

CHAPTER II

In description of those people who occasionally see true dreams or experience true revelations, and who do enjoy some relationship with God Almighty, but the relationship is not of a high degree, and their carnal self is not consumed and obliterated by the flame of divine light, though it comes somewhat closer to it.

There also exist some people in this world who adopt a measure of piety and chastity. Their own efforts towards self-reformation, combined with their innate capacity and constitution of their brain for experiencing a sample of dreams and visions, produces within them a superficial piety and virtue that brings with it a limited measure of illumination by true dreams and genuine visions, but they are not free from darkness. Indeed, even some of their prayers are accepted, but not in regard to extraordinary matters, for their piety is not perfect. It is rather like the clear water that appears clear at the surface, but contains manure and filth underneath. Since their self-purification is not complete and their righteousness and sincerity suffers from much deficiency, they stumble when faced with a trial. If the mercy of God accompanies them and His attribute of *Sattār* [Concealer] protects them, they may pass on from this world without any major stumble; but in the case of a trial there is a danger that they may come to an evil end like Balaam, and, like him,

be likened to a dog even after having experienced revelations. Because of their deficient state of knowledge, practice, and faith, Satan lurks at their door and rushes inside their home when they stumble. They see light from afar but they do not enter this light, nor do they get a substantial portion of its warmth. Hence, they are in a state of risk. God is Light, as He says:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ¹

One who only sees the inevitable results of this Light is like someone who only sees the smoke from a distance but does not see the light of the fire. Therefore, he is deprived of the benefits of the light and also of its warmth that consumes the impurities of human nature. Those who believe in the existence of God merely on the basis of traditional or rational arguments or on account of dubious revelations—such as the so-called religious scholars, philosophers, or those who believe in the existence of God on the basis of their spiritual faculties which have the capacity to see dreams and visions but are deprived of the light of God’s nearness—are like a person who sees smoke from a distance, but does not see the light of the fire. By seeing the smoke alone, he begins to believe that there must be a fire. Such a person is deprived of the enlightened conviction that comes from beholding the light itself. On the other hand, one who sees the rays of this light from a distance but does not enter this light is like one who sees the light of a fire in a dark night and finds the right path with its help, but he cannot safeguard himself from the cold due to the distance from the fire, nor can the fire consume his carnal self. Anyone can understand that if the flame of a fire is visible from a distance on a dark and frigid night, its mere sight cannot save one from perishing. Only he will be saved who gets close enough to the fire so that it may sufficiently dispel his cold. The

1. Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth (*Sūrah an-Nūr*, 24:36).
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one who beholds the light from afar may show some signs of being on the right path, but will possess none of the signs of special grace, and his state of constriction, which is due to deficient trust and carnal desires, is not removed. And his carnal self does not burn to ashes because he is far away from the flame of divine light. He does not fully become an heir of the Messengers and Prophets, and some of his inner impurities remain hidden within him. The relationship that he has with God is not free from turbidity and deficiency, for he beholds God Almighty from afar with his hazy sight, but he is not in His lap. There are men who have carnal passions inside of them. Sometimes, their carnal passions flare up and exhibit their excitement in their dreams, making them think, that their excitement is from God; whereas, this excitement is only from the self that incites towards evil. For instance, a person might say in a dream, 'I will not submit to such a person on any account. I am better than he,' and then conclude from it that he is indeed superior, whereas that incitement originated from the tumult of his ego. Similarly, he utters various kinds of statements in dreams induced by the commotion of his ego and, in his ignorance, concludes that the words are in concurrence with the will of God, and thence is ruined. And because he has not advanced towards God with all of his energy and does not accept Him with full sincerity and devotion, he is not bestowed the mercy of God in full measure. He is like a foetus that has life but has not yet been able to emerge from the womb. His eye is still closed to the full spectacle of the spiritual world. He has not seen even the face of his mother in whose womb he was nurtured. In keeping with the well-known [Urdu] proverb *A half-baked mullah is a danger to the Faith*,¹ he is in a perilous state on account of his imperfect cognition. Such people do come to know of a certain measure of insights and verities, but it is like milk which is polluted with urine, or water which has some filth in it. Compared to the first category, the person

1. The English equivalent would be, 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.'
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of this category is somewhat safer from satanic intrusion and egoistic influence in his dreams and revelations but, since such a person still has a share of Satan in his nature, he cannot altogether escape from satanic inspirations. Moreover, since his carnal passions are still clinging on to him, he cannot remain free from egoistic inspirations. The fact of the matter is that the perfection of the clarity of inspirations and revelations depends upon the purity of the soul. Those who still have some impurities in their souls, have impurities in their inspirations and revelations as well.