hands of [other] servants, which is by magnifying the small favors and recompensing the large ones. Whosoever fails to show gratitude for the small favors will not show gratitude for the large favors, and whosoever does not thank people does not thank Allah.

As far as we are concerned, the reality of gratitude is the heart's joyfulness in the Beneficent that comes as a result of His grace, which then expresses itself in the bodily limbs as they devotedly serve [Allah] upon the carpet-spread of sanctity. This heart-felt gratitude is outwardly manifested when Allah's favor is not employed in disobedience to Him. Furthermore, gratitude is the straight path and the most important method of guaranteeing one's salvation, comfort, and well-being. Consider the Quran and its mention of gratitude, for it is a description of every consummate person mentioned therein: Ibrāhīm, Nūh, and the elite among the believers. When Satan was expelled [from the heavenly realm], he said "*And You [Allah] shall not find most of them grateful.*" (Quran 7:17) Allah Most High also said, "*And We shall reward the grateful*" (Quran 3:145) and, "*Few of My servants are [truly] grateful.*" (Quran 34:13) The reason why the grateful are so few is that gratitude entails leaving everything and giving everything to the One who possesses everything, and ascribing everything to their Creator and interacting with them as He has commanded. Understand this.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when Allah's graciousness causes you to become annihilated from your graciousness, so that your gratefulness to Him is through Him and not through anything else besides. The sign of this is that you take hold of the blessing that comes from Him and give it back to Him—without being oblivious when receiving it, and without undue delay in giving it back. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-‘Alī


(The Most High)

The Name al-‘Alī means the One who is exalted in His Entity, Attributes, and acts beyond the reaches of the intellects. For the one who knows that Allah is al-‘Alī—who is above everything in rank and majesty—his aspiration will be to Allah, and in his spiritual states he will rely upon Him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking to have your aspiration raised so that it is unto Allah—so that you choose for yourself neither the lower world nor the Hereafter, wanting only to obtain His good pleasure—and by relying only upon Him in all of your states.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by inclining toward high, lofty matters, as it states in the hadith: "Indeed, Allah loves lofty matters and detests low matters."²³ It is reported that our master ‘Alī  said, "Lofty aspiration is from faith."

²³ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmi‘ al-Sagħīr* (1:253); al-Hākim, *al-Mustadrak* (*Kitāb al-Imān*); al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubra* §20780.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by ascending beyond the realm of the physical and settling in the realm of the spiritual: your soul will be heavenly [*samāwiyya*] and of the celestial-throne-realm [*‘arshiyya*] and your ego will be earthly and of the lower realm; your soul will be *Malakūtī* and your ego will be *Mulkī*—in this manner your rank will ascend and your affair will be magnified.²⁴ And with Allah is enabling grace.

24 Sidi Ahmad b. Ibn ‘Ajlba says in his lexicon of Sufi terms *Mīrāj al-Tashawwuf* (§58): “The *Mulk* (Kingdom) is the sensory aspect of existence, the *Malakut* (Sovereign Realm) is what is concealed in it of spiritual meanings...” [1]

al-Kabīr (The Great)

The Name al-Kabīr is like the Name al-‘Azīm. It is said that al-Kabīr is the One whose greatness [*kibriyā*] utterly diminishes all else besides Him, and before whose overwhelming power all tyrants are lowered.

He who knows Allah’s greatness will forget his own self-imagined greatness and no claim will remain for him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by facing Allah’s greatness with your humility and self-abasement, for whosoever humbles himself will be exalted by Allah, and whosoever acts arrogantly will be lowered by Allah.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE’S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by having self-respect and being stern with tyrants and proud and haughty with the rich—for the sake of elevating your aspiration and preserving sanctity.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

This Name is realized through the annihilation of the quality of the servant, which is insignificance, and realizing the quality of the Lord, which is greatness—and this is the supreme triumph. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Hafīz

(The Guardian)

It is said that this Name means the All-Knowing (al-‘Alīm). It is derived from the word *hifz* [to preserve], which is the opposite of neglect or forgetfulness. So in this sense it refers to knowledge. It is also said to mean the One who is not preoccupied by one thing from another (in which case it is a negating attribute). It is also said to mean the One who masterfully fashions each thing (in which case it is an attribute of action). It is also said to mean the One who safeguards and preserves things and looks after them with providential care (here derived from *hifz* insofar as it means to protect something against neglect). This latter view is the soundest position [with regard to the meaning of the Name al-Hafīz], for the Real—Exalted is He!—is the Guardian of all of His servants in every situation, the Guardian of the heavens and the earths, as He says: “*And He feels no fatigue in guarding them [the heavens and the earth]...*” (Quran 2:255) and: “*Indeed, Allah grasps the heavens and the earth lest they deviate.*” (Quran 35:41) He protects the hearts of His saints from alterities, and protects the hearts of the gnostics from halting at the mystical lights so that they find no repose in other than Him.

He who knows that Allah is al-Hafīz will suffice with His management and protection and dispose of

his own selfish calculation, and will be relieved of the fatigue of self-management. He will find Allah sufficient for him in all of his concerns, and will be free of spiritual impurity, since the one who does not run his own affairs has his affairs taken care of: "*And whosoever puts his trust in Allah shall find that Allah is enough for him.*" (Quran 65:3) In other words, Allah shall suffice him, protect him, and help him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

One should connect with this Name by turning constantly to Allah, asking Him to help one uphold His commands and safeguard His secret. One should also rely solely upon His protection and turn to Him by shunning fear of created things and anxiety over provision—trusting in His protection and guaranty.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by safeguarding those things that you have been commanded to protect: your bodily limbs, the divine commands, trusts, and items left in your care for safekeeping.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will attain realization of this Name when you are wholly immersed in the witnessing of Allah's protection and absent from your act of protection. Indeed, were you to be left alone with your act of protecting [something], you and what you are protecting would be utterly lost, for in reality there is no Protector except Allah. Allah Most High says regarding women: "*Guarding in the unseen* [in their husbands' absence] by

Allah's guarding." (Quran 4:34) This means: by Allah's act of safeguarding. Whosoever attains realization of the fact that his protection is through Allah, he will be safeguarded within himself, safeguarded in his death, and safeguarded in his Hereafter—in a measure that is proportionate to his firmness in preserving his Lord's commands. Allah Most High knows best.

al-Muqīt (The Nourisher)

It is said that the Name al-Muqīt means the Creator and Apportioner of sustenance. In this sense the meaning refers to an attribute of action. It is also said to mean the Witness (al-Shahīd) or the Determiner (al-Muqtadir)—and both of these meanings have been mentioned in the interpretation of Allah's statement "*And Allah is Muqīt [a determiner and witness] over everything.*" (Quran 4:85)

With regards to the first meaning (the Creator and Apportioner of sustenance), then the sustenance of creation is varied. Among creation are those whose sustenance has been placed in food and drink, while there are others—such as the angels in the heavens and the earth and those who are joined with them from the purveyors of spiritual struggles and discipline—whose sustenance has been placed in invocation and acts of obedience. Allah has made food the means of sustaining the physical bodies, and knowledge and increased understandings of the sustenance the means of sustaining the souls.

You can also say: For some people the sustenance for their selves [*nafs*] is contained in acts of worship; the sustenance for their hearts is contained in mystical sciences and unveilings; and the sustenance for their souls is contained in constant witnessing and in-

timate moments [with Allah].

He who knows that Allah is the Creator and Apportioner of sustenance will forget the mention of sustenance when invoking Him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking your physical and spiritual sustenance from Him and no other—so do not address your needs to any other besides Him, and do not seek succor except from Him, because the treasure-stores of sustenance, be they physical or spiritual, are in His hand alone.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by providing sustenance to those connected to you. Start with yourself and then your dependents, even in the mystical sciences and branches of knowledge.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will attain realization of this Name by being a locus of both physical and spiritual sustenance for others. You therefore give material provision to whomever turns to you seeking material provision, and give—with your spiritual ambition and state—spiritual provision to whomever turns to you seeking spiritual provision. Realization of this Name will not occur till you attain complete annihilation followed by complete subsistence, thereby becoming one whose spiritual state inspires and whose words guide unto Allah—and Allah is the Possessor of Immense Bounty!

al-Ḥasīb

(The Reckoner)

It is said that the Name al-Ḥasīb comes from the word *ḥasab*, which means nobility and sovereignty. It is also said that it means sufficiency; so it is He who gives His servant's what suffices them—and this comes from the statement "*ḥasbī Allāh*," i.e., Allah is enough for me. It is also said that the Name al-Ḥasīb comes from the word *ḥisāb* (reckoning)—in other words, the One who takes His servants actions to account.

In his collection of spiritual allusions, the son of al-Ustādh Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, al-Qādī 'Abd al-Rahīm (may Allah have mercy on them both), said:

Al-Ḥasīb is the One who reckons each category [of people] distinctively: He makes the disbelievers reckon themselves and they judge themselves worthy of the Hellfire and then enter it as a result. The people of perfection are reckoned by the angels openly for all to witness so that their excellence is made manifest. And for the generality of the believers, the All-Merciful removes their shackles and rebukes them for their sins after which He forgives them...

He who knows that the Real (Exalted is He!) suffices him will not take his needs to any other besides Him, as it has been said:

*It is forbidden for the one who knows that Allah is his
Lord,
And who singles Him out [in worship], to take besides
Him as support
Dear friend! Stand together with me on the truth
Wherein I shall die out of ecstasy and be brought back to
life in ecstasy!
Say to the earthly kings: Try as you may to experience
this ecstasy,
It is not for sale and not offered freely as a gift!*

He who knows that the Real (Exalted is He!) responds swiftly to the one who turns resolutely to Him will trust Him in every situation in which he finds himself, especially in his needs that are exclusively for Allah Most High (for if his need was merely of a personal nature he might be denied or find his need delayed).

He who knows that Allah is the Reckoner will magnify Him due to His perfect attribute and will take account of himself before Allah takes him to account.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning to Allah and asking Him to avert heedlessness from you, making it possible for you to be mindful and to take account of yourself before the Day of Reckoning, as the Prophet ﷺ said, "Take account of yourselves before account is taken of you." You should [also] connect with this Name by asking Allah to suffice you in all of your concerns, and in all matters, supplicating: "O Hasib! Put me to work in self-reckoning before the Divine Reckoning and Interrogation, and be my Guardian in all circumstances!"

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by taking your ego to account and standing vigilantly in watch over it, searching for its faults, accusing it at all times, and refusing under all circumstances to give it the benefit of the doubt. You should cultivate this Name in your character by relying on Allah's guarantee and sufficing with His promise. Allah Most High says: "*And whosoever puts his trust in Allah shall find that Allah is enough for him.*" (Quran 65:3) In other words, Allah shall suffice him. How can one who is sufficed by his Master turn to other than Him?

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will attain realization of this Name when your heart gains firmness in vigilance [*murāqaba*] and gains stability in it, for then you will constantly take yourself to account. It can also be said: you will attain realization of this Name when you attain firmness in divine witnessing [*mushāhada*], for then you will suffice with Allah's knowledge of your state over the need to seek and ask. And Allah Most High knows best.

al-Jalīl

(The Majestic)

He is the One of supreme rank whose command is manifest, who is unparalleled and incomparable in His Essence, Attributes, Names, and acts. Al-Jalīl is the one described with the attributes of majesty [*jalāl*] and beauty [*jamāl*]. His majesty speaks of His deserving the qualities of sublimity and might.

He who knows Allah's majesty will reflect that knowledge by revering Allah in his daily life. As a result, he will possess spiritual ambition, love, intimacy, and veneration.

Al-Qushayrī said:

Know that the Real [Allah] will sometimes make Himself known to the hearts with His quality of majesty, and sometimes He will make Himself known with His quality of beauty. He utterly annihilates the one who receives unveiling through His quality of majesty, and enlivens the one who receives unveiling through His quality of beauty. The unveiling of majesty results in effacement and obliteration, and the unveiling of beauty results in delight and grace. With His majesty He has made Himself known to the Gnostics, and thus they were annihilated. And with His

beauty He has made Himself known to the lovers, and thus they were in rapture.

I say: It would have been better had he reversed the description, for the predominant quality of the Gnostics is expansiveness [*bast*], and when He disclosed to them His beauty they were in rapture. As for the lovers—who are still on their spiritual voyage unto Him—when He disclosed to them His majesty they were annihilated in it, absent from all others besides Him, and thus their predominant quality is contraction [*qabḍ*].

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by humbly submitting yourself and yielding while under the protective covering of His beauty. So do not hold in awe or love anyone besides Him.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by dignifying yourself and shunning all low and unbecoming matters—for you are indeed the most majestic and marvelous of created beings. It states in the *Aphorisms* [of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh], "He has placed you in the intermediary world [*al-'alam al-mutawassit*] between His kingdom [*mulk*] and His spiritual realm [*malakūt*] in order to teach you the majesty of your rank among His created beings, and to teach you that you are a jewel wherein the pearls of His creations are hidden."²⁵

²⁵ Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, *al-Hikam*, §245.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

The realization of this Name is attained in the station of balance between the outward and the inward. It is when your outward reality is majestic and your inward reality is beatific, and you are between them as a barrier [*barzakh*] that they do not cross. The perfected saint is the one whom Allah garbs in the raiment of majesty and beauty: it is with Allah's majesty that His words are heard and His commands are obeyed, and it is with His beauty that hearts yearn for him and souls submit humbly to Him. Allah Most High knows best.

al-Karīm

(The Generous)

It is said that the Name al-Karīm means the One of Noble Rank and Supreme Eminence. An example of this [meaning] is found in the verse: *"He [Yūsuf] is naught but a noble angel!"* (Quran 12:31) This meaning refers back to the nobility of the Divine Essence. It is also said that al-Karīm means the One described with beautiful qualities, whence the statement "So-and-so has a gracious [karīm] nature," meaning a beautiful nature. This meaning refers back to the nobility of attributes. It is also said that al-Karīm means the Magnanimous, who bestows on His own accord before being asked to do so. This meaning refers back to the nobility of actions.

