



THE GARDEN OF MEANING

SHAYKH FADHLALLA HAERI



Publisher: Zahra Publications

ISBN (Printed Version): 978-1-919826-56-1

<http://www.zahrapublications.pub>

First Print Edition Published in May of 2018

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Cover Painting by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

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About the Author and This Book

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri grew up in an environment where religious scholars, as well as Sufis and mystics, were part of his formative experiences. His love and understanding of the Qur'an with its universality made him respect other religions and spiritual paths. His faith and trust in the sacred cosmic governance of the universe led him to realize how all dualities and whatever is within time and space are inseparable from the unitive force that prevails throughout the cosmos.

Human love of beauty, harmony and gardens simply reflects our desire to connect forms, emotions and meanings. Energy and matter are inseparable, so are all beginnings and ends. "*The Garden of Meaning*" expresses the truth of the ever-present Origin of all dualities, pluralities and diversities. Any reflection that elevates the human mind towards higher consciousness is a spiritual exercise. The pointers in this book are like ladders to help the serious reader transcend the limitations of the natural trap of space and time.

Reviews for *The Garden of Meaning*

The Garden of Meaning is about two gardens, one visible and fragrant, the other less visible but eternal. The beauty and harmony of both gardens are exposed in this magisterial volume, linking outer to inner, physics to metaphysics, self to cosmos. It is an invitation to all seekers, whatever their background, age or station, with peace the only goal and growth the only certainty.

Bruce B. Lawrence. Marcus Family Humanities Professor of Religion Emeritus, Duke University. Latest Book: *The Koran in English – A Biography*

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri has given us a contemporary *Garden of Meaning*, a work that not so much looks back on mystical classics as to recreate them here and now, in today's language. Sufis describe God as the *Haqq*, the Real, the Reality, and the Truth. Haeri's book is a profound meditation on this *Haqq* as our origin, our path, and our destination. We are immersed in the Ocean of the Real, even as we desperately seek the Truth. We are the fish in the ocean, wondering where the water is. Haeri's book is a beautiful awakening to that ocean in which we already are, from which we have never been apart.

Omid Safi, Professor of Islamic Studies, Duke University. Author: *Radical Love: Teachings from the Islamic Mystical Tradition*

In this luminous book Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri has gifted his readers with profound existential and ethical insights from the Sufi tradition presented with sharp lucidity and clarity. Embracing all of existence, this book is a generous rendering of core Sufi teachings that resonate at an inclusive and universal spiritual register, integrating seamlessly knowledge from a range of disciplines. A polish for the heart, Shaykh Haeri points us to the radical freedom, capacity and responsibility each human life carries for purifying him or herself – and a beautiful reminder of the bountiful inner resources available to do so. A spiritual primer for our times, this book urges us to see with both eyes, to be responsive to the changing dynamic social realities while nourishing the heart from the eternal zone of the Divine One.

Reviews for *The Garden of Meaning*

Sa`diyya Shaikh, Associate Professor, University of Cape Town. Author: *Sufi Narratives of Intimacy, Ibn `Arabi, Gender and Sexuality*

Acknowledgements

Several people have assisted with this book. Shameen Yacoob has been the main help throughout and Muneera Haeri's contribution in editing and supervision has been indispensable. Thanks to Zaheer Cassim and Yunus Ismail for their loyal support, and to all those who reviewed the book.

Preface

The 15th century mystic poet Kabir said, “*It is good knowing that glasses are to drink from, the bad thing is not knowing what thirst is for.*” The philosopher can end up becoming infatuated with the glass, the religionist with putting it on an altar, or worshipping the one who carried the glass.

In this book, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri shows us not only what thirst is for, but also the origin of and reason for the thirst itself.

Using the metaphor of life as a *garden of meaning*, Shaykh Fadhlalla shows us that, approached with a cultivator’s eye, every experience, longing and desire that we have – as well as every process, natural and artificial, practical or virtual, that we find within or around us – grow toward one purpose.

“Your life’s journey is like a walk in a sacred park, where every grass and flower and tree has its own story and cycle of beginnings and ends.”

