

# The Twenty-Seventh Word

## TREATISE ON INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENTS OF THE LAW (*Ijtihad*)

[Five or six years ago in an Arabic treatise, I wrote concerning a matter to do with independent judgements on points of the Shari'a. Now, at the request of two of my brothers, this Word was written about that matter in order to put in his place someone who had overstepped the mark in his attacks on it.]

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

*If they had only referred it to the Prophet, or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have tested it from them [direct].<sup>1</sup>*

The door of independent judgements on the law is open, but at the present time there are six 'Obstacles' to entering it.

**THE FIRST:** In winter when the storms are fierce even small holes are blocked up, and it is in no way reasonable to open up new doors. Under the onslaught of a mighty flood, to make openings in the wall in order to repair it leads to being drowned. In just the same way, at this time of denial and the assault of the customs of Europe and the legion of innovations and the destruction of misguidance, to open up new doors in the citadel of Islam in the name of *ijtihad*, and make openings that will be the means of those bent on destruction scaling the walls and entering it, is a crime against Islam.

**THE SECOND:** Independent judgements may not be made about the essential teachings of religion, for they are specified and definite. Moreover, they are like basic food and sustenance. Although at this time all effort and endeavour should be expended on their being upheld and raised to life, they are being abandoned and degraded. So to give them up, despite their being among the theoretical matters of Islam and due to being the pure and sincere

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'an, 4:83.

interpretations of the first generations of Islam are not inadequate for the needs of all times, and to make new interpretations of the law in arbitrary fashion, is an innovation and betrayal of Islam.

**THE THIRD:** Just as varying goods in the market are sought after according to the season; they are in demand one after the other, so in the exhibition of the world and market of human society and civilization, every century different goods are sought after and are in demand; they are displayed in the market, demand attracts them, gazes are turned on them, minds are drawn by them. Like at the present time the goods of politics and securing the life of this world and the demand of philosophy are sought after, for example. And at the time of the first generations of Islam and in the market of that age, deducing from the Word of the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth His wishes and what He wants of us were the most sought-after goods, and obtaining the means to gain through the light of prophethood and the Qur'an eternal happiness in the world of the hereafter, which had been revealed to such a degree it could not be concealed.

At that time, since people's minds, hearts and spirits were directed with all their strength towards understanding the wishes of the Sustainer of the Heavens and the Earth, the discussions, conversations, events, and circumstances of social life all looked to that. Since they occurred in accordance with those wishes, whoever had high ability, his heart and nature unconsciously received instruction in knowledge of God from everything. He received knowledge from the circumstances, events, and discussions which took place at that time. As though everything became a teacher for such a person, and inculcated in his nature and disposition the preparatory knowledge for independent judgements. That natural instruction illuminated him to such a degree that he was almost capable of interpreting the law without acquiring the knowledge, to be illuminated without fire... Thus, when someone capable who received such natural instruction in this way began to work at interpreting the law, his capacity which had become like a match manifested the mystery of Light upon Light; he became qualified to interpret it (*mujtahid*) swiftly and in a brief time.

At this time, however, due to the domination of European civilization and the supremacy of natural philosophy and the preponderance of the conditions of worldly life, minds and hearts have become scattered, and endeavour and favour divided. Minds have become strangers to non-material matters. Thus, it is because of this that if someone now was to memorize the Qur'an at the age of four and have the intelligence of a *mujtahid* like Sufyan ibn Uyayna, who held discussions with religious scholars at an early age, he would need ten times longer than Sufyan to become qualified to interpret the law. If Sufyan acquired the learning in ten years, this man would need one

hundred years. Because the period of Sufyan's natural study began at the age of reason. His disposition and abilities were slowly prepared and illuminated; they took lessons from everything and became like a match. But his counterpart at the present time, since his thought is submerged in philosophy, his mind plunged in politics, and his heart is giddy at the life of this world, his disposition and abilities have grown distant from interpretation of the law. For sure, they have become distant from interpretation of the Shari'a to the degree they have been preoccupied with the modern sciences, and have remained backward in regard to it to the extent he has become learned in the physical sciences. Therefore, he may not say: "I am as intelligent as him. Why can't I on a level with him?" He does not have the right to say this, and he cannot be on a level with him.

**THE FOURTH:** Just as within a body is the inclination to expand, for its growth and development. And, since it is from within, the inclination to expand is a being perfected for the body. Whereas if it is an inclination for expansion from outside it, it is to rip the body's skin; to destroy it; it is not expansion. In the same way, when the inclination to expand and will to interpret the law were present in those within the sphere of Islam through the door of perfect taqwa and the way of conforming to the essential teachings of Islam, like the righteous early generations, that was a perfection and a being perfected. But if such an inclination and desire come from those who give up the essentials, prefer the life of this world to that of the hereafter, and are tainted with materialist philosophy, it is the means of destroying the body of Islam and casting off the chain of the Shari'a from the neck.