All of these meanings apply to Allah Most High, for He is Karīm in His Essence, His Attributes, and His acts.

He who knows that Allah is Karīm in His qualities will not love anyone else besides Him; he who knows that Allah is Karīm in His Essence will love Him without ulterior cause [*illa*]; and he who knows that Allah is Karīm in His actions will not seek from other-than-Him, and will not seek to manage things alongside of Him.

Junayd ra said: "Al-Karīm is the One who does not reduce you to begging."

The most comprehensive explanation of the Name al-Karīm is that of the one²⁶ who said:

Al-Karīm is the One who pardons when He decrees and protects when he binds. When He gives to someone, He increases him beyond hopes and does not care how much He gives and to whom He gives. If someone besides Him is petitioned for a need, He will not be pleased, and if someone offends Him, He will lightly rebuke him and not take it to the utmost limit. He does not fail the one who seeks refuge and protection in Him, and He suffices from all intermediaries and intercessors.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking a downpour of His generosity and largesse in every hour, every moment, every circumstance. Do this by relying upon Him for all of your needs and turning yourself wholeheartedly to Him, while putting your bodily limbs to work for what is with Him. It says in the *Aphorisms*, "Let not the intention of your aspiration shift to other-than-Him, for hopes cannot outstrip the Generous (al-Karīm)." ²⁷

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by striving against your ego in giving [to others] and adopting noble qualities of character and beautiful manners.

²⁶ Imam al-Ghazālī, *al-Maqṣid al-ʿasnā*.

²⁷ Ibid., §38.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will attain realization of this Name when generosity becomes an innate quality within you and part of your very nature; when you give without concern for how much you gave or to whom you gave, and when you take on the qualities mentioned in the above-mentioned comprehensive meaning of al-Karīm. And Allah Most High knows best.

al-Raqīb

(The Watcher)

It is said that al-Raqīb is similar in meaning to the Name al-Ḥafīz. Al-Ghazālī said:

The Name al-Raqīb is more particular [in meaning] than the Name al-Ḥafīz, because al-Raqīb is the one who looks after something to the point of never forgetting it in the first place, and who observes it with a constant and persistent gaze—so that if one to whom it was forbidden knew about the surveillance he would not approach it. It is as though this Name refers to knowledge and protection together, but with regard to its being constant and persistent, in added to there being something forbidden and protected from access.

His statement, “if one to whom it was forbidden knew about the surveillance he would not approach it,” means that the Real, Exalted is He, is intrinsically aware of all things. Had the servant truly known and realized within his heart that Allah is ever-watching over him, then he, out of awe and shame before the Most High, would never commit a forbidden act or come near one,

He who knows that Allah is al-Raqīb, watching over

all things, will be vigilant of Him in all things and will not turn to other than Him in anything—acting in accordance to Allah's words: "*And Allah is a watcher over all things.*" (Quran 33:52)

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by striving to seek closeness to Him—a closeness that engenders shyness, awe, and magnification, or one that brings with it annihilation, obliteration, and effacement, such that you say with the tongue of humble entreaty and supplication: "O Raqīb! Grant me of Your watchfulness what will prevent me from disobedience, and grant me of witnessing Your closeness what will drive away the causes of obliviousness and neglect!"

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by maintaining constant vigilance over your ego, your heart, and your inner-most secret. You should suffice with His knowledge in all circumstances. You should also cultivate this Name in your character by carefully supervising those whom Allah has ordered you to look after, such as your family or others, since the Prophet ﷺ has said: "Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock."

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will attain realization of this Name when vigilance is so firmly entrenched in your heart that you become a locus for the theophanies [*tajalliyāt*] of the Lord, after which this vigilance moves to others and you watch closely over the secrets of those who turn

to you or connect with you, as Shaykh Abū al-Hasan al-Shādhilī said, "A Shaykh will not be a Shaykh until his hand is with the hand of the needy disciple wherever he goes." And Allah is the Possessor of Immense Bounty!

al-Mujīb

(The Answerer of Prayers)

Allah Most High says: *"I respond to the call of the supplicant when he invokes Me."* (Quran 2:186) The meaning of the Name al-Mujīb with respect to Allah Most High is that He answers those who call upon Him; He is gracious towards those whom the supplicants put forward as intermediaries [*wasīla*] in their prayers; He relieves the needs of the hopeful; He gives before being asked; and He fulfils the wishes of His servant with beautiful gifts after He is asked.

It is related in a tradition, "Verily, Allah is shy to leave His servant empty-handed."

When a need comes to the mind of one of His friends, Allah grants it to him swiftly and before his tongue mentions it. At other times, according to the dictates of the divine preordainment, the answer to a supplication might be delayed. It is mentioned in the *Aphorisms*, "If in spite of intense supplication the divine gift is delayed, let it not be the cause of your despairing. For He has guaranteed you a response in what He chooses for you, not in what you choose for yourself, and in the time He wants, not in the time you want."²⁸

He who knows that Allah is al-Mujīb will continually supplicate for all things large and small and

²⁸ Ibn 'Aṭā'illah al-Sakandarī, *al-Hikam* §6.

will not ask of others—relying instead on Allah's response and mercy. Afterwards, when his certainty grows stronger and he is overcome by the station of satisfaction [*ridā*], he will suffice himself with Allah's knowledge of his state instead of asking. It is mentioned [paraphrased] in the *Aphorisms* that sometimes propriety leads the servants to forgo asking because of their confidence in His Providence and because their remembrance of Him preoccupies them from asking Him, so let your asking be out of servitude [*‘ubūdiyya*] and propriety with Lordship, not out of seeking the fulfilment of your own interests. Far exalted is the pre-eternal divine decree above being linked with contingent causes! Verily, His providential giving preceded your supplication!

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking a response [from Allah] before supplicating, and by not presuming your request too great, for Allah is greater than all that is sought.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by responding to those who ask your help in religious or worldly matters, for "Never was the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked for something to which he said no." Responding in matters of religion pertains to knowledge. If a person is asked about something and the questioner is worthy of an answer he should respond; otherwise silence is more appropriate. It is mentioned in the *Aphorisms*, "Whomsoever you see answering every question put to him, expressing

everything he has witnessed, and mentioning all that he knows—infer from all of that the existence of his ignorance!”

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by acquiring the quality of magnanimity in your heart, so that you are unable to refuse those who ask of you. Or, by acquiring knowledge so you are able to answer difficult questions as if they were self-evident, as was the state of our master ‘Alī (may Allah ennoble his countenance) when he spoke upon the pulpit and in other places. Allah Most High knows best.

al-Wāsi^c (The Vast)

He is the One whose generosity extends to all created beings; whose knowledge extends to all things that are known; and whose omnipotence extends to all things subject to divine power—thus He is not preoccupied with one thing and distracted from another.

He who knows that Allah is Vast in both mercy and knowledge will put hope in the expansiveness of His mercy, and will fear the expansiveness of His knowledge, and will thus strike a balance between fear and hope at all times.

Know that the expansiveness of Allah's generosity takes on two forms: the grace of conferring benefit and the grace of warding off harm. The former is what He has blessed them with, and the latter is what he has averted from them and sufficed them therefrom. It is not from the perfection of grace that one's worldly means are perfectly organized and arranged and that one attains whatever he wishes for; rather, Allah's subtle blessings, when compared to the worldly things He has removed from him, are far more in comparison to the worldly things He has removed from him, and His benevolence toward him is far vaster and far more encompassing.

Know too that the servant's closeness to Allah Most High corresponds with how much he distances

himself from the lower world [*dunya*]. In one of the previous revealed scriptures it says, "When a scholar inclines to the lower world, the least that I [Allah] do is strip from him the sweetness of intimate entreaties with Me." We ask Allah Most Glorified, out of His grace and largess, for protection and safety.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking the vastness of His generosity in knowledge, spiritual state, and sustenance, so that you attain expansion in the spheres of knowledge, spiritual meanings, character, provisions, and understandings, and so that you attain expansion in the sphere of divine witnessing by exiting the constriction of the material and entering the vast expanse of witnessing.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by seeing to it that your character, mercy, knowledge, and gnosis become vast and expansive.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will attain realization of this Name when the sphere of your witnessing expands to the point where you are not shaded by sky or diminished by earth. It says in the *Aphorisms*, "The cosmos envelops you insofar as your corporeal nature is concerned, but it does not envelop you insofar as the immutability of your spiritual essence [*rūhāniyyat dhātika*] is concerned."²⁹

²⁹ Ibn 'Aṭā'illah al-Sakandarī, *al-Hikam* §246.

al-Hakīm

(The Wise)

It is said that the Name al-Hakīm means the Possessor of Penetrating Wisdom, which is knowledge of things as they truly are and doing actions in the most perfect manner. It is also said that al-Hakīm means the Proficient [al-Muḥkim]—coming from the word *ihkām*, which means mastery, and which refers to His supreme management and perfect competence.

He who knows that Allah is al-Hakīm will never object to Him in any matter, and never consider His wisdom suspect in anything—instead he will see all of Allah's actions as beautiful (even if the same cannot be said when the actions are ascribed to us). [Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir] al-Jīlānī (may Allah have mercy upon him and be pleased with him) said:

*If you ascribe every "ugly thing" to His goodness
The spiritual meanings of goodness will rush toward you
The deficiency of the ugly is made whole by His beauty
Thus there is, in reality, no deficiency or ugliness!*

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking to know Allah's wisdom (which is His mastery of all things and creation thereof) outwardly, while seeking to know His omnipotence (which is His creative

power) inwardly. Wisdom is therefore the effect of divine power upon things; divine power manifests while wisdom masters and conceals.

The reality is that there is naught save Allah's omnipotence. Wisdom, therefore, is the locus of divine laws and omnipotence is the locus of ultimate realities. Allah Most High says, "*He grants wisdom to whom He wills; and whomsoever is granted wisdom is granted much goodness.*" (Quran 2:269) Al-Bayḍāwī said, "Wisdom is the mastery of knowledge and action." This, then, is the door one enters to witness divine power.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being wise in your statements and actions, and indeed all of your affairs.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you reflect knowledge of divine wisdom outwardly, and knowledge of divine power inwardly, thereby gathering and balancing between wisdom and power—giving everything its due right and measure. And Allah Most High knows best.

al-Wadūd

(The Loving)

Allah Most High says, *"And He is the Oft-forgiving, the Loving."* (Quran 85:14) It is said that the Name al-Wadūd is an emphatic noun—on the morphological pattern of *fu'ūl* that takes the meaning of the subject-doer noun, similar to the Names Ṣabūr and Shakūr. It is also said that al-Wadūd is an object-noun (i.e., the One Who is Loved).

It means that Allah loves the believers and that they love Him. The Most High says, *"He loves them and they love Him."* (Quran 5:54) He also says, *"Verily, for those who believe and perform righteous works, the All-Merciful shall bestow them with love."* (Quran 19:96) It is said [concerning this latter verse] that [Allah shall bestow] them with love between them and Him. It is also said that He will bestow love between them and His servants. According to the former interpretation this verse means that the All-Merciful shall create love within the believers' hearts. And according to the second interpretation this verse means that He shall place love for them in the hearts of His servants.

As for Allah's love for His servants, it means that He graces them with His excellence and wills what is good for them, and praises them.

As for the servant's love for Allah Most High, it is by the servant hastening to that which pleases Him:

by fulfilling His commands, remembering Him often, submitting to His decree, exalting Him, and being in absolute awe of Him. These are the signs of love; so whoever is most obedient and reverent and most frequent in remembering Allah will be strongest in his love. And every love that is for the sake of ulterior motives is tainted. Real love must be pure, free of every extraneous desire.

He who knows that Allah is the Loving will forget all love besides His love, and will exert his utmost efforts to attain His love.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking Allah's love as much as possible. This entails that Allah is obeyed and not disobeyed, and that He be remembered and not forgotten. But this love must not be for any motive or external cause. Nay, rather it should be so that Allah's Lordship is given its due, as it says in a tradition: "Verily, Allah Most High says, 'The most beloved of the lovers in My sight is the one who worships me not for the obtainment of a gift but in order to give [My] Lordship its due!'" This is not possible, however, unless one seeks the love of Allah's Friends [Awliyā'] and elect, and earnestly seeks to know them and reach them, saying with the spiritual or physical tongue, "O Loving, who loves His Friends and elect servants brought near! Place love in my heart for You, and place love for me in the hearts of the believers!"

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by loving all created things. That is by lovingly desiring

faith [īmān] for the disbeliever; lovingly desiring repentance for the sinner; lovingly desiring firmness for the righteous person; and lovingly desiring for all of creation—in general and in particular—what you love for yourself.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by being utterly annihilated from your own self and "your" love and subsisting instead through the love of your Lord, till there is but one love—from the Loving—as al-Shushtarī said *عز*:

*He who sees me sees what is utterly astounding
I am the lover and the beloved, there being no "two"*

And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Majīd (The Glorious)

In one of the canonical Quranic readings [*qirā'a*] in which the word is nominative [*rafa'*], Allah Most High says, "*The Glorious Possessor of the Throne [Dhū al-'Arsh al-Majīd]*." (Quran 85:15) It is said that al-Majīd means the One who is beautiful in actions. It is also said to mean the One who is bountiful in gifts, or the One who is exalted in rank, or the One who possesses perfect nobility, vast dominion, and who is limitless and unsurpassable. It is also said that it means the One who has no co-sharer in His praiseworthy attributes.

He who knows that Allah is the Glorious will humbly submit before His divine authority and not look to others in what is ultimately His affair—and indeed everything is from Him and unto Him, and is thus His affair!

