

CHAPTER I

In description of the people who experience some true dreams or some true revelations, but they have no relationship with Allah the Almighty, nor do they receive the slightest share of the light that is bestowed upon His chosen servants, and their carnal self is far removed from any relationship with the divine light.

Let it be clear that since man has been created for the purpose of recognizing his Creator and attaining the level of certainty in believing in His Being and His attributes, God Almighty has, therefore, fashioned the human mind accordingly. On the one hand, it has been endowed with the ability to reason, whereby it can ponder over the creations of Allah the Exalted Maker, and—having discovered the subtle imprints of the perfect wisdom of Allah the Maker, Exalted be His Name, that are evident in every particle of the universe and the magnificent and well-organized system characterizing the world order—understand with perfect insight that such a grand enterprise as the heaven and the earth cannot exist on its own without a Creator; indeed, it *must* have a Creator. On the other hand, it has also been endowed with the spiritual senses and faculties to compensate for the deficiency and imperfection that rational faculties experience in attaining the complete cognition of Almighty God, because it is obvious that rationality alone cannot lead to the complete cognition of God. The reason is that, by observing the

component parts of the universe—individually or collectively—and their flawless and perfect order, the rational faculties given to man can, at the most, conclude that this universe, which is based on profound principles and deep wisdom, ought to have a Creator. They cannot go so far as to affirm that He does indeed exist. It is obvious that, until man's enlightenment reaches the level of affirmation that the Creator does indeed exist, only realizing the need for a creator cannot be called perfect enlightenment because the statement that 'there ought to be a Creator for all these creations' cannot equal the statement that 'the Creator, whose necessity has been acknowledged, does indeed exist'. Therefore, in order for seekers after truth to complete their spiritual journey and satisfy the innate desire for the perfect cognition of God that is inherent in their nature, it is necessary that, along with their rational faculties, they should be granted spiritual faculties, so that, if the spiritual faculties are applied fully and there is no veil in between, they should reveal the countenance of the True Beloved with such clarity as the rational faculties cannot show on their own.

Therefore, God, who is Benevolent and Merciful, and who has invested human nature with the hunger and thirst for His perfect cognition, has also endowed human nature with two types of faculties for the purpose of arriving at that perfect cognition. The first are the rational faculties, the source of which is the brain. The second are the spiritual faculties, the source of which is the heart, and their purity depends upon the purity of the heart. Spiritual faculties reach the reality of that which cannot be discovered completely through the rational faculties. The spiritual faculties only possess the stimulating capability—that is, creating such purity as makes it possible to reflect the graces from the Source of all graces. Therefore, it is a prerequisite that they [such seekers] be eager to acquire that bounty and there should be no veil or obstruction in between so that they become recipients of the grace of perfect cognition from God. Their recognition [of the Divine] should not be limited to an affirmation that this universe, which is full of wisdom, ought to have a Creator. Rather, by fully receiving the honour of

discourse and converse with that Creator and by observing His magnificent Signs directly, they should see His countenance and observe with the eye of certainty that, indeed, that Creator does exist. But the nature of most people is not free from the veils—they are afflicted with the love of this world and its temptations, pride, arrogance, conceit, hypocrisy, self-indulgence, and other moral vices; wilful neglect and delinquency in discharging the rights of God and rights of people; deliberate violation of the norms of sincerity, fidelity, and fine points of love and loyalty [to God]; and deliberate severance of the bond with God Almighty. On account of all types of veils, obstructions, desires, and passions, they are not capable of being the recipients of a worthy grace of divine converse and discourse, which should exhibit anything of the light of their being acceptable to God.[☆] Yet the eternal favour of God, which does not desire that the innate faculties of human nature should go to waste, has ordained, by way of planting a seed, that most human beings should occasionally see true dreams or receive true revelations so that they should be aware that there is a path open for their progress. But their dreams and revelations do not have any signs of God's acceptance, love, and grace; nor are such people free from the impurities of their egos. They are shown these dreams only so that an argument for believing in God's holy Prophets is established against them. For, if they were totally devoid of understanding the reality of true dreams and true revelations, and they had no definite knowledge of them, they could plead before God Almighty that they could not

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1. ☆ Bear in mind that Prophets^{as} and Messengers^{as} also experience physical desires and passions, but the difference is that these holy people first renounce their desires and carnal sentiments and slaughter their self before the Almighty in order to win His pleasure. Then, what they lose for God is returned to them as grace. They are granted everything and they do not become destitute. But, the desires of those who do not sacrifice their self for the sake of God become veritable veils for them. Like worms, they ultimately perish in filth. The difference between them and God's holy people can be described as follows: A prison is home for both the warden and the prisoners, but we cannot say the warden is like the prisoners. (Author)

possibly understand the reality of prophethood since they were completely unacquainted with this phenomenon. They could say that they were totally unaware of the essence of prophethood and their nature was not given any example to understand it; therefore, how could they possibly comprehend this concealed truth? Thus has it been the way of God from antiquity and ever since the foundation was laid for the creation of this world that ordinary people—irrespective of being good or bad, being righteous or disobedient, being the follower of a true faith or a false one—are also shown some true dreams or vouchsafed true revelations so that their concept and conjecture, which derives from hearsay and imitation of others, may reach the level of *‘ilmul-yaqīn* [knowledge by inference]¹☆ and they may have personal experience which should help spiritual progress. To this end, the Omniscient One has fashioned the human brain in such a way, and endowed it with such spiritual faculties, that it can experience some true dreams and can receive some true revelations. However, those true dreams and true revelations are not an indication of any greatness or esteemed status, but are only pathways to progress acting merely as samples. If such dreams and revelations signify anything, it is only that such a person has the right nature, unless he is ruined by carnal passions. It is implied by such a nature that the person can advance [spiritually] if no barriers and screens are encountered. To illustrate, there may be a tract of land which shows signs of having underground water, but the water lies buried beneath several layers of earth and is admixed with many forms of sludge; and the water that is pure, pleasant, and usable cannot be reached without a great deal of labour and many days of digging the earth. Therefore, it is the height of insolence, absurdity, and misfortune