**THE FIFTH:** Three points of view make interpretation of the law earthly at this time, and prevent it being heavenly. Whereas the Shari'a is heavenly, revealed, and since interpretations of it make known its hidden ordinances, they also are heavenly.

**The First:** The wisdom of an ordinance is one thing, while the reason for it is something different. Wisdom and benefit are the cause of its choice, not the means of its being necessitated and created. And the reason is the means for its existence. For example, the obligatory prayers are shortened while travelling; two rak'ats are performed. The reason for this permission of the Shari'a is the journey, while its wisdom is the hardship. If there is the journey but no hardship, the prayers are still shortened. For there is the reason. But if there is no journey yet hardship, it may not be the reason for shortening the prayers. Thus, contrary to this fact, the view at this time is to set up the benefit and wisdom in place of the reason, and to make its judgement in accordance with that. Such an interpretation is certainly earthly, not heavenly.

**The Second:** The view at the present time looks primarily to worldly

happiness, whereas the view of the Shari'a looks primarily to happiness in the hereafter, and to happiness in this world in second place and indirectly as the means to the hereafter. That is to say, the view of this time is a stranger to the spirit of the Shari'a; in which case, it may not make interpretations in its name.

**The Third** There is a rule: "Necessity makes permissible what is forbidden." This rule is not universal. So long as it is not by way of what is forbidden, necessity makes licit what is forbidden. But if something has become a necessity due to abuse and for illicit reasons, this necessity may not be the basis of ordinances permitting it, nor form an excuse. For example, if, through ill choice someone makes himself drunk in an unlawful way, according to scholars of the Shari'a, his actions act against him and he may not be counted as excused. If he divorces his wife, the divorce is in force. And if he commits a crime, he receives the punishment. But if it is not through ill choice, the divorce is not in force, neither does he receive punishment. And, for example, even if an alcoholic is addicted to alcohol to the degree of necessity, he may not say: "It is a necessity, and lawful for me."

Thus, at this time there are many matters which have reached the degree of necessity and have taken on the form of a general calamity afflicting people, and which, since they have arisen from ill choice, illicit desires, and forbidden acts, may not be the basis of ordinances permitting them and making what is unlawful lawful. However, since those who make interpretations at the present time make those necessities the basis of ordinances of the Shari'a, their interpretations are earthly, the products of their own fancies, tainted by philosophy, and cannot be heavenly or revealed, or in accordance with the Shari'a. However, if exercise of authority concerning the Divine ordinances of the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth and interference in the worship of His servants is without the Creator's permission, that exercise of authority and interference are rejected. For example, a number of the heedless and neglectful approve the changing of some of the marks of Islam like the Friday Sermon, and substituting the language of each country for Arabic, for two reasons:

**The First:** "So that in that way the mass of Muslims will understand current politics." But current politics has become so intermixed with lies and trickery and evil that it has become like the very whisperings of Satan. However, the pulpit is the seat of delivering Divine revelation, so political rumours do not have the right to rise to that high position.

**The Second:** "The Friday Sermon is for understanding the admonitions of certain Suras of the Qur'an." Yes, if the majority of the Islamic nation conformed to the essential teachings and incontestable matters of Islam and the ordinances which are well-known and carried them out, then the reading

of the Sermon in the known language and the translation of the Qur'an,<sup>2</sup> if it was possible, might have been desirable, in order to understand the theoretical matters of the Shari'a and its subtle matters and abstruse teachings. But the well-known, incontrovertible ordinances of Islam like the five daily prayers, fasting in Ramadan, and *zakat*, and the unlawfulness of murder, fornication, and wine are neglected. The ordinary people are not in need of learning their necessity or unlawfulness, but through encouragement and warning, to be reminded of those sacred decrees, and, through their sense of belief and feelings for Islam being stirred, to be prompted, encouraged, and reminded to conform to them. However lowly and ignorant they may be, they understand the following brief meaning from the Qur'an and Arabic Sermon: "The preacher and the reciter of the Qur'an are recalling the pillars of belief and Islam, which are known by me and everyone, and teaching us, and reciting them." A longing for them is born in their hearts. What words are there in the universe which can be compared with the miraculous, instructive reminders, warnings, and encouragement of the All-Wise Qur'an, which comes from the Sublime Throne?