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking glory and splendor through drawing near to His Divine Presence and by holding fast to the means of attaining His honor, coupled with reverence and exaltation, and expressing your utter neediness and want.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being glorious within your essence, attributes,

and actions. Be glorious in your essence by making Allah the ultimate focus of your spiritual ambition; be glorious in your attributes by having excellent qualities of character; and be glorious in your actions by constantly upholding good conduct and propriety and acquiring virtues.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when [its reality] is firmly entrenched within you to the point that it does not leave you when circumstances fluctuate and personal needs change. Allah Most High knows best.

al-Bā'ith

(The Raiser)

It is said that the Name al-Bā'ith means the One who raises [i.e., sends] the Messengers with laws, raises the dead by bringing them back to life, and raises the sleeping by awakening them.

He who knows that Allah is the Raiser will grow stronger in his certainty about the resurrection, and will have sound faith regarding the Messengers, and will grow firm in his trust that his provision will come to him from where he perceives not. He will be for his Lord, by his Lord.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by asking Allah to awaken you from the slumber of your heedlessness, and by asking Him to send divine inspirations [*wāridāt ilāhiyya*] to your heart from the treasures of His unseen, and by asking Him to put your heart at ease with what He guaranteed or promised you of provision and other needs.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by raising yourself up and raising up those around you, with your spiritual ambition and state.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you are of those whose state inspires others and whose speech guides them to Allah, whereby you raise up [i.e., send] the hearts to the Divine Presence with a mere glance. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Shahīd

(The Witness)

It is said that the Name al-Shahīd means the Omnipresent from whom nothing known, seen, or heard can be hidden, and who does not need approximation; rather, He approximates to all. Allah Most High says, *"Does it not suffice that your Lord is a Witness over all things?"* (Quran 41:53)

It is said that the Name al-Shahīd means the All-Knowing (al-ʿAlīm). It is also said to mean the One who shall witness against His creation on the Day of Resurrection. Allah Most High says, *"Say, 'What is most weighty in evidence?' Say, 'Allah is a Witness between me and you...'"* (Quran 6:53)

He who knows that Allah is al-Shahīd will worship Him in a state of vigilance [*murāqaba*]; Allah will not find him where He has forbidden him, and will not miss him where He has commanded him to be. The one who knows that Allah is al-Shahīd will suffice with His knowledge and witnessing from all others besides Him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by asking Allah to grant you mindfulness [*taqwā*] and vigilance towards Him so that you turn to and rely upon naught but Him—sufficing with His knowledge from everything

else, and sufficing with His vision of you from everything else, and seeing Him present in everything and close to everything.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being a witness over your bodily limbs that have been entrusted in your care, and by being a witness over the innermost contents of your heart, and by observing carefully your family and kin for whom you are responsible.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you actualize your-witnessing of Him to the point that you witness Him in everything and observe Him in all of your spiritual states. It says in the *Aphorisms*, "He who knows the Real [al-Haqq] witnesses Him in everything. He who is annihilated by Him is absent from everything. He who loves Him prefers nothing to Him."³⁰ And with Allah is enabling grace.

30 Ibn 'Aṭṭ'illah al-Sakandari, *al-Hikam* §163.

al-Ḥaqq (The Real)

It is said that the Name al-Ḥaqq means the Supreme Being whose existence is intrinsically necessary and for whom termination, non-existence, and change are impossible. All are from Him and to Him. Everything "other than Him" is naught [*bāṭil*], for all else besides the Divine Entity is without ultimate reality. This is alluded to in the hadith: "The most truthful statement said by a poet is the statement of Labīd: '*Lo, everything besides Allah is naught.*'"

It is also said that the Name al-Ḥaqq means the Possessor of Truth—meaning the one who manifests it. It is also said to mean the Truthful and the Just.

Some of the Shaykhs have said that al-Ḥaqq is an absolute name [*ism muṭlaq*] for the Manifest [*al-Zāhir*], the Existent, the Guide to His inward realities. When applied as a description for others, the name ḥaqq refers to one who does good deeds and who is sound in his beliefs and works. Thus it is said, "Such-and-such action and statement and belief is *ḥaqq*." It is a characteristic of the Folk [the Sufis] that they use the name al-Ḥaqq when they speak of the Divine (Exalted is He), because the Real (as we mentioned above) is the Supreme Being whose existence is intrinsically necessary. The reason for this is that the Folk, after having ascended from [the station of] witnessing the

divine actions to witnessing the Divine Attributes, and from there to witnessing the Divine Essence, did not see in existence anything besides Him. That is because "other-than-Him" has no independent being. Real Being is naught but Allah Most High. He is the Absolute Real. The Folk's use of the Name al-Haqq is similar to the scholars in the station of [rational] demonstration and proof who, characteristically, tend to use the Name al-Bārī (which means the Creator) when they speak of the Divine, because they see nothing but creation and it is from creation that they infer the Creator's existence—expressing the extent of their understanding.

He who knows that Allah is the Real will forget creation as he invokes Him, and will prefer truthfulness [over all else], and through gatheredness [*jama'*] he will be absent from separation [*farq*], through annihilation not longing.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning resolutely to Allah, asking Him to fulfil your hopes in Him, asking Him to utilize you in truth within all matters—upholding the right of Lordship, and fulfilling the conduct that befits servitude.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by verifying that your spiritual states are free of pretentious claims, and by purifying your statements from lies and bias.

al-Haqq

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you are unmitigated truth and Allah hurls you against every falsehood, pulverizing it with your reality and spiritual ambition. Allah Most High knows best.

al-Wakīl (The Trustee)

Allah Most High says, "*And Allah is sufficient as a Trustee...*" (Quran 4:81) It is said that the Name al-Wakīl means the One who is responsible for the affairs and needs of creation. It is also said to mean the one to whom those things are entrusted ... The Most Exalted is therefore the One who takes it upon Himself to tend to His servants' needs and freely administer their affairs in accordance to what He has willed. When the Most High attends to His servant's needs He enriches him, rendering him free of need from all others, and blesses him with His providential care, sufficing him from every preoccupation. He enriches him and makes him free from every "other" and every peer, and so the servant does not consider his needs too numerous, for he knows that his trustee and guarantor is none other than his Master and Lord. For this reason it is said, "One of the signs of certitude is having a large family that sit upon the carpet-spread of reliance [upon Allah]."

It is related that al-Dīnawūrī said, "I once owed a debt that had weighed heavily upon my chest, but I saw a dream in which someone said to me, 'You miser! You take such-and-such amount of money with Me as your guarantor and then have the audacity to suspect Me [of not taking care of your debt]! It is for

you to take and for Me to repay it!' I woke up and soon thereafter I was blessed to repay the debt. After that incident I never demanded exact change from the butcher or the green grocer!"

It is also related that when Aḥmad b. Khadrūwayh was on his death bed he owed seventy thousand dirhams—which is seven hundred *mithqāls*—so he convened a meeting with all of his debtors and said, "O God, let my soul be a pawn in their hands; if You will to take my soul then see that their rights are fulfilled!" At that very moment, someone knocked on the door and said "Everyone to whom Aḥmad owes money should step outside," and the man paid his debt, after which he died—may Allah have mercy upon him!

He who knows that the Real is his Trustee will entrust all of his needs with Him: he will not attempt to manage his own affairs alongside of Him, and he will not rely upon any except Him. The Most High says, "*And whosoever trusts in Allah then He is sufficient for him.*" (Quran 65:3)

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning resolutely to Him, asking that He makes your certitude sound so that you rely upon none but Him, and return to none but Him, and submit yourself and resign your affairs to none but Him.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being a trustee of your dependents, demanding Allah's rights from them in matters of legal responsibility [*taklīf*] and matters of divine decree [*taṣrīf*].

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you attain full annihilation from your own self and subsist through Him, till you are one of His trustees in carrying out His divine ordainments, as one of His deputies on His earth. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Qawī (The Strong)

It is said that al-Qawī means the All-Powerful. It is also said that al-Qawī is the One that never experiences weakness, in either His Entity, Attribute, or act. Some of the Shaykhs have said that the Name al-Qawī comes from *quwwa* (strength), which is an intermediate between the inner state known as "might" [*ḥawl*] and the outer state of "statement" [*qawl*], because the first thing that occurs inwardly within one who does an action is called *ḥawl*, followed by what is perceived on the limbs, which is called *quwwa*. The manifestation of an act in the form of strength and firm grasp is called power [*qudra*], and for that reason the phrase "there is no might or power save by Allah" refers all matters and actions to Allah's command.

Shaykh [Aḥmad] 'Zarrūq said, "From these words it becomes clear that strength [*quwwa*] is something more than power [*qudra*]. The likes of this is found within creation so as to approximate its understanding—but in any case, our Lord is far exalted and transcendent beyond the attributes of bodies, such as possessing limbs, nerves, and [spatial] inwardness and outwardness in His description."

He who knows that Allah is al-Qawī will seek His might and strength in all matters.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking the succor of His strength by realizing your own weakness, as it is said [in the *Aphorisms*]: "Realize your attribute and He will support you with His attribute; realize your weakness and He will support you with His strength!"³¹ The manifestation of this [i.e., seeking His strength by realizing your weakness] is that you drop selfish calculation [*tadbīr*], forsake pretentious claims, and see Allah's divine favor in everything and no longer fear creation or experience anxiety over provision—nay, you abandon all such concerns entirely!

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being strong for the sake of Allah and not fearing the blame of the blamer.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you completely free yourself from personal claims to might and strength—nay, when you free yourself from claims of being alongside the Strong and Firm. And with Allah is enabling grace.

³¹ This is an abbreviation of aphorism §128. The entire passage is as follows: "Realize your attribute and He will support you with His attribute; realize your weakness and He will support you with His strength. Realize your attribute and He will support you with His; realize your lowliness and He will help you with His Sublimity; realize your impotence and He will help you with His Power; realize your weakness and He will help you with His Might and Force!" [t]

al-Matīn

(The Firm)

Allah Most High says, "*Verily, it is Allah who is the Provider, the Possessor of Strength, the Firm.*" (Quran 51:58) He is the One with perfect strength. The Name Matīn is derived from the word *matāna*, which means firmness. The back is called a *matn* because it is the firmest and strongest part of most animals—though this meaning cannot be used with respect to the Most High. Instead, for Him it means power, namely the power to create something whose existence is [rationally] possible.

Shaykh [Aḥmad] Zarrūq said, "[Al-Matīn] is the One who possesses perfect power, insomuch that it cannot be opposed or matched or rivaled by any other; His strength does not admit weakness nor can His command be thwarted. Verily, He is the Overpowerer [al-Ghālib] who is never overcome or hindered, and His power stands in need of neither material nor cause. This is indicated in His words '*Verily, it is Allah who is the Provider, the Possessor of Strength, the Firm.*'"

He who knows Allah's strength and firmness will never fear anything, and will never put his aspiration with anything besides it—he will depend on Him and rely upon Him alone.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking firmness in the religion and strength in certitude, beseeching Him, "O Firm! Make my religion firm, and make my certitude steady and strong!"

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being firm in your religious practice, by being strong in your certitude—firm in knowledge and gnosis, solidly upon the truth and absent from the harms of creation.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

The means of attaining realization of this Name and the Name al-Qawī are the same. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Walī

(The Patron)

Allah Most High says, "*And Allah is sufficient as a Patron, and sufficient as a Helper.*" (Quran 4:45) He also says, "*Allah is the Patron of those who have believed.*" (Quran 2:257) Al-Walī means the Helper, or the One in charge of affairs and who executes them, or the One who fulfills the needs of the sincere. Some of the Shaykhs have said that al-Walī is derived from the word *walāya*, which means standing firm within the dictates of knowledge and action. The scholar, therefore, is a *walī* of what he knows, and the *walī* of a child is the one tasked with treating him or her well.

He who knows that Allah is the Patron of the believers will never take anyone else besides Him as a patron. Allah says, "*And whosoever takes Allah and His Messenger and the believers as patrons, then verily it is the Party of Allah that are triumphant!*" (Quran 5:56)

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking His help against your ego and caprice, and against everything that comes between you and the Presence of your Master, so that you are guarded under His watchful care and He turns to you with His divine safeguard and concern.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by fulfilling the conditions of sainthood [*walāya*], thereby becoming a saint [*walī*]. The saint is the one who turns to Allah in obedience to Him and in knowledge of Him, and so Allah turns to him in all of his states and does not leave him to be with any other besides Him. The conditions of sainthood are four: knowledge, spiritual state, spiritual ambition, and rectitude.

"A sign that Allah has conferred sainthood upon one of His servants is that He makes enabling grace [*tawfiq*] his lasting lot, so much that were he to want evil or pursue what is forbidden, Allah would protect him from committing it, and were he to incline toward lassitude in obedience, Allah would insist that he be given enabling grace and divine assistance. That is one of the signs of eternal felicity, while its opposite is one of the signs of damnation.

"Another sign of one's sainthood is that Allah places love for him in the hearts of His Friends [*Awliyā'*]; for Allah Most High looks in the hearts of His Friends at every moment, and if He sees a servant in their hearts He looks upon that servant with benevolence and kindness; and if He sees that a saint's spiritual focus is put upon a particular servant—or if He hears a saint's prayer for him—He insists that He shower him with His grace and excellence. This is the wont of Allah."³²

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by becoming annihilated, and then by becoming annihilated from your own an-

³² Imam Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *al-Taḥḥīr fī al-Taḍkīr*.

al-Wali

nihilation. It is then that sainthood will be actualized within you and divine concern for you will be complete. And Allah is the Possessor of immense bounty!

al-Ḥamīd (The Praised)

Allah Most High says, "*And He is the Patron, the Praised.*" (Quran 42:28) The Name al-Ḥamīd means the One who is Praised (Maḥmūd); He is the One who is praised by His self-praise and by the praise of His creation. It is also possible that al-Ḥamīd means the One who praises—in other words, the One who praises His believing servants and lauds them for their righteous acts. It is also said that [al-Ḥamīd] is the One who is described by lofty attributes, the absence of which would render praise invalid, and by which no one but Him can truly praise Him. This is why the Prophet ﷺ said, "I cannot enumerate praises to You—You are as You have praised Yourself!"

