

thorns, rocks, serpents, and beasts, but this much light cannot save him from the cold and destruction. Thus, if such a person fails to reach the warm circle of the fire, he is destroyed just like one who walks in the dark.

Then the third category of people who experience revelations and see dreams are those whose quality of dreams and revelations resembles the physical experience of a person who, on a dark and frigid night, not only finds the full radiance of the fire and walks in it, but also, by entering its warm circle, is fully safeguarded against the ill effects of the cold. This rank is attained by those who incinerate the cloak of carnal passions in the fire of divine love and adopt an arduous life for the sake of God. They see the death that lies ahead, yet they rush to choose that death for themselves. They embrace every pain in the path of God. For the sake of God, by becoming the enemy of their ego and marching against it, they exhibit such power of faith that even the angels are amazed and astounded at the strength of their faith. They are spiritual champions and all of Satan's assaults amount to nothing in opposition to their spiritual strength. They are true in their faithfulness and uncompromising in their truthfulness such that the sights of worldly pleasures cannot beguile them nor can the love of children or the bond of matrimony turn them away from their True Beloved. In short, no bitterness can frighten them nor can any carnal pleasure hinder them from God, nor can any relationship interfere with their relationship with God.

These are the three states of spiritual ranks of which the first is named *'ilmul-yaqīn* [knowledge by inference], the second is designated *'ainul-yaqīn* [certainty by sight], and the third blessed and perfect rank is known as *ḥaqqul-yaqīn* [true certainty]. The cognition of any human being cannot be perfected nor can it be washed clean of all impurities until it reaches the stage of *ḥaqqul-yaqīn*, for this stage does not depend only on observation, but descends upon the heart of a man as an actual experience; and the man, being thrust into the blazing fire of divine love, is totally separated from his carnal self. Arriving at this stage, human cognition moves from hearsay to actual experience and the ignoble self is totally burnt to ashes, and such a man becomes seated in the lap of God

Almighty. Just as a piece of iron, being placed in fire, assumes the appearance of fire, and the characteristics of fire start to manifest through it, in the same way, a person of this rank figuratively becomes endowed with divine attributes. He is, by nature, so completely lost in the pursuit of the pleasure of God that he speaks while being immersed in God, sees while being immersed in God, hears while being immersed in God, and walks while being immersed in God, as if there is only God inside his cloak. His human nature is overpowered by the manifestations of the Divine. Since this subject is delicate and is beyond ordinary comprehension, I shall, therefore, leave it at this point.

In yet another way, I may illustrate this third rank, which is the superior and perfect rank, in the following manner. The perfect revelation, which is the third of the three types of revelation and descends upon the perfect individual, is as if the light and the rays of the sun fall on a polished mirror which is perfectly facing it. It is obvious that, though the light of the sun is the same, differences develop in the manner in which it appears according to the various objects [that reflect it]. Thus, when a ray of the sun falls on such a dense area of earth that does not have clean and pure water on its surface—but rather, has black and dark dust, and the surface is also uneven—then [the reflection of] the ray is very weak, particularly in the event that a cloud should be intervening between the sun and the earth. But when that same ray, in front of which there is no intervening cloud, falls on clear water that shines like a polished mirror, then the same ray is intensified tenfold in its appearance, so much so, that the eye cannot even bear it.

In the same manner, when revelation descends upon a soul that has attained purification, having been cleansed of all impurities, its lustre is manifest to an extraordinary degree. The reflection of divine attributes upon that soul becomes complete, and the countenance of the One True God is fully revealed. It is obvious from this inquiry that when the sun rises, its light falls on every pure and impure surface, even to the extent that the outhouse, which is a place of filth, partakes of it. However, the full benefit of that light is obtained by that clean mirror