**THE SIXTH:** Since the great interpreters of the law among the righteous early generations of Islam lived close to the time of the Companions of the Prophet, the age of light and age of truth, they were able to receive a pure light and make pure interpretations. But the interpreters of the law at this time look at the book of reality from behind so many veils and from such a long distance that they can see even its clearest letters only with difficulty.

**If you say:** The Companions also were human beings and not free of error and differences, while the means of interpretation of the law and the ordinances of the Shari'a is the justice and truthfulness of the Companions, on which the Islamic community have agreed, saying: "All the Companions were just and all spoke the truth."

**The Answer:** Yes, the absolute majority of the Companions of the Prophet were lovers of the truth, truthfulness, and justice. For in that age, the ugliness of lies and falsehood was shown in all its ugliness and the beauty of right and truthfulness was shown in all its beauty in such a way that the distance between them stretched from the ground to the Divine Throne. There was a clear separation between them, from the depths of Musaylima the Liar at the lowest of the low to the degree of truthfulness of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) at the highest of the high. Indeed, just as it was lying that brought Musaylima to the lowest of the low, so it

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<sup>2</sup> The Twenty-Fifth Word, about miraculousness, has shown that a true translation of the Qur'an is not possible.

was truthfulness and right which raised Muhammad the Trustworthy to the highest of the high.

Thus, the Companions, who held elevated sentiments and worshipped good morals and were illuminated with the light of the conversation of the Sun of Prophethood, did not stretch out their hands to the buffoonery and filth of the lying in Musaylima's shop, which was so ugly and the cause of descent, and they shrank from unbelief. So too they shrank from lying, the companion of unbelief, and sought as far as they were able – especially in relating the ordinances of the Shari'a and propagating them– truth, truthfulness, and right, which are so fine and the cause of pride and glory, ascent and progress, and were the thing most in demand from the elevated treasury of the Glory of Messengership, and which illuminate man's social life with their beauteous splendour; the Companions acted in conformity with them and were desirous of them; this is certain, definite, and necessary. Whereas at this time, the distance between truth and lying has become so narrow that they are now quite simply shoulder to shoulder. It is extremely easy to pass from truthfulness to lying. Lying is even preferred to truthfulness due to the propaganda of politics and diplomacy. And so, if the most ugly and the finest things are sold in the same shop for the same price, certainly the jewel of truthfulness and right, which is most elevated and penetrates to the essence of reality, will not be obtained blindly, relying on the word and skill of the shopkeeper.

## Conclusion

Sacred laws change according to the ages. Indeed, in one age different prophets may come, and they have come. Since subsequent to the Seal of the Prophets, his Greater Shari'a is sufficient for all peoples in every age, no need has remained for different laws. However, in secondary matters, the need for different schools has persisted to a degree. Just as clothes change with the change of the seasons and medicines change according to dispositions, so sacred laws change according to the ages, and their ordinances change according to the capacities of peoples. Because the secondary matters of the ordinances of the Shari'a look to human circumstances; they come according to them, and are like medicine.

At the time of the early prophets, since social classes were far apart and men's characters were both somewhat coarse and violent, and their minds, primitive and close to nomadism, the laws at that time came all in different forms, appropriate to their conditions. There were even different prophets

and laws in the same continent in the same century. Then, since with the coming of the Prophet of the end of time, man as though advanced from the primary to the secondary stage, and through numerous revolutions and upheavals reached a position at which all the human peoples could receive a single lesson and listen to a single teacher and act in accordance with a single law, no need remained for different laws, neither was there necessity for different teachers. But because they were not all at completely the same level and did not proceed in the same sort of social life, the schools of law became numerous. If, like students of a school of higher education, the vast majority of mankind were clothed in the same sort of social life and attained the same level, then all the schools could be united. But just as the state of the world does not permit that, so the schools of law cannot be the same.

**If you say:** The truth is one; how can the different ordinances of the four and twelve schools be true?

**The Answer:** The same water governs in five different ways in five ill people of different disposition, thus: for one, the water is a cure for his illness, and according to medicine, necessary. For another, it is like poison for his sickness and harmful, and medically prohibited. For another, it causes a small amount of harm, and is reprehensible medically. For another the water is beneficial and without harm; according to medicine that is sunna for him. And for yet another it is neither harmful nor beneficial; he can drink it with good health, and for him it is medically permissible. Thus, here the truth has become numerous; all five are true. Are you able to say: "The water is only a cure, only necessary, and it governs in no other way?"