He who knows that Allah is the Praised in His Entity, Attributes, and acts will be far too busy in invoking and praising Him to remember his ego and praise it—as the author of the *Aphorisms* stated, "The believer is the one who is too busy extolling Allah to praise his own self, and too busy fulfilling Allah's rights to mention his own."³³

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by praising and extolling Allah abundantly in all conditions.

³³ Ibn 'Aṣā'illah al-Sakandarī, *al-Ḥikam* §242.

al-Hamīd

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being praiseworthy in your actions and praiseworthy in your character, in all conditions.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by actualizing the station of evanescence [*zawāl*], so that the one who praises is annihilated in the Praised, whereby the one who praises is utterly effaced and only the Praised remains. Allah Most High knows best.

al-Muḥṣī

(The Knower of Each Separate Thing)

Allah Most High says, "*And He enumerated everything fully.*" (Quran 72:28) The meaning of the Name al-Muḥṣī is the Knower. It is also said to mean the One who informs [others] about the numbers of all quantifiable things. [According to the latter meaning,] this Name refers back to divine speech. It is also said that al-Muḥṣī means the All-Powerful, whence the verse "*He knew that you would not be able to carry it out [tuḥṣūhu].*" (Quran 73:20)

Shaykh [Aḥmad] Zarrūq رحمته الله said, "He is the One who encompasses all existents in detail, such that nothing—not even a single atom—escapes His knowledge, and no state is hidden from Him."

Some of the Shaykhs have said that the Name al-Muḥṣī is derived from the word *iḥṣāʾ*, which means to have encompassing knowledge of the numbers of things and all matters that are quantifiable.

He who knows that Allah is the Knower of All Separate Things can never be oblivious and neglectful of Him under any condition. Nay, rather, he will stand in vigilant watch over himself at all times: watching over his breaths, movements, and stillness.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking strength from Him so that you can bear the rigors of

auditing your self and standing in vigilant watch over each of your breaths, and enumerate (as you have been commanded) His Names and attributes, whether by way of doctrine, illuminatory disclosure [*kashf*], or via a spiritual state or station—saying with your physical and spiritual tongue, "O You who enumerates and encompasses and has power over all things! Make me of those who fully enumerate Your Names!"

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by striving against your ego to attain unto these aforementioned meanings.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when it is firmly entrenched within you and you have stability [*tamkīn*] in it.

al-Mubdi' – al-Mu'īd

(The Beginner – The Restorer)

Allah Most High says, *"Verily, He is the Beginner, the Restorer."* (Quran 85:13) Al-Mubdi' is the One who brings things from unseen non-existence and manifests them in concrete entities. Al-Mu'īd is the One who restores created beings to life after non-existence and grants them everlasting existence.

Some of the Shaykhs have said that both are taken together as a single Name because the meaning of the former completes the latter. Thus it is said that every pairing of two divine Names, wherein using only one would render the meaning incomplete, is in reality a single Name.

He who knows that Allah is the Beginner and the Restorer will entrust all matters to Him, because it is from Him that all things have begun and it is unto Him that all things return.

In addition, one of the proprieties [ādāb] of the person who realizes this Name is that if intimacy [uns] or the sweetness of divine entreaty [munājāt] are removed from him due to a slip or a misdeed he has committed, he does not despair of their return, for it is the wont and beautiful grace of Allah that if ever a servant suffers a dry spell or experiences a state of turbidity or a period of intimacy passes him by, that He renews for him those days that had gone

by and returns for him those missed moments, as it was said:

*Though the traces of the love once between us have vanished
My longing for you will never fade;
I shall never despair of Allah reuniting us
Better than it was before!*

Another one sung:

*Shall I entertain hopes in rekindling love after it has departed
Ah, what a hope I have—shall you ever come true?*

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by disclosing different branches of knowledge and sciences that will benefit creation and in turn benefit you in the presence of the King and the Real. You should also cultivate this Name in your character by beginning with the rights of the Real before your personal rights and returning to Him with a sincere expression of spiritual and physical neediness.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when the above-mentioned reality is firmly entrenched within you, to the point that it becomes a part of who you are without active choice. With Allah is enabling grace.

al-Muḥyī-al-Mumīt

(The Giver of Life-The Giver of Death)

Allah Most High says, *"It is He who brings to life and causes death."* (Quran 40:68) Al-Muḥyī means the Creator of Life and al-Mumīt means the creator of death. Life has two categories: the life of the bodies and the life of the souls. The life of the bodies is through the functioning of the external limbs, and the life of the souls is through the illumination of the inward realms.

Al-Qushayrī says, "And so, Allah Most High brings to life the souls of the devotees, brings to life the hearts of the gnostics, and brings to life the spiritual states of the people of divine union; and He causes death to the states of the people of separation..."

Allah Most High says, *"Or the one who was dead and then We brought him back to life..."* (Quran 6:122) In the exegesis of this verse it is said, "Or the one who was a disbeliever and then We guided him."

It is said, "To whomever the Real turns, He brings him to life; to whomever the Real shuns, He causes to die; whomever the Real brings close, He brings him to life; and to whomever the Real causes to vanish, He annihilates him."

It has been sung:

*When I remember you I die then I am brought to life again;
How often am I brought to life for you, and how often do I die!*

al-Muhyī-al-Mumīt

He who knows that Allah is al-Muhyī and al-Mumīt will never give death or life unwarranted attention or concern; rather, in every situation he finds himself in he will resign and submit himself to the One in whose Hand is life and death.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning to Allah, asking Him to enliven your heart and soul with knowledge of Him, and asking Him to slay your ego, caprice, and all of your base desires.

CULTIVATION OF THESE TWO NAMES IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate these two Names in your character by enlivening your realms [i.e., your inner and outer religious life] with acts of obedience and slaying your egoistic desires and passions therein.

REALIZATION OF THESE TWO NAMES

You will realize these two Names when they are so firmly entrenched within you that your countenance brings to life dead hearts and heedless souls, and by merely seeing your form stubborn egos are slain and enticing passions are killed. Allah Most High knows best.

al-Hayy (The Living)

Allah Most High says, "*Allah—there is no god but Him—the Living...*" (Quran 2:255) That is, only He is the Living, for His life is intrinsically necessary just as His Entity is intrinsically necessary, and His life is endless just as His Entity is endless—unlike the life of others besides Him, for their life is but metaphorical and ephemeral; how can one who is contingent and ever-fading be affirmed alongside the One who has the quality of pre-eternality and endlessness? The life of created beings is therefore derived from His life, and their subsistence is through the existence of His Being. This is the meaning of the statement of Abū Madyan rahimahullah: "The Real [Allah] is independent of existence, while existence draws its sustenance from Him. The primal material comes from the essence of existence, so were that material to be cut off, existence would collapse."

Because all created things are in utter need of Allah's life for their subsistence, the Most High mentions the Name al-Qayyūm (the Self-subsistent) immediately after the Living in several verses that will be mentioned, Allah willing.

He who knows that Allah is the Living who does not die will put his trust in Him, as Allah says, "*And put your trust in the Living who does not die, and glorify His*

praises; and sufficient is He as the knower of His servants' sins." (Quran 22:58) The first of these [in the verse] is for interacting with creation; the second is for interacting with the Real; and the third is for interacting with the ego and forsaking useless excess (*fudūl*) that does not concern one. Trust [in Allah] is for the sake of interacting with creation by putting one's aspirations elsewhere [i.e., not ingratiating oneself with others and depending on them]; glorification is the way of interacting with the Real; and abstaining from prying into the sins of others is the way of interacting with the ego.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking the life of the soul through knowledge, gnosis, and perfect love, beseeching Allah: "O Living! Grant me a goodly life, and pour out to me the freshest drink of Your love!"

CULTIVATING THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being absent from your own life and the life of others—by witnessing Allah's Life and Self-subsistence. This is why the Greatest Shaykh [al-Shaykh al-Akbar], Muhyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, said, "He who observes that created things have no [independent] actions has triumphed; he who observes that created things have no life of their own has outshined; and he who observes that created things are nothing but non-being has arrived and been favored."

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you are firmly established in witnessing Allah's life alone, being before

Him as a corpse in the hands of its washer. When you actualize this quality within yourself, your soul will be enlivened with His Life, and you will subsist through His Subsistence. Accordingly, everyone who comes into contact with you will be enlivened with your life, till ultimately all of the lands and servants are given life through you, and you will be as the poet said:

*Through you, every land in which you descend comes to life
As if you are rains falling on the earth
The eye desires to gaze at your beautiful form
As if you are luminous moons in the eyes of people!*

And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Qayyūm (The Self-subsistent)

Allah Most High says, "*Allah—there is no god but Him—the Living, the Self-subsistent.*" (Quran 2:255) It is said that al-Qayyūm means the Everlasting and Eternal, which would mean that it is a self-signifying attribute [*ṣifa naṣsiyya*]. It is also said that al-Qayyūm means the One who manages the affairs of all creatures entirely, which would mean that it is an attribute of action [*ṣifa fiʿliyya*].

Al-Qushayrī says, "Al-Qayyūm is a hyperbolic way of saying 'the One who manages all affairs [*al-Qā'im bi al-umūr*]'"; it is said that so-and-so is managing [*qā'im*] a thing, and is therefore *qayyim*, or *qayyām*, or *qayyūm*."

The meaning of the Name al-Qayyūm, therefore, is the One who manages and takes charge over everything that occurs in the cosmos.

He who knows that Allah is al-Qayyūm will rely solely upon Him. By remembering Him he will cease to remember all others, and by witnessing His Self-subsistence he will no longer witness any other.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking to know Allah's self-subsistence [*qayyūmiyya*] so that you rest yourself from the toil of self-management [*tadbīr*] and are sufficed with His supreme management of all things without objection or self-management.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by upholding [qayyim] what you have been ordered to look after: your family, your children, yourself, your wealth, and everyone who has an attachment to you, women and men alike.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when it is firmly established within you, to the point that you tend to the affairs of creation entirely. Some of the gnostics³⁴ have said, "The knower of Allah can carry the heavens and the earths on a single eyelash..." Allah Most High knows best.

³⁴ Said by Shibli A. (r)



al-Wājid

(The Resourceful)

The meaning of the Name al-Wājid is the One who is Vast, Self-sufficient, and Generous. It is said, "So-and-so gave out of *jidda*"—meaning, his largesse and affluence. It is also said that al-Wājid means the All-Knowing, as Allah Most High says, "*And he found Allah with him.*" (Quran 24:39)—in other words, he knew that Allah was with him. It can be said *wajada-wujūdan*, which means "to be correct," as well as *wajada-wijdan* or *wijdatan*, which means "to be self-sufficient." The Name that derives from this is *wājid*. As for the phrase "*wajada 'alayhi*" which means "he despised," it is not fitting in the context here. The word *wajd* [ecstasy] is used by the Sufis to describe the spiritual states that they find within their hearts.

[Abū al-Husayn] al-Nūrī said, "Ecstasy [*wajd*] is a burning coal ignited by spiritual mysteries, and a grief that dissuades one from yearning [for the world?]. It is manifested upon the limbs when the divine inspiration comes." Abū 'Alī al-Rūdhbārī was asked about *wajd* and he said, "It is the unveiling of secrets that lead one to witnessing of the Beloved." It is also said that *wajd* is the fire of intimacy that is spread by the winds of sanctification.

Junayd said, "The Finder [*wājid*] was mentioned in the presence of al-Sarī [al-Saqatī] and he said, 'The

finder reaches a point where his face can be struck by a sword and he will not feel a thing.' I had taken slight umbrage with what he had said until I experienced it for myself."

He who knows that Allah is al-Wājid—who is not frustrated or rendered incapable by anything—will not seek anything from others besides Him and rely upon none but Him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking richness and captivating love through Him.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by always finding yourself in what Allah has sought from you, never falling heedless or neglectful under any circumstance. You should also cultivate this Name in your character by outwardly showing ecstasy in your love for Allah.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by gaining certitude and being free of need from all things besides the Lord of the Worlds. [Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh] said in *al-Tanwīr* [*fi isqāt al-tadbīr*], "It is neither a servant's knowledge nor his constancy with reciting his litanies that show you his understanding; his understanding and light are only reflected in his freedom from all things besides his Lord and his being gathered unto Him in his heart, and his being freed from the fetters of craving and his being adorned by the raiment of pious scruples—for it is by these that actions are considered excellent, and

by these that states are purified." And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Mājid (The Magnificent)

It is said that the Name al-Mājid means the Exalted and Glorious. It is also said to mean the One who possesses supreme management and disposal, or the One who is Tremendous and Magnificent in stature. Some of the Shaykhs have said that it comes from the word *majd*, which means the pinnacle of nobility manifested by the King.

He who knows that Allah is al-Mājid will raise his spiritual ambition towards Him and will rely upon Him in all affairs—just as we said concerning the Name al-Majid, which has the same essential meaning apart from the fact that it is an intensified form of the Name al-Mājid.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking His magnificence through raising your spiritual ambition beyond created things and through attaching yourself to spiritual realities, saying: "O Magnificent whose qualities and Names are magnificent! Grant me a magnificent spiritual ambition through which I can ascend unto the loftiest station!"

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being magnificent [*majid*] in your actions, spiritual

al-Majid

states, qualities of character, sciences, and indeed all of your affairs. You will only attain unto this by being upright outwardly and purified inwardly, by which you then become magnificent and noble.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you have firmness in magnificence by knowing the Magnificent and being absent from all else besides Him. Allah Most High knows best.

al-Wāḥid (The One)

Al-Wāḥid means He who is alone in his Entity, Attributes, and acts, who is neither resembled by nor resembles anything whatsoever, and who is without partner or equal.

