

# The Eighteenth Word

[This Word consists of two Stations, of which the Second has not yet been written. There are three Points in the First Station.]

## FIRST POINT

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*

*Think not that those who exult in what they have thus contrived, and who love to be praised for what they have not done – think not that they will escape suffering: for grievous suffering does await them.<sup>1</sup>*

### **A Chastening Slap for my Evil-Commanding Soul:**

O my foolish soul, charmed at glory, enamoured of fame, addicted to praise, and without equal in egotism! If it is a just claim that the source of the fig and its thousands of fruits is its tiny seed, and that all the grapes in their hundred bunches hanging from a dry branch of the vine are produced through the skill of the branch, and that those who benefit from them should praise and esteem the branch and the seed, then perhaps you have the right to be proud and conceited about the bounties with which you are loaded. But in fact you deserve to be constantly chided, because you are not like the seed and the branch: since you have the faculty of will, you reduce the value of those bounties through your pride. Through your conceit, you destroy them; through your ingratitude, you nullify them; through claiming them as your own, you lay hands on them unlawfully. Your duty is not to glory in your deeds, but to offer thanks. What is fit for you is not fame, but humility. Your right is not praise, it is repentance and to seek forgiveness. Your perfection lies not in self-centredness, but in recognizing God.

Yes, you in my body resemble 'nature' in the world. Both of you were created to receive good and be the thing to which evil is referred. That is to say, you are not the agent and source, but the recipient and passive. You have only an effect, and that is being the cause of evil because you did not accept as you should have done a good arising from absolute good. Also you

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'an, 3:188.

were both created as veils, so that things that are apparently ugly, whose beauty is not obvious, would be attributed to you, and you would be means of the Most Holy Divine Essence being acknowledged free of defect. But you have taken on a form entirely contrary to the duty of your natures. Although out of your incapacity you have transformed good into evil, you as though act as partners to your Creator. That means one who worships himself and worships nature is extremely foolish and perpetrates a great wrong.

And do not say: 'I am a place of manifestation, and one who manifests beauty becomes beautiful.' For you have not assimilated it, so are not a place of manifestation but a place of passage.

And do not say: 'Among people I was chosen. These fruits, these fine works, are shown through me. That means I have some merit.' No! God forbid! Rather they were given to you first because you are more bankrupt, needy, and sad than everyone else!<sup>2</sup>

## SECOND POINT

This Point elucidates one meaning of the verse:

*Who has created everything in the best way,*<sup>3</sup>

and is as follows:

In everything, even the things which appear to be the most ugly, there is an aspect of true beauty. Yes, everything in the universe, every event, is either in itself beautiful, which is called 'essential beauty,' or it is beautiful in regard to its results, which is called 'relative beauty.' There are certain events which are apparently ugly and confused, but beneath that apparent veil, there are most shining instances of beauty and order.

Beneath the veil of stormy rains and muddy soil in the season of spring are hidden the smiles of innumerable beautiful flowers and well-ordered plants. And behind the veils of the harsh destruction and mournful separations of autumn is the discharge from the duties of their lives of the amiable small animals, the friends of the coy flowers, so as to preserve them from the blows and torments of winter events, which are manifestations of Divine might and glory, and under the veil of which the way is paved for the new and beautiful spring.

Beneath the veil of events like storms, earthquakes, and plague, is the unfolding of numerous hidden immaterial flowers. The seeds of many potentialities which have not developed sprout and grow beautiful on account of events which are apparently ugly. As though general upheavals and universal

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<sup>2</sup> Truly, I was extremely pleased at the New Said silencing his soul to this extent in this dispute, and said, A thousand bravo's!

<sup>3</sup> Qur'an, 32:7.

change are all immaterial rain. But because man is both enamoured of the apparent and is self-centered, he considers only the externals and pronounces them ugly. Since he is self-centred, he reasons according to the result which looks to himself and judges it to be ugly. Whereas, if, of their aims one looks to man, thousands look to their Maker's Names.

For example, man reckons to be harmful and meaningless thorned plants and trees, which are among the great miracles of the Creator's power. Whereas they are the well-equipped heroes of the grasses and trees. And for example, hawks harrying sparrows is apparently incompatible with mercy, but through this harrying, the sparrow's abilities unfold. And for example, he considers the snow to be very cold and uninviting, but under that chilly, unpleasing veil there are aims so warm and results so sweet they defy description. Also, since man is self-centred and worships the apparent and therefore judges everything according to the face that looks to him, he supposes to contrary to good manners many things that are perfectly polite and correct. For example, in man's view, the discussion of his sexual organ is shameful. But this veil of shame is in the face which looks to man. Whereas the faces that look to creation, art, and its aims and purposes are veils which if considered with the eye of wisdom, are perfectly correct. Shame does not touch them at all.

Thus, certain expressions of the All-Wise Qur'an, the source of politeness and right conduct, are in accordance with these faces and veils. Beneath the apparent faces of creatures and events which seem to us to be ugly, are extremely fine, wise art and beautiful faces looking to their creation, which look to their Maker; so too there are numerous beautiful veils which conceal their wisdom, and moreover, great numbers of apparent instances of disorder and confusion which are most regular sacred writing.

### THIRD POINT

*If you do love God, follow me; God will love you.*<sup>4</sup>

Since in the universe there is observedly beauty of art, and this is certain, it necessitates with a certainty as definite as actually witnessing it the Messengership of Muhammad (PBUH). For the beauty of art and finely ornamented forms of these beautiful creatures show that their Fashioner possesses a significant will to make beautiful and powerful desire to adorn. And this will and desire show that the Maker possesses an elevated love and sacred inclination towards the perfections of the art He displays in His creatures. And this love and inclination require to be turned towards and concentrated on man, the most enlightened and perfect individual among beings. And man is the conscious fruit of the tree of creation. And the fruit

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<sup>4</sup> Qur'an, 3:31.

is the most comprehensive and furthest part, the part with the most general view and universal consciousness. And the one with the most comprehensive view and universal consciousness should be the most elevated and brilliant individual, who will meet with and be addressed by that Beauteous Maker; who will expend his universal consciousness and comprehensive view entirely on the worship of his Maker, the appreciation of His art, and offering thanks for His bounties.

Now, two signboards, two spheres appear. One is a magnificent, well-ordered sphere of dominicality and exquisitely fashioned, bejewelled signboard of art. The other is an enlightened and illumined sphere of worship and broad and comprehensive signboard of thought and reflection, admiration, thanks, and belief. This second sphere acts with all its strength in the name of the first sphere.

Thus, it will be clearly understood how closely connected with the Maker is the leader of the second sphere, which serves all the Maker's art-cherishing aims, and how beloved and acceptable he is in His eyes.

Is it at all reasonable to accept that the munificent Fashioner of these fine creatures, Who so loves His art and even takes into consideration all the tastes of the mouth, would remain indifferent towards His most beautiful creature, who, in a clamour of admiration and appreciation which makes the Throne and earth reverberate and in a litany of thanks and exaltation which brings to ecstasy the land and the sea, is worshipfully turned towards Him? Would He not speak with him and want to make him His Messenger and wish his commendable conduct to pass to others? It is possible that He would not speak with him and not make him His Messenger... By no means!

*Verily, the religion before God is Islam.<sup>5</sup>  
Muhammad is the Messenger of God.<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> Qur'an, 3:19.

<sup>6</sup> Qur'an, 48:29.