Similarly, impelled by Divine wisdom, the Divine ordinances change according to the schools of law and those who follow them, and they change as truth, and all are true and right. For example, since, in accordance with Divine wisdom and determining, the majority of those who follow Imam Shafi'i are closer to village life and nomadism than the Hanafis, and are lacking in social life, which makes the community like a single body, each person recites the Fatiha behind the prayer-leader so as to himself express his pains at the Court of the Dispenser of Needs and utter his private wishes. And this is absolutely right and pure wisdom. However, since most Islamic governments favoured the school of Imam-i A'zam, the great majority of those who follow that school are closer to civilization and town life and more fitted for social life. Thus, the community becomes like a single individual and one man speaks in the name of all; all affirm him with their hearts and bind their hearts to his and his word becomes the word of all; according to the Hanafi school, the Fatiha is not recited behind the prayer-leader. And its not being recited is absolutely right and pure wisdom.

And, for example, since through forming a barrier against the assaults of



nature, the Shari'a modifies it and trains the evil-commanding soul, according to the Shafi'i school, most of whose followers are villagers, semi-nomadic, and occupied in manual labour: "Ablutions are spoilt by touching a woman; the slightest uncleanness is harmful." While according to the Hanafi School, since the great majority of its followers have entered social life and become 'semi-civilized:' "Touching women does not spoil the ablutions; there is licence for a small amount of uncleanness."

Now we shall consider a manual worker and a gentleman. Due to his craft and the manner of his livelihood, a worker is afflicted with mixing with and being in contact with women who are canonically strangers to him. Since he sits at the same hearth as them and is involved with unclean things, nature and his evil-commanding soul find the field empty and may attack him. Therefore, in order to form a barrier against such attacks, the Shari'a states concerning them: "Your ablutions will be spoilt; do not touch the women. Your prayers will be invalid; do not be tainted." A heavenly voice rings in his spiritual ears. Whereas, in accordance with social custom and in the name of common morality, the gentleman –on condition he is honourable– is not afflicted with being in contact with women who are canonically strangers to him, and in the name of cleanliness of civilization, he is not tainted to any degree with unclean things. Therefore, in the Hanafi school, the Shari'a has not shown him harshness and censure; it has shown its permissive side, and lightened it. "If your hand has been touched, your ablutions are not spoilt. If you are ashamed and do not perform the *istinja* in public, there is no harm in it. A small amount of uncleanness is permitted." It saves him from scruples. Thus, two drops from the ocean as examples for you. Make analogies with them, and if you can, balance them on the scales of the Shari'a in this way, with the balance of Sha'rani's *Mizan*.<sup>3</sup>

*Glory be unto You, we have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.*<sup>4</sup>

*O God! Grant blessings and peace to the one in whom were embodied the lights of Your love through the beauty of Your attributes; the comprehensive mirror to the manifestations of Your Most Beautiful Names; in whom was focussed the rays of Your love for the art which is in Your creatures; the most perfect and wonderful of Your artefacts, who was a sample of the perfections of Your art and an index of the beauties of Your inscriptions; and who reflected the subtleties of Your love and Your desire that Your art be appreciated; the most elevated herald of Your fine art, who proclaimed in resounding voice admiration*

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<sup>3</sup> See, Sharani, *al-Mizan al-Kubra*.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'an, 2:32.



*for the beauty of Your inscriptions, the most wonderful praiser of the perfections of Your art; who reflected together in his being the varieties of Your love and Your appreciation for the good morals of your creatures and the subtleties of Your artefacts' qualities, comprehending all fine conduct and good morality through Your favour and the subtleties of commendable attributes through Your grace; who was the most excellent criterion and measure of everything You mention in Your Criterion of Truth and Falsehood, the Qur'an, those whom You love from among the righteous, the patient, the believers, those who fear You, who turn to You, and who repent, and all the classes of those whom You infuse with life and honour through Your love in Your Criterion of Truth and Falsehood, until they become as the leader of those whom You love; the master of those beloved by You and chief of Your beloveds; and grant blessings and peace to all his Family and Companions and brothers. Amen. Through Your mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful!*

## Addendum to the Twenty-Seventh Word

On the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH)

Like Mawlana Jami, I say,

*O Messenger of God! If only like the dog of the Companions of the Cave,  
I could be in Paradise among your Companions.  
Is it right that their dog is in Paradise while I am in Hell?  
He was the dog of those Companions; I am the dog of yours!*

*In His Name, be He glorified!  
And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.*

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.  
Muhammad is the Messenger of God, and those who are with him are strong against  
the unbelievers, [but] compassionate amongst each other.<sup>5</sup>*

**You Ask:** There are some narrations which say: “At a time when innovations are rife, some of the righteous from among the believers and those who fear God will be on a level with the Companions, or of even greater virtue.” Are these narrations sound? And if so, what is their true meaning?