He who knows that Allah is the One will dedicate his heart to Him alone, and as a result will be one by Him. The statement of the Prophet ﷺ "Allah is Single [Witr] and loves that which is single"³⁵ has been interpreted as the heart that is singled out for Him. In the *Aphorisms* it states, "Just as He does not love the deed in which He is a co-sharer, likewise He does not love the heart that has a co-sharer. He does not accept the deed in which He is a co-sharer, and He does not draw near to the heart that has a co-sharer."³⁶

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning resolutely to Him, asking that He turn you to Him alone, whereby your very being is completely severed from all else but His unicity and you rely upon His oneness in all of your affairs.

³⁵ Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* §453.

³⁶ Ibn 'Aṣṭ'illah al-Sakandari, *al-Hikam* §203.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by not seeing anything but Him in this abode and the abode of the Hereafter, and by not aspiring to any other besides Him. In this way you will be the unique of your age and matchless among your peers.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you are well grounded in divine unity, to the point where all of existence, from its first to its last and from its inward to its outward, are all one in your spiritual vision, as the poet said:

*If the one you desire is singular in his beauty
Then be singular in your love—if you truly love him*

And as another said:

*Existence is naught save one;
And you are that one!*

And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Aḥad (The Alone)

The meaning of the Name al-Aḥad is essentially the same as al-Wāhid, the only difference being the emphasis here on the attribute of oneness. It can be said that Allah is One in His Entity, Attributes, and acts, Alone in His Oneness [*wahdāniyya*].

For the one who knows that Allah is Alone, the cosmos will no longer receive a share of being or even non-being. Instead, it will be as the author of the *Aphorisms* said, "[P]ermanent [*thābita*] through His making it so, and effaced by the Unity of His Entity."³⁷ He also said, "The ray of light of spiritual vision [*baṣīra*] makes you witness His nearness to you, while the eye of spiritual vision makes you witness your non-being due to His Being. The spiritual vision of truth makes you witness His Being, not your non-being or your being. Indeed, 'Allah was, and there was nothing alongside of Him, and He is now as He always was.'"³⁸

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by forgetting everything through Allah's remembrance, and forsak-

³⁷ Ibn 'Aṣā'illāh al-Sakandarī, *al-Ḥikam* §141.

³⁸ Ibid.

ing all affairs except His affair, and by never seeking to ascend to any other besides Him.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by isolating yourself in your worship and subservience to Allah, withdrawing from your peers and fellow servants as accords with your state.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you are so immersed in witnessing Oneness that you no longer have a sense of duality. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Ṣamad

(The Eternal)

It is said that the Name al-Ṣamad means the one who neither eats nor is fed. It is also said to mean the Master and Owner, or the Clement, or the Exalted in Rank, or the One who is invoked and to whom all needs are petitioned.

Some of the Shaykhs have said that al-Ṣamad is an absolute Name for the Supreme Refuge, who is indispensable, owing to His all-encompassing command. The Name al-Ṣamad, therefore, refers back to the name Allah. The comprehensive explanation [of the Name al-Ṣamad] is that He is free from needing anything besides Himself, while everything besides Him is in need of Him.

He who knows that Allah is al-Ṣamad will not aspire to any other besides Him, and will be rich in Him in all circumstances.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by returning to Allah Most High with a state of longing and desire at all times and circumstances.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in accordance to the meanings we explained above. In the case of the first meaning [the one who neither eats nor is fed], you

cultivate it in your character by raising your spiritual ambition so you do not hanker after what is in the hands of creation, while at the same time being kind and gentle; and by becoming more disciplined so the desire for food and drink is diminished within you.

In the case of the second and third meanings [the Master and Owner and the Clement], you cultivate it in your character by spending on others and being forbearing with them, as the poet said:

*By spending and forbearance, the young man becomes a
leader of his people
And by his being affable and easy with you*

In the case of the fourth meaning [Exalted in Rank], you cultivate it in your character by having non-attachment to the world [zuhd] and by striving in obedience.

In the case of the fifth meaning [the one to whom needs are petitioned], you cultivate it in your character by lending help to others during their time of need and becoming, as it were, their refuge.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when the above-mentioned meanings become so firmly entrenched within you that they seldom leave you. And Allah Most High knows best.

al-Qādir-al-Muqtadir

(The All-Powerful-the Determiner)

The Name al-Qādir means the One who possesses all-encompassing power [*qudra*], which is an attribute through which possible things are brought into existence or non-existence, in accordance with the divine will. As for the Name al-Muqtadir, it is said to mean the same as al-Qādir. Others, however, say that it is more emphatic in meaning than al-Qādir. It is said that al-Qādir means the one who is fully capable of doing an action without needing to manipulate material or use intermediaries, and who is not rendered incapable of carrying out his will.

Some of the Shaykhs have said that al-Qādir comes from the word *qudra* [power], which is the manifestation of things in concrete entities and perceptible forms. In this case the Name al-Qādir refers back to the Name Allah. The Name al-Muqtadir refers to wielding absolute power over everyone to whom He has given a portion of power. And in this case the Name al-Muqtadir refers back to the descriptive "Gatherer of the Dominion" [*Jāmi' al-Mulk*].

He who knows that Allah is the All-Powerful and the Determiner, who is not rendered incapable or powerless by anything, and from whose omnipotence nothing escapes, will not consider anything he asks of Him to be too much, be it miniscule or great.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking, at every time and moment, His power when desiring to do any act, so that you are by Him and for Him in everything.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by never deeming yourself incapable of carrying out what He wants from you—as much effort as you can muster and as much obedience as you can carry out. Indeed it has been said that in the beginning [of the spiritual path] one should be as if he were a Qadarite³⁹ (in other words, as a Mu'tazilite⁴⁰ in exerting efforts in spiritual works), and in the end [of the spiritual path] one should be as if he were a Jabarite⁴¹ (in utter resignation and contentment with the divine).

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when your affair is by Allah, whereby if you say to something "be" it is, with Allah's permission. This is when human traits are gone and spirituality dominates over the entirety of the servant. And with Allah is enabling grace.

³⁹ A Qadarite is an extreme proponent of free will, who believes that humans create their own actions. [t]

⁴⁰ A Mu'tazilite has beliefs similar to the Qadarites. [t]

⁴¹ A Jabarite is an extreme fatalist, who believes that he is essentially like a leaf blowing in the wind. [t]

al-Muqaddim-al-Mu'akhir (The Advancer-The Delayer)

These two Names refer back to the attribute of will [irāda], and they mean [the One who] advances some actions over others and delays some actions with respect to others, determining every existent with its particular time and rank. He also advances one group through their obedience and worship of Him, and holds another group back by His will and volition. The Most High says, "*And certainly We know those of you who hasten forward [al-mustaqdimīn] and We certainly know those who lag behind [al-musta'khirīn].*" (Quran 15:24) Someone was once seen exerting himself in worship, and when asked why, he replied, "Who has greater need of spiritual exertion than me? I yearn to join the ranks of the pious and the esteemed forebears, and Allah Most High says, '*And in that let the strivers strive*' (Quran 83:26)." Conveying this idea, it has been sung:

Race forward in word and deed!

Warn the soul from the utter regret of losing!

He who knows that Allah is the Advancer and Delayer will not rely upon the fleeting state of his self, and will never despair of his Master in any circumstance. Understand this.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning constantly to Allah, asking Him to advance you in the army of the Forerunners [*al-Sabiqūn*] and to hold you back from being among the destroyed folk in the lowest of the low.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name by giving precedence to what pleases your Master and holding your ego back from what displeases Him.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by witnessing the King and All-Powerful and thus being annihilated from advancement and delay; your gaze will be upon His will and volition and as a result you shall favor those advanced by the divine will to attain his portion and disfavor those held back by the divine will till their appointed time. And Allah Most High knows best.

al-Awwal-al-Ākhir

(The First-The Last)

The First and the Last are both negating attributes. This means Allah is endless and therefore the First before everything, and the Last after everything. Some have said that these two Names mean the One whose existence has no beginning or end, due to the affirmation of His pre-eternality and the impossibility of His non-existence. Everything begins with Him and returns to Him.

One scholar has said that the Names the First and the Last express encompassment [*iḥāṭa*], whereby the First is before every "first" and the Last encompasses every "last." The beginning and end are both with Him, so there is nothing before Him and nothing after Him. This same scholar said, "The reason why the two Names are linked with the conjunction 'and' is because of the respective difference in their meanings; in reality, however, they both refer back to the One."

He who knows that Allah is the First will be absent from all things, and he who knows that Allah is the Last will return to Him in all things.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning to Allah at the commencement and conclusion of all matters.

CULTIVATING THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being the first—a forerunner—in every good work and being the last in attachment to it.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will attain realization of this Name when Allah covers your quality with His quality, and conceals your description by His description, covering the quality of contingency with the quality of pre-eternality, and covering the quality of ephemerality with the quality of subsistence, whereby you become first and last: outward with the manifestation of your physical being, but inward inasmuch as Allah is Inward (which is why the Names the Outward and the Inward are mentioned immediately after the Names the First and the Last).

al-Zāhir-al-Bāṭin (The Outward-The Inward)

It is said these two Names mean: The One whose Lordship is clear with demonstrations and proofs, but who is inaccessible through modality, imaginings, and surmise. So Allah is the Outward in view of the fact that He makes Himself known, the Inward in view of the opacity [of created beings]. It is also said that He is the Outward with respect to the hearts through proof, the Inward with respect to the eyes through intellectual vision [*‘ayān*]. It is also said that He is the Outward to some people, which is why they declared His unicity, and He is the Inward to others, which is why they glorified Him.

I say: The sound position is to say that the Real (Exalted is He) has possessed all of His beautiful Names pre-eternally. Thereafter the Names sought to manifest their effects, so the Name al-Zāhir necessitated that all things be manifest, and so they appeared by Allah's power. The Name al-Bāṭin then necessitated that all things be hidden after their manifestation, so they were hidden by Allah's wisdom. He is therefore al-Zāhir with His power, al-Bāṭin with His wisdom; al-Zāhir in His Inwardness, al-Bāṭin in His Outwardness. The Most High says, "*He is the First, the Last, the Outward, the Inward.*" (Quran 57:13) The restriction that is understood from the pronoun ("He") ap-

plies to all four [Names]. Thus, He is the First, He is the Last, He is the Outward, He is the Inward. His Name al-Zāhir necessitates the inwardness and obliteration of things, as there is nothing manifest besides Him, as is understood from the restriction [mentioned in the above verse]. And His Name al-Bāṭin necessitates the outwardness of things so that He be inward with respect to them.

The upshot is that the Real (Exalted is He) is manifest with His power and light and is hidden with His wisdom and domination. To this effect it has been said:

*Verily you have manifested, hidden to none
Save to the blind who cannot see the moon;
Yet you have hidden yourself, veiled by what you manifested
How can the one concealed by grandeur be known?*

He who knows that Allah is the Outward will not need a proof to infer His existence. How astounding! How can the One through whom the sciences were made known be known through them? Rather, He is Self-sufficient with His Essence and free of needing a demonstrative proof to prove His existence!

*I am astounded at the one who seeks a witness for you
When it is you who made every witness testify*

He who knows that Allah is the Inward will feel shame before Him in every matter and will stand in vigilant watch over his soul in everything he does, and will return to Him in everything.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning to Allah, asking Him to beautify your outward with

servitude, and to adorn your inward with witnessing [His] Lordship.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate the Name al-Zāhir in your character by being outward, by manifesting your spiritual distinction [*khuṣūṣiyya*] to the lovers and to those who are truthfully attached to you. You should cultivate the Name al-Bāṭin by being inward, by concealing your pious works and spiritual states from the undeserving.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize these two Names by being a sincere servant who desires neither conspicuousness [*ẓuhūr*] nor inconspicuousness [*buṭūn*]. Shaykh Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Mursī said, "The one who loves conspicuousness is a servant of conspicuousness, and the one who loves inconspicuousness is a servant of inconspicuousness—but the servant of Allah is he for whom it is the same whether Allah makes him manifest or hidden." This is true understanding from Allah, for if such a person sees that the divine power has made him known then he is not perturbed, and if he sees that the divine power has made him hidden then he works accordingly. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Wālī

(The Ruler)

He is the one who rules directly in order to rectify and safeguard His subject. The meaning of this Name is like that of the Name al-Ḥakam and al-ʿAdl. It can also mean the same as al-Walī explained earlier.

He who knows that Allah is al-Wālī will be sufficed with His governance, and will rely upon Him in his conditions and concerns, and will drop all self-calculation with Him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning submissively to Him, asking that He turn to you with His *wilaya*, and that He surround you with His providential care and select you for His divine concern.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by ruling over your ego, protecting it from transgression (*tughyān*), vigilantly observing it at all times; ruling over your heart so that you do not abandon it to wander aimlessly through the created realms; ruling over your soul and innermost secret so that you do not keep them from the station of spiritual excellence (*ihsān*); and ruling over those for whose care you are responsible, from your family and children and brethren.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you have stability in the aforementioned areas of rule and they are ever in your grasp. With Allah is enabling grace.

al-Muta^cālī

(The Exalted)

He is the One who is exalted in his greatness, magnificence, and glory beyond every quality of His creation that can be comprehended or understood. He who knows that Allah is the Exalted will not see anything besides Him as exalted; his attachments will part ways with him, his personal flaws will leave him, his pretensions will vanish, and his qualities will be exalted.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking lofty matters—by raising your aspirations above low matters and forsaking selfish interests and comforts.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by raising your spiritual ambition, serving others with excellence, and carrying out the strictures [of the law].