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1. ☆ Knowledge is of three kinds: (1) First: *‘ilmul-yaqīn*, [knowledge by inference] which is akin to seeing smoke rise from a distance and deducing that there must be a fire at that spot; (2) Second: *‘ainul-yaqīn* [certainty by sight], which is akin to seeing that fire with one’s own eyes; and (3) Third: *ḥaqul-yaqīn*, [true certainty] which is akin to feeling its heat by putting one’s hand in that fire. (Author)

to imagine that the pinnacle of human excellence lies in experiencing some true dream or true revelation. Rather, there are many other requisites and conditions for human excellence and, unless they are all fulfilled, such dreams and revelations are a part of the realm of trials in accordance with the plan of God. May God safeguard every seeker from their ill consequences.

At this point it should be borne in mind by one who is enamoured by revelation, that *wahī* [revelation] is of two kinds: *wahyul-ibtilā'* [the revelation of trial] and *wahyul-istifā'* [the revelation of exaltation]. The revelation of trial sometimes brings about ruination; as, for example, Balaam was ruined for the same reason. But the recipient of the revelation of exaltation is never ruined. Moreover, even the revelation of trial is not experienced by everyone. Just as many people are born physically deaf, dumb, and blind, so do some lack spiritual faculties. Just as a blind person can carry along with the guidance of others, so do these people. But, on account of general testimony, which is tantamount to a matter-of-fact statement, they cannot deny these real occurrences, nor can they allege that all are similarly blind as they are—as is the everyday observation that a blind man cannot argue that those who claim to be able to see are liars, nor can he deny the fact that, except for him, thousands of others have eyes, for he observes that people do use their eyes and can do what the blind cannot. However, if there had come a time when everyone was blind and there was no one who could see, and a controversy emerged as to whether there was a time in the past when only people with sight were born, the blind could have ample reason to deny, debate, and contest. I am inclined to think that the blind would have ended up winning this argument, because anyone who refers only to the past—and cannot show, in any other person of his own era, those human qualities and excellences that he claims to be real, and contends that those powers and qualities are not present anymore but did exist in the past—would lose the argument on critical review. If human beings still possess the abilities—such as the ability to see, hear, smell, touch, remember, think, etc.—which were bestowed

on the physical aspect of human constitution by the Perfect Benefactor [in the past], then why would anyone think that those spiritual capabilities that people enjoyed in previous ages have become altogether extinct in their constitution in this age, particularly when those capabilities are more crucial to human perfection than physical faculties? And how can it be denied when our everyday experience confirms that these faculties have not become extinct? This illustrates how distant from the truth are the religions that admit that the physical and intellectual faculties of human nature are still the same as they were before, but they deny that the spiritual faculties are still present in human beings as they were in the past.

My intent from this entire discourse is that unless a person possesses certain other qualities—which I shall, God willing, elaborate upon in Chapter III—the mere fact that he sees true dreams or experiences a few true revelations does not prove any excellence on his part. It is merely the result of the peculiar constitution of his brain, and that is why there is no precondition in it for being virtuous or truthful, nor is it necessary for him to be a believer and a Muslim. And just as some people experience true dreams or learn something by way of *ilhām* [inspiration] simply due to the constitution of their brains, similarly, the nature of others is suited for scholarship and discoveries due to the constitution of their brains and they alight upon subtle matters. But, in reality, they fall under the category of people mentioned in an authentic hadith:

أَمَنَّ شِعْرُهُ وَكَفَرَ قَلْبُهُ

Meaning that, his poetry professed belief [in God], but his heart disbelieved.

That is why it is not for every simple-minded person to recognize a truthful one. [As is said]:

اے بے ابلیس آدم روئے ہست پس بہر دستے نباید داد دست
Oh how many an Iblis has the face of Adam!

So give not your hand [in allegiance] to everyone.

Moreover, it should also be borne in mind that the dreams and revelations experienced by the people of this rank are steeped in much darkness and very rarely contain the brilliance of truth. They are not accompanied by any sign of God's love and acceptance, and any news of the unseen they may contain is such that it is also shared by tens of millions of others. Anyone who wishes can verify for himself that such dreams and revelations are experienced by all kinds of people, including sinners, liars, infidels, atheists, and indeed, even prostitutes. Therefore, anyone who exults over, and is enamoured by, such dreams and revelations is not wise. And gravely deceived is the one who deludes himself into believing that he is someone special merely by experiencing in himself a sample of dreams and revelations of this quality. Indeed, it should be remembered that such a person is only like someone who, on a dark night, sees the smoke of a fire from a distance, but he cannot see the glow of this fire nor can he alleviate his frigidity and dejection by its heat. This is the very reason why such people derive no share of God's special blessings and bounties, nor does any acceptance develop in them. They have no connection with God at all, nor are the impurities of their human self consumed by the flames of divine light. Since they do not develop a real friendship with God, their lack of nearness to Him allows Satan to remain their constant companion and they are dominated by *ḥadīthun-nafs* [the inspirations of the self]. Even as the sun remains mostly hidden on an overcast day—only a corner of it becomes visible occasionally—so are such people mostly enveloped in darkness, and their dreams and revelations have a great deal of satanic influence.