**The Answer:** The consensus of the Sunnis, the *Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'at*, that after the prophets the most virtuous of mankind are the Companions, is a certain proof that those that are sound out of those narrations refer to minor virtues. For in minor virtues and particular perfections a quality may be deemed preferable to that which is superior and in fact preferable. But from the point of view of general virtue the Companions cannot be reached, who are the subject of Divine praise at the end of Sura al-Fath, and are praised and applauded in the Torah, Gospels, and Qur'an. For now, we shall explain three points of wisdom concerning this truth, which comprise three reasons, out of very many reasons and instances of wisdom.

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<sup>5</sup> Qur'an, 48:29.

**First Instance of Wisdom:** The conversation of the Prophet was such an elixir that someone who experienced it for one minute received lights of reality equivalent to years of spiritual journeying. For in conversation there is reflection and a being coloured. It is well-known that through reflection and following and imitating, and through the sublime light of prophethood, a truly exalted level may be reached; –like through allegiance to his sovereign and following him, a sultan’s servant may rise to a position so high a king cannot rise to it. It is due to this mystery that the greatest saints cannot reach the level of the Companions. Even saints like Jalaluddin Suyuti, who conversed many times with God’s Noble Messenger (PBUH) while awake, even if they do this and are honoured in this world with his company, they still cannot reach the Companions. For through the light of Muhammad’s (PBUH) prophethood, the Companions’ conversation was with him as Prophet. While the saints saw him (PBUH) after his death and conversed with him (PBUH) through the light of his sainthood. That is to say, the personification and appearance of God’s Noble Messenger (PBUH) is in respect of his sainthood, not in regard to his prophethood. Since that is so, however much higher the level of prophethood is to that of sainthood, one should differentiate between the two conversations to that degree.

Just how luminous an elixir was the Prophet’s company may be understood through the following: a primitive man so hard-hearted and savage he buried his daughter alive would come and be honoured with the conversation of the Prophet for an hour, and would acquire such kindness and compassion that he would not step on an ant. And an ignorant savage would converse with the Prophet for a day, then go to lands like China and India and instruct civilized peoples in the realities and guide them in perfections.

**Second Reason:** As is explained and proved in the discussion of interpretation of the law in the Twenty-Seventh Word, the vast majority of the Companions were at the highest level of human perfections. For at that time in the mighty revolution of Islam, good and truth appeared in all their beauty, and evil and falsehood, in all their ugliness, and they were felt physically. Such a difference was apparent between good and evil and such a distance opened up between truth and falsehood that they drew as distant from one another as belief is from unbelief, and even Hell is from Paradise. The Companions, who by nature possessed elevated emotions, were captivated by the highest morality, and inclined towards dignity and virtue, would not voluntarily stretch out their hands to evil and falsehood, and so fall to the level of Musaylima the Liar and his ridiculous utterances. For he was the herald of falsehood, evil, and lies, and their embodiment. Their characters demanded that they looked to the rank of the perfections, those of God’s Beloved (PBUH) at the highest of the high, who was the herald and embodiment of truthfulness, good, and right, and that they hastened in that way with all their strength and endeavour.

For example, it sometimes happens that in the market of human civilization and shop of social life, everyone flees in disgust from the fearsome results and ugly consequences of certain things, like from a deadly poison, let alone buying them, while the beautiful results and valuable consequences of certain other things and of immaterial goods attract the general view and demand to themselves like a universal panacea and a sparkling brilliant; everyone tries their utmost to buy them. In just the same way, in the Era of Bliss in the market of human social life, since goods like lying, evil, and unbelief gave rise to results like everlasting misery and base buffoons like Musaylima the Liar, it is certain and clear that the Companions, who were captivated by elevated characteristics and love of exalted things, would flee from them with loathing as from fatal poison. And of a necessity, the Companions, with their pure natures and praiseworthy characteristics, would, with all their strength, emotions, and faculties, be desirous of and customers for truth, truthfulness and belief, which yielded results like eternal happiness and luminous fruits like God's Noble Messenger (PBUH), as though for the most effective panacea and precious diamond. However, after that time, the distance between truthfulness and lying has gradually and by degrees diminished, until they have become shoulder to shoulder. Having begun to be sold together in the same shop, social morality has become corrupted. The propaganda of politics has caused greater demand for lying. At a time when the awesome ugliness of lying has begun to be concealed and the shining beauty of truthfulness has begun not to be apparent, who can attain to the strength, constancy, and taqwa of the Companions in the matters of justice, truthfulness, exaltedness, and right, or surpass their level? I shall explain something which occurred to me which will illuminate this to a degree. It was like this:

One time, it occurred to me, why could wondrous individuals like Muhyiddin al-'Arabi not attain to the levels of the Companions? Then, while saying, "*Glory be to my Sustainer, the Most High*" during the prayers, the meaning of the phrase was unfolded to me. Not in its complete meaning, but its reality in part became apparent to me. I said in my heart: "If only I could perform one of the five daily prayers in the same way as this phrase, it would be better than a year's worship." After the prayers I understood that that thought and state was guidance indicating that the Companions' degree in worship could not be reached. In that mighty social revolution brought about by the lights of the Qur'an, while opposites were separated from one another, and evils together with all their darkness, details and all who followed them, and good and perfections together with all their lights and results came face to face – at such an exciting time, all glorifications of God and recitations of His Names expressed all the levels of their meanings freshly and newly and in a young and unfaded fashion. So too, under the crashing of that mighty revolution all the senses and subtle inner faculties of people were awakened,

even senses like those of fancy and imagination, in an awakened and aware state, received the numerous meanings of those recitations and glorifications in accordance with their own perceptions, and absorbed them.

Thus, due to this wisdom, when the Companions, whose senses were awakened and subtle faculties, alert, uttered those blessed words comprising the lights of belief and glorification, they did so in all their meaning and they partook of them with all their senses. However, after that revolution and upheaval, the subtle faculties have gradually sunk into sleep and the senses fallen from that point of realities into heedlessness; like fruits, under the veil of familiarity, those blessed words have gradually lost their delicacy and freshness. Simply, as though drying up through the air of superficiality, only a little freshness remains, and this may be restored to its former state only through drastic surgery of a reflective and reasoning kind. Thus, it is because of this that another can reach the virtue and level the Companions attained to in forty minutes, only in forty years.

**Third Reason:** As is proved in the Twelfth, Twenty-Fourth, and Twenty-Fifth Words, the comparison of prophethood and sainthood is that of the sun itself and the sun's image as it appears in mirrors. Thus, however much higher the sphere of prophethood is than that of sainthood, the servants of the sphere of prophethood and the Companions, the stars of that Sun, have to be superior to the righteous in the sphere of sainthood to the same degree. The legacy of prophethood and veracity, which is the supreme sainthood, is the sainthood of the Companions; even if a saint attains to this, he still cannot reach the level of the Companions, the first rank. We shall explain three out of the numerous aspects of this Third Reason.

**First Aspect:** The Companions cannot be reached in interpretation of the law, that is, in deducing its ordinances, that is, in understanding what pleases Almighty God from His Word. Because that mighty Divine revolution revolved on understanding the dominical wishes and Divine ordinances. All minds were turned towards deducing the Divine ordinances. All hearts were eager to know "What does our Sustainer want from us?" All that happened at that time did so in a way that made this known and understood. The discussions of the time concerned them. Thus, since everything and all situations and discussions and conversations and stories occurred in such a way as to give some sort of instruction in these meanings, and since this perfected the Companions' capacities and illuminated their minds, and since their ability to interpret the law and deduce its ordinances was ready to be lit up like a match, someone at this time with the intelligence and capacity of the Companions could not reach in ten years or perhaps in a hundred, the level of deduction and interpretation they reached in a day or a month. Because now, worldly happiness is the focus of attention in place of eternal happiness. Mankind's attention and view is directed towards different goals.

Since the struggle for livelihood together with lack of reliance on God has bewildered man's spirit, and Naturalist and Materialist philosophies have blinded his intellect, just as the social environment does not strengthen a person's mind and capacity in the matter of interpreting the Divine law, so it confuses and scatters them. We proved in the discussion on interpretation of the law in the Twenty-Seventh Word in the comparison between Sufyan ibn Uyayna and someone of his intelligence today that the other person could not acquire in a hundred years what Sufyan acquired in ten.

**Second Aspect:** The level of the Companions in closeness to God cannot be attained with the feet of sainthood. For Almighty God is infinitely close to us; closer to us than everything, but we are infinitely distant from Him. Divine proximity may be gained in two ways:

*The First* is through the unfolding of Divine immediacy, to which the Divine proximity in prophethood looks, and which the Companions manifested through the legacy of prophethood and conversation of the Prophet.

*The Second Way* is to traverse the degrees of our distance from God and be honoured with Divine proximity to an extent. Most of the spiritual voyaging of sainthood is according to this, and illumination through the self and through the outside world proceeds in this way.