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by renouncing the two realms and doffing your sandals from the two abodes [this world and the Hereafter]. It is then that your rank will be elevated and your affair will be made lofty. It states in the hadith, "Be indifferent to the world and Allah will love you; be indifferent to what

is in the hands of people and people will love you."⁴²
And with Allah is enabling grace.

⁴² Ibn Mājah.

al-Barr

(The Kind)

Allah Most High says, "*Verily, He is the Kind, the Merciful.*" (Quran 52:28) The meaning of the Name al-Barr is He who delivers goodness with benevolence and excellence. This meaning of this Name is close to the meaning of al-Rahīm, and that is why Allah joined the two Names in His Holy Book.

He who knows that Allah is the Kind and the Merciful will return to Him in all affairs, small or large, and Allah will suffice him with His goodness and mercy from all that concerns him, whether by repelling harm or bringing benefit. It states in the *Aphorisms*, "When He gives to you, He shows you His kindness, and when He deprives you, He shows you His power. And in all that He makes Himself known to you and turns to you with His benevolence."⁴³

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking a downpour of His kindness and goodness, and having ardent love for Him in your heart because of the blessings and benevolence that He has conferred upon you. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Love Allah on account of the graces He bestows upon you..."⁴⁴ [Another way

⁴³ Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Sakandarī, *al-Hikam* §84.

⁴⁴ Al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3:162.

of connecting with this Name is] by mentioning it frequently in supplication. The Most High says, *"Indeed, we used to invoke Him before. Verily, He is the Kind, the Merciful."* (Quran 52:28)

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being of benefit to Allah's servants and by having compassion for them, since the kind [*barr*] person is the one who does not harm even an ant and does not conceal any evil. They (the Sufis) have said, "The kind person [*barr*] is the one who is affable and gentle in nature, who has a smiling face and gentle words."

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you have such a firm foothold in kindness and benevolence that you are kind with the good and evil alike, whereby you strive to counsel both and ask the Clement and Forgiving to turn to both in repentance. And Allah Most High knows best.

al-Tawwāb

(The Oft-Relenting)

Allah Most High says, "*Verily, Allah is the Oft-Relenting, the Merciful.*" (Quran 9:118) Al-Tawwāb is the One who frequently turns to His servants with repentance [tawba] on account of their many sins. Al-Qushayrī said, "The meaning of Allah's act of 'turning to His servant with repentance' is that He turns to the servant with His many graces and facilitates his repentance." It is said that Allah's act of "turning to the servant with repentance" means His creation of repentance for the servant, and it is also said to mean His acceptance of the servant's repentance. Thus, repentance comes from Allah in the beginning and its completion is dependent upon Him.

He who knows that Allah is Oft-Relenting will return unto Him with repentance in all of his circumstances and states. And for the one whose state is to repent, it is hoped that Allah will relent toward him. When repentance is from Allah there is no possibility of return [to the previous state from which one repented], and when repentance is from you there is a possibility of return. As such, repentance from Him is actualization while repentance from you is exposure to the gentle breezes of divine mercy.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by asking Allah to turn to you in repentance.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by constantly repenting, even if you succumb to a sin a thousand times, for "*Verily, Allah loves the oft-repenting*" (Quran 2:222) and "*loves those who purify themselves*" (Quran 2:222) even more.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by accepting the repentance of those who transgress against you; by pardoning and forgiving them without taking them to task or exacting vengeance against them—except in the situation where it is incumbent to exact vengeance, in order to uphold divine wisdom and fulfil the legal rulings, which is why the Name Avenger (al-Muntaqim) is mentioned immediately after the Name Oft-Relenting.

Al-Muntaqim (The Avenger)

Allah Most High says, "*Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, the Possessor of Vengeance [Dhū Intiqām].*" (Quran 14:47). This Name means: He who seizes whomsoever He wills with the severest force He wills. [The root of this word, *naqima*,] is used when someone detests something. It is said "So-and-so detested [*naqima*] such-and-such." An example of this is found in the words of the Most High, "*And they detested them naught [naqamū minhum]...*"—that is, they resented them naught—"save because they had believed in Allah..." (Quran 85:8).

The vengeance of Allah Most High is His punishment of the sinful for what He detests from them; it does not mean a personal aversion (as it does for humans). With respect to Allah it means that He condemns the act that He detests, condemns those who do it, and punishes them.

He who knows that Allah is the Avenger will be fearful of His vengeance; he will not exact vengeance upon His servants and will not sin freely against Him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking Allah's refuge from His vengeance and seeking His protection from that which will incur His wrath.

while at the same time breaking the force of your ego out of fear of His vengeance.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by exacting vengeance against your base desires and against everything that cuts you off from your Master.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by being one of Allah's swords by which He exacts vengeance against His enemies. This shall come after the qualities of the ego are effaced and the qualities of the Real are made manifest. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-‘Afū

(The Pardoner)

It is said that al-‘Afū means the One who overlooks sins so that no trace of them remains. It is said, “the winds effaced [‘afat] the traces” if they removed them; and it is said “the abodes vanished [‘afat]” if all traces of them are gone.

It is said that the Name al-‘Afū means: the One who gives prodigiously and bestows gifts in abundance. It is taken from the word ‘afw, which means surplus (*faql*). This is the meaning of the word in the verse “Take what is ‘afw...” (Quran 7:199) In other words, take what is surplus and from the excellent qualities of character. The Most High also said, “And they ask you what they should spend. Say, ‘Of what is surplus [‘afw].’” (Quran 2:219) This means, of what remains extra from their wealth.

He who knows that Allah is the Pardoner will take refuge in His pardon and seek it in all circumstances, no matter how enormous his sins may be.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking pardon from your Master, beseeching Him, “O Pardoner! Pardon me with Your grace and excellence, and treat me with Your generosity and largesse!”

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by always pardoning the slips of fellow servants, even if they are the epitome of boorishness and stubbornness.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when noble qualities of character are firmly imprinted in your nature, to the point that you pardon the one who wrongs you, maintain ties with those who cut ties with you, and give to those who deny you—as your Prophet ~~has~~ commanded.

al-Ra'ūf

(The One Who Shows Pity)

The Name al-Ra'ūf comes from the word *ra'fa*, which is intense mercy. *Ra'fa* is the interior of mercy, and mercy is one of the most particular qualities of divine will, because mercy is the will to remove harm and repel evil, with a type of affection. *Ra'fa*, then, is an increase in benevolence and kindness.

He who knows that Allah is al-Ra'ūf will rely on His kindness in his worldly and afterworldly life, will not attempt to manage his affairs alongside of Him, and will not despair of his mercy.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking Allah's intense mercy [*ra'fa*], and by being gathered unto His mercy with frequent supplication, longing, constancy in gratitude, and rejoicing in divine bounty.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being compassionate and merciful with Allah's servants.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when mercy and pity are firmly entrenched within you, to the extent that through you Allah shows mercy to your foes and to

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES

those who ally themselves with you. And with Allah
is enabling grace.

Mālik al-Mulk

(The Absolute Sovereign)

Allah Most High says, "Say, 'O Allah, the Absolute Sovereign...'" (Quran 3:26). The Absolute Sovereign is the One who wields absolute control. He who knows that Allah is the Absolute Sovereign will not seek a dominion from any other besides Him, and will not attempt to manage anything in His dominion alongside Him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking complete free-disposal over yourself; when you have free-disposal over yourself you will have free-disposal over all of creation.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by controlling your ego, your desires, and all of your states.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you are annihilated from your own dominion and being and subsist by the Being of your Owner, thereby taking possession of the dominion with time as your servant:

*For you time is obedient, and creatures are your servants;
So live out each of your days as an Eid!*

Ibn al-Fāriḍ said:

*And by drunkenness in it, even if but a single moment
You will see time obedient to you, and to you is the judgment*

And with Allah is enabling grace.

Dhū al-Jalāl wa al-Ikrām

(The Possessor of Majesty and Generosity)

Allah Most High says, "*Blessed is the Name of your Lord, the Possessor of Majesty and Generosity.*" (Quran 55:78). He is the Possessor of magnificence [*‘azama*], exaltedness [*kibriyā’*], and complete and absolute largesse.

He who knows that Allah is the Possessor of Majesty and Generosity will hold Him in awe due to His majesty, and will enjoy intimacy with Him due to His generosity—he will constantly remain between fear and hope, gratitude and seeking refuge.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking Allah’s generosity, submitting yourself to His majesty, and humbling yourself for Him as you interact with His servants.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE’S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by having majestic distance from flaws and being ennobled beyond them.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when *jalāl* and *jamāl* are balanced within you; when your outward is *jalāl* and your inward is *jamāl*; that is how you stand between Allah’s *jalāl* and *jamāl*. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Muqsiṭ (The Equitable)

The Equitable is the One who rules with justice. The *qāsiṭ* is one who is unjust, as the Most High says, "*As for the unjust [qāsiṭūn], they shall be firewood for Hell.*" (Quran 72:15)

He who knows that Allah is the Equitable and Just will fear His justice and hope for His grace.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking guidance and rectitude from Him, so that you can be equitable in every facet of your life.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being equitable and being just with yourself and those close to you, and by avoiding injustice and oppression in all matters. The Most High says, "*O you who believe! Stand firmly for justice, as witnesses for Allah, even against your own selves.*" (Quran 4:135)

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when justice is firmly imbedded within you after you have obliterated your faults. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Jāmi^c (The Gatherer)

He is the One who shall gather all disputants on the Day of Judgment. The Most High says, "*Our Lord! You are the Gatherer of people on the Day in which there is no doubt.*" (Quran 3:9) He is also the Gatherer of all perfections, and the Gatherer of what He wills for whom He wills.

He who knows that Allah is the Gatherer of all perfections will love and revere Him; he who knows that He is the Gatherer of what He wills for whom He wills shall resign all of his affairs to Him; and he who knows that He is the Gatherer of people on the Day of Resurrection will fear Him and have hope in Him, and will exert himself in obedience to his Master.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking to gather your heart unto Him—nay, you should seek to gather your entire being unto His Holy Presence [*Ḥaḍrat Qudsihi*] so that you die in a state of gatheredness and are resurrected with the people of union, who are the ones brought nigh [*al-Muqarrabūn*].

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should first cultivate this Name in your character by gathering good qualities within yourself, then you should cultivate it by being one who gathers all disjointed things, and use power and wisdom in both.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you gain stability in utter gatheredness of gatheredness [jam^c al-jam^c], whereby you are annihilated from gatheredness. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Ghanī

(The Rich)

The Most High says, "O mankind! You are poor unto Allah, and Allah is Rich, Worthy of praise." (Quran 35:15). He is the One who does not need anything while everything is in need of him to secure its beginning and continued existence. He is, therefore, Self-sufficient and free of needing a locus [*maḥall*] or determiner [*mukhaṣṣis*].⁴⁵

He who knows that He is the Self-sufficient will seek sufficiency [through Him] from everything, return to Him in every matter, and display neediness before him in every matter.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking richness from Allah and by Allah so you are sufficed by Him from needing others besides Him—which includes your own seeking—by always expressing your poverty and need of Him. Abū Hāṣṣ [al-Naysabūrī] was asked, "With what should the needy seeker [*faqīr*] meet his Master?" He replied, "And can the Rich be met with anything other than poverty?"

⁴⁵ What is meant by locus is a place. What is meant by determiner is a doer and something that characterizes Allah with existence as opposed to non-existence. This is impossible for Allah because the one who is in need of a determiner accepts the possibility of being non-existent, which is impossible for Allah. {t}

What he means is that a person should meet Allah with poverty from his own poverty, for otherwise he would find richness through his own expression of poverty—this is why the Shaykh and Pole [‘Abd al-Salām] Ibn Mashīsh, when he asked Abū al-Hasan al-Shādhili “With what shall you meet Allah?” and the latter replied “With my poverty” he said, “By Allah, if you were to meet Him with your poverty you would be meeting Him with the greatest idol!”

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE’S CHARACTER

Allah is only met with Himself, and that is by the servant realizing the station of richness. And it is by having complete spiritual poverty that one can truly be sufficient through his Lord and cultivate the Name al-Ghanī in his character.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you are firmly grounded in your knowledge of Him and self-sufficient through Him. Allah Most High knows best.

al-Mughnī

(The Enricher)

He is the One who gives richness to whom He wills among His servants.

He who knows that Allah is the Enricher will seek richness through Him and express poverty and need before Him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking a downpour of richness from Him.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by enriching those whose hearts and bodies turn to you, by offering them a drink that will enrich them beyond their sensory realms, that they be sufficed with your water from the water of others.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when the abovementioned quality is perfected within you. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Mu‘ṭī – al-Māni‘ (The Giver–The Withholder)

In the [order of divine Names] listed by Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq it is al-Mu‘ṭī (the Giver) and al-Māni‘ (the Withholder). He said, “He is the one who gives to whom He wills and withholds from whom He wills. So there is no one who can hold back what He has given, and there is no one who can give what He has withheld—as the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘O Allah! There is no withholder of what You have given, and no giver of what You have withheld...’”⁴⁶

He who knows that Allah is the Giver and the Withholder will not rely on the giving of others besides Him, or [be affected by] the withholding of others: he will not rely upon the worldly means, much less any other.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by not asking others besides Allah for the fulfilment of your needs.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE’S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by giving and withholding as Allah commands you without any hesitation.

⁴⁶ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you give by Allah and withhold by Allah, and when you understand giving and withholding from Allah. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Ḍārr-al-Nāfiʿ

(The One Who Harms—The One Who Benefits)

The meaning of these two Names is: the One who decrees harm and benefit and delivers them to whom He wills, how He wills—justice in the former and grace in the latter.

He who knows that Allah is the One who harms and benefits will not desire benefit from any other besides Him, and will not seek the removal of harm from any other besides Him.