Thus, the first way is purely given, it is not acquired; it is attraction, the drawing of the Most Merciful One, and it is being loved by Him. The path is short, but very severe, very elevated, very pure, and without shadow. The other is acquired, long, and in shadow. Even if its strange wonders are many, it cannot reach the first in regard to quality and Divine proximity. For example, there are two ways of reaching yesterday. The first is not to be subject to the course of time. Through a sacred power, it is to rise above time, and see yesterday as present like today. The second is to traverse the distance of a year, to travel and turn, and come to yesterday. But still yesterday cannot be held; it leaves the person and departs. In just the same way, there are two ways of passing from the apparent to reality. The first is to be carried away directly on the attraction of reality, and, without entering the intermediate realm of the sufi way, to find reality within the apparent itself. The second is to pass through many levels through spiritual journeying. For sure, the saints are successful in annihilating the soul and kill the evil-commanding soul, but they still cannot reach the Companions. Because, since the Companions' souls had been purified and cleansed, through the many faculties within the soul, they manifested to a greater degree the varieties of worship, and thanks, and praise. After the soul has been annihilated, the worship of the saints acquires a simpleness and plainness.

**Third Aspect:** The Companions cannot be reached in regard to virtuous actions and good deeds pertaining to the hereafter. Because, just as in certain

conditions in a frightening and important post, a soldier may gain in one hour's watch the virtue of a year's worship, and by being hit by a bullet may rise in one minute to a station similar to a degree of sainthood which can only be gained in at least forty years; so too, the Companions' service in the establishment of Islam and propagating the decrees of the Qur'an and their declaring war on the whole world for Islam was so elevated that others cannot reach one minute of it in a year. It may even be said that in that sacred service all their minutes were like that one minute of the martyred soldier. All their hours were like the one hour's watch of a faithful soldier in some terrifying post in which the acts are few, but the recompense great and value high.

Indeed, since the Companions formed the first rank in the establishment of Islam and spreading of the lights of the Qur'an, in accordance with the rule 'the cause is like the doer,' a share of all the good works of all the Islamic community passes to them. The Islamic community saying "O God! Grant blessings to our master Muhammad and to his Family and Companions" shows that the Companions receive a share of the good works of their whole community.

Furthermore, just as an insignificant characteristic in the root of a tree takes on a large form in the tree's branches, and is larger than the largest branch; and just as a small protuberance at the beginning gradually forms a mass; and just as an excess the size of a needle point at a central point may become more than a metre at the circumference of the circle, just like these four examples, since the Companions were from the roots and foundations of the luminous tree of Islam, and were at the beginning of luminous lines of the structure of Islam, and were from among the leaders of the Islamic community and were the first of their number, and since they were close to the centre of the Sun of Prophethood and Lamp of Reality, a few of their actions were many and their small acts of service, great. To reach their level necessitates being a true Companion.

*O God! Grant blessings to our master Muhammad, who said: "My Companions are like the stars, whichever of them you follow, you will be rightly guided,"<sup>6</sup> and, "The best of centuries is my century,"<sup>7</sup> and to his Family and Companions, and grant them peace.*

*Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup> al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa*, I, 132, No: 381.

<sup>7</sup> *Bukhari*, Shahada, 9; Fada'il Ashab al-Nabi, 1; Ayman, 10, 27; Fitan, 45.

<sup>8</sup> Qur'an, 2:32.



**QUESTION:** It is said, the Companions saw God's Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him), then they believed. However we have believed without seeing him, in which case our belief is stronger. Also, there are narrations mentioning the strength of our belief, are there not?

**THE ANSWER:** At that time, when all ideas were opposed and hostile to the truths of Islam, the Companions believed so strongly –sometimes on only seeing the person of God's Messenger (PBUH) and without miracles– that all the generally held ideas in the world did not shake them. Let alone doubts, they did not even cause some of them the slightest anxiety or scruple. You are comparing your belief with that of the Companions, but how can there be any comparison? For despite your seeing with the mind's eye, not the Messenger's (PBUH) humanity and bodily form, which was the seed of the Tuba-tree of his prophethood, but through all the lights of Islam and truths of the Qur'an, his luminous, magnificent collective personality, encompassed by a thousand miracles, you waver and fall into doubt at the word of a European philosopher. Yet due to their belief, the Companions did not waver in the face of the attacks of the entire world of unbelief and of the Christians, Jews, and philosophers? And how can you compare the intense fear of God of the Companions and their complete righteousness, which demonstrated the strength of their belief and proceeded from it, and your dull belief, which due to your extreme weakness does not impel you to perform even the obligatory practices completely, O you who make such a claim!? However, the Hadith the meaning of which is: "Those at the end of time who do not see me and believe, are more acceptable,"<sup>9</sup> refers to particular virtues. It concerns certain special individuals. Our discussion, however, is in regard to general virtue and the majority.