CONNECTION WITH THESE TWO NAMES

You should connect with these two Names by taking all of your needs to Allah, for no one can raise what He has lowered.

CULTIVATION OF THESE TWO NAMES IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate these two Names in your character by inflicting harm on those you are commanded to inflict harm upon: the ego, caprice, the lower world, and everything that cuts you off from Allah; and by benefiting those you are commanded to benefit: the intellect, the heart, the soul, and every believer, and in particular those who have an attachment to you.

REALIZATION OF THESE TWO NAMES

You will realize these two Names when it is your

spiritual ambition that decrees a matter as a benefit or harm. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Badī^c (The Originator)

It is said that al-Badī^c means the Creator. It is also said that it means the incomparable. Some of the Shaykhs have said, "Al-Badī^c comes from the word *bid^c*, which is something without precedent. It means al-Mubdī^c: the One who makes manifest that which had no precedent. From this is the verse '*The Originator [Badī^c] of the heavens and the earth.*' (Quran 2:117) [He is called al-Badī^c here] because nothing similar to the heavens and earth came before them. From this also is the word innovation (*bid^ca*), which is something without precedent in the Sunna."

He who knows that Allah is the Originator will love Him and prefer Him [over all else]—either because of the perfection of His quality or the beauty of His actions. [Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh] said in his *Aphorisms*, "If you have not made well your thoughts of Him because of His quality, make it well because of His treatment of you; for has He accustomed you to anything but what is good, and has He conferred upon you anything but His blessings?"⁴⁷

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking His wondrous wisdom, in statement and action, and con-

⁴⁷ Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Sakandarī, *al-Hikam* §40.

templating the marvels of His creation and deriving lessons from the amazing effects of His power.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by acquiring the means of wisdom. That is by inculcating virtues and shunning what is contemptible; by breaking the habits of the self so that benefits manifest.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when your heart is firmly grounded in witnessing the Originator, to the extent your creativity is by Allah, from Allah, and to Allah. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Bāqī

(The Everlasting)

The Name al-Bāqī means the one for whom non-existence and termination are impossible, owing to the necessary existence of the One named as such. It is also said that al-Bāqī means the Permanent whose existence and everlastingness are without cessation or end.

He who knows that Allah is the Everlasting will look constantly to His everlastingness and all else will vanish, while He who is without end remains.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking to endure by the endurance of your good deeds and pious works. [The Prophet ﷺ said:] "When the servant dies all of his works are cut off except for three..."⁴⁸

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by striving to draw closer to Allah until He loves you. Then, when He loves you, He will be your hearing and your sight, and indeed your entire being. It says in

⁴⁸ Narrated by Muslim in his Ṣaḥīḥ collection. The full narration reads: "When the servant dies, all of his actions are cut off except for three: perpetual charity, knowledge from which others gain benefit, or a righteous offspring who prays for him."

some of the narrations of the hadith, "So when I love Him I become *him* [*kuntuḥu*]." So replace the darkness of contingency with the light of pre-eternality; replace the ephemeral with the Everlasting; so when the sensory is annihilated when one's humanness is annihilated what remains shall be the spiritual meaning, which remains through spirituality.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by realizing annihilation within subsistence; there is no end to that subsistence. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Nūr

(The Light)

It is said that the Name al-Nūr means the One who draws all things from the darkness of non-being into the light of being. Some of the Shaykhs have said, "Al-Nūr is an unrestricted name [*ism mutlaq*]."⁴⁹ He is the One who makes all phenomena manifest, who makes plain the essences and differentia of all things, in a manner that best sheds light on them and reveals them outwardly." It is also said that al-Nūr means the One who is intrinsically manifest and by whom everything is made manifest. It is also said to mean the Possessor of Light (Dhū al-Nūr)—in other words, the Creator of light and the One who brings it into being, physically and spiritually.

Allah Most High says, "*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.*" (Quran 24:35) This means, the One who provides light to the heavens and the earth and their inhabitants. He is therefore the One who enlightens the sun and the moon, and enlightens the hearts with mystical sciences and branches of knowledge.

He whose spiritual insight is discerning and whose realms are subtle will see in existence naught but Allah's sublime light. It states in the *Aphorisms*, "It is

⁴⁹ That is to say, it is not restricted by being derived from an etymological root. [t]

only because of the intensity of His manifestation that He is veiled, and it is only because of the sublimity of His light that He is hidden from sights."⁵⁰ The cosmos, therefore, is all light, and is only veiled by the manifestation of divine wisdom therein. He who sees the cosmos but fails to witness the light in it, or before it, or with it, has been blinded by the presence of the lights and veiled from the sun of gnosis by the clouds of created things.

He who knows that Allah is the Light who makes everything manifest will annihilate everything by His existence and make everything absent through his witnessing of Him.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking the lights of those hearts that take from the treasure-store of the unseen realms, so that your heart is also filled with light, and you thereby rise above existence entirely and behold and find naught but the Light.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being absent from the darkness of materiality through witnessing the light of spiritual meaning.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name by witnessing your non-being by His Being, and then by witnessing His Being alone and as He always was. Allah was, and there was nothing alongside of Him, and He is now as He always was. And with Allah is enabling grace.

⁵⁰ Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Sakandarī, *al-Hikam* §165.

al-Hādī

(The Guide)

Al-Hādī means the one who guides His servants by divine command [*amr*] and by enabling grace [*tawfiq*], for He "*Gives everything its form and then guides it.*" (Quran 20:50) This means He has guided His creature to what He willed for him in his religion and worldly life, and in all of his affairs. He guides the hearts to His love and gnosis, and He guides the souls to purification and adornment [with praiseworthy qualities]. The Most High says, "*So He inspired it [the soul] with its corruption and godfearingness.*" (Quran 91:8) He guides the bodily limbs to obedience and to the forsaking of disobedience.

He who knows that Allah is the Guide will seek from Him guidance and solicitude for what He wills and in what He wills.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking guidance from Him, the Most Exalted, and by following His guidance.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by guiding the servants to their religious and worldly benefits, in general and in specific.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when guidance is firmly imbedded in your heart, so that you guide and direct others with your spiritual power and state without needing to resort to words. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Wārith (The Inheritor)

Al-Wārith means the One to whom all properties and their owners return, in such a way that there remains not a single claim to ownership alongside of Him. He says, "*Verily We inherit the earth and all those upon it.*" (Quran 19:40)

He who knows that He is the Inheritor of everything will not content himself with anything in existence.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by turning to Him and asking that He make you of the inheritors of His Prophets and Emissaries and Elect, and asking that He cause you to inherit the garden of gnosis and the garden of Paradise.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by being an inheritor of the station of the gnostics—in their mystical sciences, their works, and their spiritual states. It states in the hadith, "The knowers are the heirs of the Prophets. The Prophets have bequeathed neither dinar nor dirham; rather, they have bequeathed knowledge, so whosoever takes it has acquired a tremendous portion."⁵¹

⁵¹ Ibn Majah.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when you attain all forms of inheritance: inheriting from the Messenger (may the best of prayers and salutations be upon him) in his statements, actions, spiritual states, and qualities of character. The one who inherits all these is the perfect and comprehensive inheritor. The scholars of the outward have inherited the Prophet's statements; the devotees have inherited the Prophet's works; while the gnostics have inherited the Prophet's qualities of character after having shared with the others in inheriting his statements and works. And with Allah is enabling grace.

al-Rashīd

(The One Who Guides)

It is said that al-Rashīd means the One who Guides, in which case it means the same as His Name al-Hādī. It is also said that it means the One who is described with justice in His judgment and truthfulness in His statement. It is also said that it means the One who is transcendent beyond imperfections and base things, which would mean that it is similar [in meaning] to the Names al-Quddūs (the Holy), al-‘Alī (the Exalted), and al-Muta‘ālī (The Supremely Exalted).

Some Shaykhs have said, “Al-Rashīd comes from *rushd* [rectitude], and so He is the One who takes charge of a matter, and cannot be assailed by any correction or amendment.”

He who knows that Allah is the One who Guides will, in all conditions, find repose in His management of affairs, and will be by Him and for Him in everything.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by seeking His guidance for that which is for your benefit, and by seeking facilitation for that which will bring you success, and by being pleased with what He manages for you—since you know that it is He who tends to your needs and benefits.

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by, as Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq (may Allah have mercy upon him) said, "never taking a stance of impudence in any of your states, religious or worldly, in the law, the intellect, or custom."

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when your right guidance is firmly set within you: when you busy yourself with yourself while witnessing your spiritual guide or the masters of the craft. Allah Most High knows best.

al-Ṣabūr

(The Patient)

He is the One who does not hasten the punishment of the one who purposely offends Him, even though his intended harm does not and cannot reach Him. The meaning of this Name with regard to the Most High is: delaying the punishment of the sinful until an appointed time that He knows, after which He either seizes them or turns to them in repentance by His divine favor.

Some Shaykhs have said, "Al-Ṣabūr comes from the word *ṣabr* [patience], which means tolerating injury; it is the quality of the Transcendent who is described by what He is transcendent above."

He who knows that Allah is the Patient will love Him on account of His gentleness towards His servants and will never feel secure against His stratagem, since He gives respite but is never neglectful.

CONNECTION WITH THIS NAME

You should connect with this Name by asking Him to put you to use as the patient ones are put to use in the arenas of patience. These arenas are four: tribulation, misfortune, obedience, and disobedience. As you ask Him this you should utter with the tongue of humility and dedication, "O Ṣabūr! Make me patiently endure obedience to You, make me patiently

avoid disobedience to You, and make me patient in both the tribulations and well-being you give me!"

CULTIVATION OF THIS NAME IN ONE'S CHARACTER

You should cultivate this Name in your character by striving to endure patiently in the four abovementioned arenas.

REALIZATION OF THIS NAME

You will realize this Name when patience becomes an inherent quality within you and a natural predisposition that never leaves you, to the extent that it transforms into satisfaction and submission, whereby misfortune transforms into blessing and tribulation transforms into mercy—and that is not difficult for Allah!

The Journey to the Pleasure & Closeness of Allah ﷻ



From the teachings of
Shaykh Abdul Aziz ad-Dabbagh ﷻ

Ahmad Dabbagh

MUHAMMADIYAH
PUBLICATIONS

You have been created to surrender and worship your Creator, Allah, the Exalted by choice whilst other creation have no choice but to obey and worship Him. If not to Allah, you will surrender to the opinions of others in order to like you, wealth, fear of others, satan, your own pride, lusts and ego.

You were designed to worship your Creator, if you fail to worship Him, it is not that you will not worship or serve but you will worship and serve the self, satan, people, false gods which is a disgrace even to your self.

If you will serve Allah the other creation will serve you, the world, the Hereafter, angels and even heavens. On the other hand if you forget your Creator and become rebellious, the world, Shaytan, Duniya and Hell will enslave you.

You can serve and worship Allah and fulfill the purpose of your life by adopting four qualities:


1. Firstly, to spend one's life in accordance with the laws and commands of Allah and in every state and condition to give preference to His command even if the whole world is in opposition to him.
2. Secondly, to give preference to the way of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ over all false worldly customs and cultures and to colour one's life in the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.
3. Thirdly, to fulfil the rights of the creation by having compassion upon them, honouring their rights, not inconveniencing them and trying to better their lives in this world and the Hereafter by conveying to them the Message of Islam.
4. Fourthly, to live life in the constant remembrance and presence of Allah through one's heart and mind by thinking that Allah, the Exalted is with me, watching me and listening to me. One should spend their whole life as though he is seeing Allah, the Exalted, and most certainly Allah, the Exalted is seeing his every condition.

This book is a practical manual to systematically bring these qualities in the person whilst you live, marry and engage in lawful work and business. To start this wonderful journey personal guidance is offered free of charge.

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CONTENTS

Purpose of this book	5
Personal detail page	8
Journey towards the Divine pleasure of Allah and example of the plane	9
Our True identity	12
Our whole story	15
The path to Hell	26
Thirst builders	27
The path to the Pleasure of Allah	28
Ultimate objective: The Pleasure of Allah	29
The four objectives	30
The non-objectives	31
The mountain of four conditions	33
The first condition: Wing of belief	36
The second condition: Wing of fiqh	39
The third condition: Wheel of repentance	40
The fourth condition: Wing of striving and steadfastness	46
Sincerity	51
Beginning the Journey to the Divine Presence	56
Bridge of Purification	57
First stage: Purification of the seven organs	59
Second stage: Purification of the mind	78
Third stage: Purification of the heart and soul	87
Fourth stage: Purification of the heart and soul	96
The Mountain of four objectives	97
Following the Sunnah of the beloved Holy Prophet ﷺ	99
The Teacher and the Seeker	101
Reliance on Allah	103
Dawah: Horizontal and vertical stabilisers	107
Steadfastness and Remembrance of Allah (Dhikr)	109
Preparation for the Remembrance of Allah (Dhikr)	110
Relationship between Dhikr & the internal & external state	110
Muraqabah (Meditation)	113
Dhikr: La ilaha illAllah	117
Conveying the message	119
Appendix: A. Table of records	120
B. Table of Sunnahs	131
C. Additional sheets	138
Summary of Amaals	142
Sanad: Shajrah of Tareeqah Muhammadiyah	144

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

Allah ﷻ created man to worship Him so that through this he can attain His pleasure. The rest of creation on earth has been created to serve mankind, even the sun, the moon and the stars in the heaven were created for this purpose. In this world, Allah tests man through wealth, possessions, land, relatives, spouse, children, sickness, health and even through life and death. The question is whether these worldly things take mankind away from Allah ﷻ or do mankind use the world to achieve the closeness of Allah the Most High. Allah the Exalted sent the Prophet ﷺ to teach mankind how to spend their life in the worship of Allah ﷻ, in order to please Him. In order to please Allah ﷻ, man must develop the following four qualities within him:

GIVING PREFERENCE TO ALLAH ﷻ

1. Firstly, to spend one's life in accordance with the laws and commands of Allah and in every state and condition to give preference to His law even if the whole world is in opposition to him.

MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ

2. Secondly, to give preference to the way of the Prophet ﷺ overall false worldly customs and cultures and to colour one's life in the life of the Prophet ﷺ.

COMPASSION UPON CREATIONS

3. Thirdly, to fulfil the rights of the creation by having compassion upon them, honouring their rights, not inconveniencing them and trying to better their lives in this world and the Hereafter by conveying to them the Message of Islam.

CONSTANT AWARENESS OF ALLAH

4. Fourthly, to live life in the constant remembrance and presence of Allah through his heart and mind by thinking, that is Allah, the Exalted is with me, is seeing me and listening to me. He should spend his whole life as though he is seeing Allah, the Exalted, and most certainly Allah, the Exalted is seeing his every condition.

THE BENEFIT OF SUBMITTING TO ALLAH'S WILL

How will a person achieve all of this? In this book, in light of the Quran and Hadith and the lives of the friends of Allah and gnostics, there is a summary of the path to the pleasure of Allah upon which hundreds and thousands of people have travelled in order to attain the presence of Allah ﷻ.

HOW CAN I DO THIS?

Before travelling on this path one must fulfil four conditions:

1. Beliefs (*Aqidah*): One should align their beliefs in conformance to the doctrine of Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamah.
2. Fiqh (Islamic law): One should learn the obligatory, necessary, recommended, preferred, forbidden, innovative practices in relation to Wudu (*ablution*), Ghusl (*ritual bath*), Ibadah (*worship*) and transactions.
3. Repentance (*Tawbah*): If one has violated the rights of Allah and the creation he should make amends and compensate for them, sincerely repent and make strong intention not to return to them in the future.
4. Striving (*Mujahadah*): One should make a firm determination to strive and sacrifice one's desires, as the devils, the lower-self and the worldly people will always be opposing the person during his journey to the closeness and pleasure of Allah ﷻ.

FIRST STAGE: PURIFICATION OF THE BODY

One will firstly learn the methodology to protect his bodily organs from the sins of the tongue, ears, eyes, hands, feet, stomach and private parts.

SECOND STAGE: PURIFICATION OF THE MIND

In the second stage, the person learns the methodology for preserving the heart and mind from evil thoughts, replacing it with good and pure thoughts and instilling in the mind the presence of Allah ﷻ.

THIRD STAGE: PURIFICATION OF THE HEART AND SOUL

Thirdly, to purify the heart and soul by eradicating the evil traits such as envy, hatred, ostentation and arrogance contained within the heart and then adorning ones inner-self with good traits such as sincerity, patience, gratitude, trust and abstinence.

FOURTH STAGE: ILLUMINATION OF THE SPIRIT (RUH)

In the fourth stage, the person will annihilate their inward and outward in the love and obedience of Allah and the Messenger ﷺ the result of which will be the attainment of Allah's closeness, pleasure and gnosis.

CONVEYING THE MESSAGE AND STEADFASTNESS

Upon completing the four stages of purification the seeker's inward will become enlightened with the friendship and presence of Allah and he will begin to invite others to travel the path upon which he walked. If a person dies in this state, then he will be, through the grace of Allah, successful in this life and gifted with the company of the Prophets, truthful ones, martyrs and friends of Allah in the hereafter.

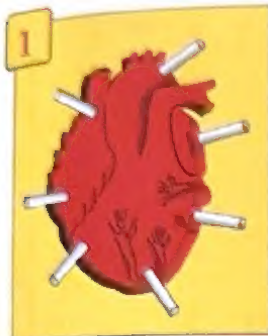
FROM WHERE CAN I BEGIN THE JOURNEY

Shaykh 'Abdul Qadir Psaid: "Whomsoever has achieved the pleasure of Allah, has obtained everything, and whomsoever was not able to achieve the pleasure of Allah has lost everything."

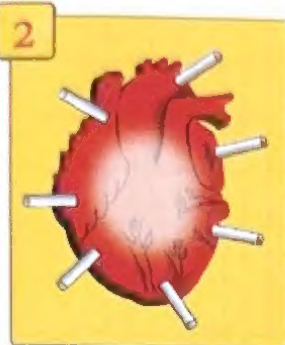
You can also attain this success by firstly learning about the path to Allah and thereafter remaining under the supervision of a teacher or guide who is following the commands of Allah, the Noble ways of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, has knowledge of this path and is aware of all its pitfalls and difficulties.

May Allah ﷻ grant us His true love, the true love of His Beloved ﷺ, His obedience and His pleasure in this world and the hereafter.

THE FIRST STAGE: PURIFICATION OF THE SENSUAL ORGANS OF THE BODY



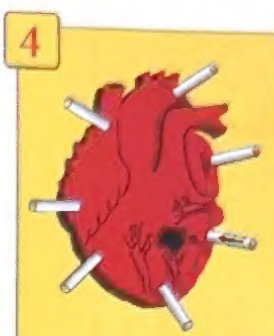
1
State of the heart, when it was born. This is before we started to contaminate it with the evil of sin.



2
This is the effect on the heart when one embraces Islam or when repents from his/her sins, it's a similar state to the first states, clean and free from contaminations



3
This is the actual state of the heart of disbelief. It's pitch black.



4
Effect on the heart when a person commits a sin.



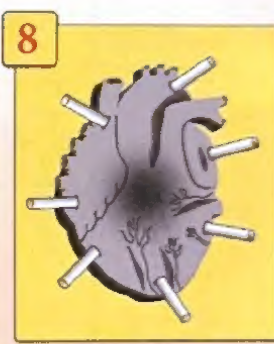
5
The heart is darkened due to being engrossed in sin.



6
The heart is cleansed with Dhikr and prayers but only for short while.



7
Due to the darkness still entering the heart through the physical organs of the body, so again the heart returns to its present diseased state.



8
State of the heart when a person tries to refrain from sinning with all the organs of the body simultaneously.



9
The Heart darkened once again due to the lack of spiritual power of resistance.



10
The effect on the heart by blocking one channel. The disease entering the heart is blocked, this minimises the effect.



11
Cleaning effect due to the second channel being blocked at the same time; the area of cleanliness has increased and its effect slowly starts to spread to other parts of the heart.



12
One by one the streams of disease of the darkness of sin is blocked. So the heart remains clean and effect of the Dhikr and prayers begin to show itself.

THE SECOND STAGE: PURIFICATION OF THE MIND

THE ROUTE LEADING TO INDULGING IN SIN
This is the route taken by a person who doesn't pay attention to the fact that their mind has been invaded by an evil thought. There is no reaction to invasion thus the evil thought takes over the mind.

The sparkle of evil grows and settles.



The person slowly starts to think about the evil thought and allows the sparkles of evil to settle in the mind.



Evil thought grows as the person starts to entertain it.

The person's mind becomes inclined towards the thought as one starts to entertain it.



The mind is enflamed and desire is built by the evil thought.

The evil thought enflames the mind and starts to take over, it's very hard to control it now unless one has strong willpower and help of Allah, the All-Merciful.

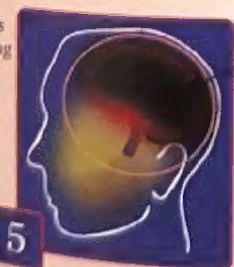


The mind is overtaken; overwhelmed and succumbs to the evil thought.

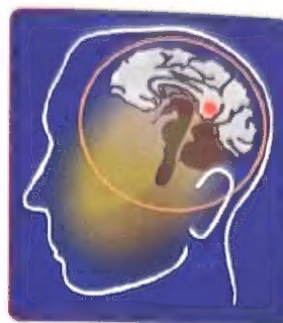
Order sent by the mind to carry out the evil thought.

The evil thought dominates the mind and then the mind orders the organs to carry out the evil thought.

The person is now indulging in that evil act/thought thus darkening their mind, heart and soul.



The mind is darkened due to indulging in sin



THE ROUTE LEADING TO SALVATION FROM SIN
This is the route which is taken by a person who wishes to get rid off of the thought from their mind. Two weapons are made available which can combat the invasion of evil thoughts.

Techniques are:

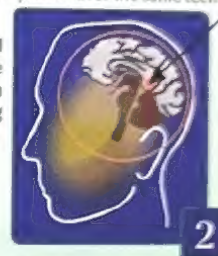
1. Seeking refuge in Allah, the Exalted.
2. Using your willpower to resist it.

A sparkle is very easy to put out when using the technique of seeking refuge in Allah, the Almighty and using your willpower.



The sparkle of evil is crushed & the mind is free of any evil.

The evil whisper enters and again the person uses the same technique.



Again the evil whisper enters and again the person uses the same technique of seeking refuge in Allah, the Almighty and crushing it with one's willpower.

Thin shield protecting the mind from evil whispers.



Once a person trains themselves in using this technique they slowly start to develop a shield to protect their mind from being corrupted with evil thoughts.

The protecting shield is further strengthened and now being trained to think of Allah and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.



strengthened protective shield frees of evil

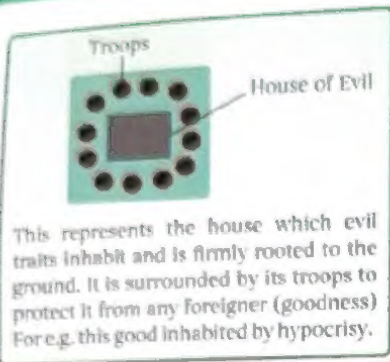
Now good thoughts are developed in the mind trying to please Allah, the Exalted.



The mind is in constant remembrance of Allah.

The mind in the remembrance of Allah and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

THE THIRD STAGE: PURIFICATION OF THE HEART AND THE SOUL



THE DESPICABLE ATTRIBUTES (Akhlaq-e-Pazillah)

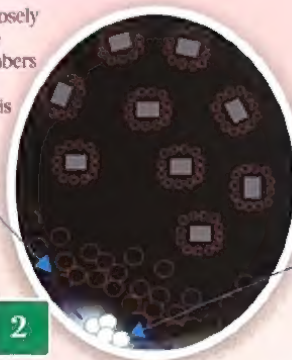
THE BEAUTIFUL ATTRIBUTES (Akhlaq-e-Hamidah)

The ellipses represents the soul which can consist of both good and evil.



The Soul is darkened due to being engrossed in evil desires and has been overtaken by the evil traits. Its very weak due to lack of good practices such as prayers, dhikr etc. and living in a sinful lifestyle

Evil troops are closely packed and have strengths in numbers to fight back the goodness which is trying to prevail



The Soul at the beginning when one tries to become pious.

Evil troops slowly start to split due to the presence of good troops, they are much more weaker from the beginning and start to retreat a little.

Troops of good traits are present in small numbers at the beginning when a person tries to become pious and do good deeds. It does manage to fight few of the evil troops back and strengthens itself.

The troops of good traits increase in number and tries to fight off and win back as much land as possible from the evil troops of evil traits.



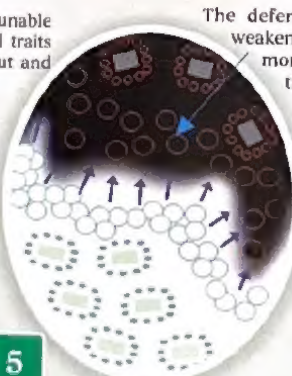
Steadfastness on Sharia and the practices that are prescribed by the Shaykh.



Good Traits start to develop establish themselves.

The evil troops retreat and are unable to defend the houses of evil traits who have been driven out and their houses crushed.

Slowly the as the land of the soul is recaptured and the area of goodness increase, the good traits they start to build their houses or take over the houses of the evil traits and firmly establish themselves in that place.



Power of the Evil Traits weakened (half purified).

The defence of the evil troops weakening day by day, they lose more the land to the good troops of the good traits, and are reducing in numbers.



Last of the Evil Traits remaining as Good Traits dominates.

The Purified Soul develops a Protective Shield.

The Purified Soul illuminates.

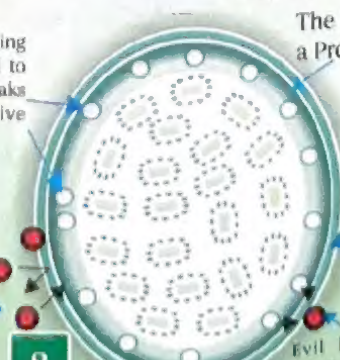
Complete repoussement of the land of the soul by the good traits from the evil traits, the soul starts the illuminate from within the light of Allah.



Good troops surrounding the surface of the soul to fight off any evil that leaks through the Protective Shield.

Evil Troops looking to find a way back into the soul.

90



Protective Shield to protect it from all the evil. This had been developed initially in purification of Mind

Evil leaking through but is repelled back by the good troops.



THE FOURTH STAGE: ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE SPIRIT

- 1 Annihilation in the love and obedience in following the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

The person annihilates himself in the love of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and is continuously decorating his outer and inner with the Sunnah.



- 2 The Purified Soul annihilated in love of Allah, the Exalted and Glorified.



The person at this stage is in complete annihilation in the love of Allah ﷻ.

He becomes absorbed in the gnosis of Allah, the Most High and experiences such things which no eye has seen and no ear have heard.

- 3 Perfected Soul, inner annihilated in love of Allah ﷻ and outer annihilated in love and obedience in following the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

The person's physical body is in complete absorption in the love and obedience of Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and his inner self is in complete absorption in the love of Allah, His Messenger and Akhirah.

This person experiences the true Iman and enters amongst the beloved servants of Allah the Glorified and lives his entire life as if he is looking at Allah and the abode of heaven and hell are fresh in his mind and heart.

His only purpose becomes seeking the pleasure of Allah with all his body, mind, heart and soul.