**SECOND QUESTION:** They say that the saints and possessors of perfection abandoned the world. It even says in a Hadith: "Love of this world is the source of all error."<sup>10</sup> Whereas the Companions were very involved in the world. It was not abandoning the world, some of them were ahead of the civilized of that time, even. How is it that you say that even the least of such Companions was of greater worth than the greatest saint?

**THE ANSWER:** It has been proved decisively in the Second and Third Stopping-Places of the Thirty-Second Word that to love the face of the world which looks to the hereafter and that which looks to the Divine Names is not the cause of loss, but the means to perfection and attainment, and however far one goes in those two faces, the further one goes in worship and knowledge of God. The world of the Companions was in those two faces. They saw this world as the arable field of the hereafter, and sowed

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<sup>9</sup> *Musnad*, v, 248, 257, 264; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, iii, 41; iv, 89.

<sup>10</sup> al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, iii, 368, No: 3662.

and reaped it. They saw beings as the mirrors of the Divine Names, and gazed on them yearningly. As for the transience of the world, that is its transitory face, which looks to man's base desires.

**THIRD QUESTION:** The sufi paths are the ways of reality. Some of the heroes and leaders of the Naqshbandi Order, which is claimed to be the most famous, the most elevated, and the highway among the sufi ways, defined its basis as follows. They said: On the Naqshbandi way four 'abandonings' are necessary: abandoning the world, abandoning the hereafter, abandoning existence, and abandoning abandoning. That is to say, on the Naqshbandi way one has to give up four things: both give up this world; and, on account of the soul, not make even the hereafter one's true aim; forget one's existence; and in order not to become vain and proud, not think about these acts of renunciation. That means true knowledge of God and human perfections are attained through giving up what is other than God?

**THE ANSWER:** If man consisted of only a heart, it would be necessary to give up everything other than God, and to leave behind even the Divine Names and attributes and bind one's heart to the Divine Essence alone. But man possesses many senses and subtle faculties charged with duties, like the mind, spirit, soul, and others. The perfect man is he who, driving all those subtle senses towards reality on the different ways of worship particular to them, marches heroically like the Companions in a broad arena and rich fashion towards the goal, with the heart as commander and the subtle faculties as soldiers. For the heart to abandon its soldiers in order to save only itself and to proceed on its own is the cause not of pride, but of distress.

**FOURTH QUESTION:** Where does the claim of the Companions' superiority spring from? And who put it forward? Why should this matter be made the subject of discussion at this time? Also, why is there this claim of equality with the great interpreters of the law?

**THE ANSWER:** There are two groups who say these things. Some are the sincere religious scholars and men of religion who, seeing certain Hadiths, open up such discussions in order to encourage and hearten the pious and the upright at this time. We do not have anything to say to them. They are anyway few and are quickly made aware. The other group, however, consists of most fearsome, conceited people who want to spread their denial of the schools of law by claiming equality with the great interpreters of the law, and to further their irreligion by claiming equality with the Companions. Because firstly, those people of misguidance have become depraved, and have become addicted to depravity, and cannot carry out the obligations of the Shari'a, since they form an obstacle to their depravity. In order to find a pretext for themselves, they say: "These questions may be interpreted. The schools of law are opposed to each other in these matters."

And the interpreters of the law were human beings like us, and may have made mistakes. In which case, like them we shall interpret the Divine law and perform our worship as we wish. Why should we be compelled to follow them?" Thus, due to these Satanic wiles, these wretches put themselves outside the fold of the schools of law. It is demonstrated clearly in the Twenty-Seventh Word just how baseless and rotten these claims are, so we refer you to that.

Secondly; that group of the people of misguidance saw that the matter does not end with the interpreters of the law, for what lay on their shoulders were only the theoretical matters of religion. Whereas this group wants to give up and change the essential teachings of religion. If they say: "We are better than them," the matter does not finish there. For interpreters of the law may interfere in theoretical matters and in secondary matters which are not categorical, but these people of misguidance who follow no school of law want to mix their ideas in the essentials of religion as well, and to change matters which are not capable of being changed, and to oppose the incontrovertible pillars of Islam. And so they are bound to attack the Companions, who are the bearers and supports of the essentials of religion. Alas! It has been proved decisively in the Twenty-Seventh Word that not animals in human form like them, but true human beings and the greatest of the saints even, who are the most perfect of true human beings, cannot win the case claiming equality with the least of the Companions.

*O God! Grant blessings and peace to Your Messenger, who said: "Do not insult my Companions! By the One in Whose hand is my self, if one of you were to spend gold equivalent to Mt. Uhud, he could not attain to the equivalent of two handfuls that one of them spent, or even half that."*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Bukhari, Fada'il Ashab al-Nabi, 5; Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 221, 222.