The words *meaning* and *purpose* are misleading here. As the author shows us, the experience we are all looking for in life lies beyond the wisdom that can be expressed in thoughts or words. So the use of words in the book has the subtle effect of offering ideas with one hand while removing even more with the other, a bit like setting a table laid with finely-crafted cutlery and glasses and then whisking away, not only the table cloth underneath them, but also the table itself. As a *zen koan* intimates, the words are mere fingers pointing to the moon.

As in his earlier book, *Spectrum of Reality*, Shaykh Fadhlalla avoids the use of religious, mystical or metaphysical terminology. Due to his background in science, and his interest in relating its latest discoveries to the innate processes of self-discovery, readers of any or no spiritual background can benefit. At the same time, those familiar with the Shaykh’s beautiful commentaries on the Qur’an will find that the present book deepens their understanding even more. Nonetheless, some readers may be shocked, as he challenges us to release cherished conceptions that veil us from what is really going

on:

“Through meditation or psychotropic drugs many people experience boundless consciousness or a touch of infinitude. Religious people often refer to it in religious terms, with a certain amount of reverential confusion, as sacredness, divine precinct, holy spot or bliss. There is usually an insinuation that a teacher, master or guru, dead or alive, can give it to you. The gullibility of humans is such that we really do think that somehow, somehow, somebody can take you out of the misery of yourself.”

“The gift of life within everyone is like a well that continuously provides quality water and sustenance. With the growth of conditioned consciousness and our minds, habits and accumulated memories, this well gets filled up with debris and junk that only you know the extent and density of it. For quality life, you have to clear out the junk from your well. Nobody else can do it for you.”

The overall effect of the book builds slowly, so I would recommend taking it slowly, perhaps a chapter a day upon arising or retiring. The best medicines release gradually, over time, and then disappear from the system completely without unwanted side effects, leaving one healthier than before. To the extent that any book of wisdom can do the same, this one does, leaving the reader more human than before, in touch with both soul and self in a transformed way.

Neil Douglas-Klotz (Saadi Shakur Chishti)

April 2018

Fife, Scotland

Introduction

Our natural love of gardens has many facets, which include shape, size, colors, textures, smell, touch and other feelings. We always seek harmony and connectedness and our sensory stimulations send a message of acceptance or rejection. When our body and mind are at ease we move towards higher consciousness and transcend the limitations of our mind. Our love of the perfect garden is thus a representation of our passion to experience cosmic perfection.

I grew up in an environment where visiting beautiful gardens and reading poetry describing heavenly gardens were central to the culture. Shabistari's *Secret Rose Garden* was prominent among such renderings. After various attempts to improve on the translation of his writings I had a dream of Shabistari advising me to write what is appropriate for the time and world I was living in, rather than looking at past creatively-inspired works.

There are two gardens for reflective people. One is temporary and ever-changing, while the other relates to deep meaning and insights. *The Garden of Meaning* touches both zones – the sensory garden as well as inner joy. Outer gardens and our love of beauty and harmony are doorways to the inner state of the perfect spirit within, which reflects the cosmic divine source.

From this one source and essence multiple universes and existences appear and change in dynamic flux. Whatever our senses discern emanates from a source, which asserts itself in numerous ways and most prominently through the natural search and investigation that is in our human nature. Every form has a meaning that influences our perception of it. All human experiences connect physical, chemical and biological states with higher consciousness and ultimately with the unifying cosmic Reality or singularity. The human desire to explore forms and meanings is like climbing higher along the ladder of consciousness. The supreme or divine Reality is the ultimate meaning behind what exists in the universe; as such, it permeates all that is known and unknown.

Introduction

All human experience is thus an attempt to help us rise in consciousness from the limitations of conditioned consciousness to its boundless, infinite origin. The ultimate challenge is to realize that personal life is inseparable from perpetual cosmic life. This realization is the root of durable contentment and happiness, for the purpose, meaning and direction of whatever there is in the universe is to be at one with the One and only One.

To Begin

To Begin

Whatever we experience
in life has a beginning.

Human existence is
within space-time;
therefore, there
are endless beginnings
and ends strung along
a continuity that is
perpetual.

Reality and Truth

All experiential realities are transitory and short-lived, yet we seek that which endures and is considered to be true or real. We desire connections that are naturally sustainable and continuous. We even try to convince ourselves of experiencing truth. We are desperate for Truth! We are obsessed with truth and yet constantly distracted from it. Truth is with you whoever and wherever you are, and its light illuminates the universe in numerous ways. Truth permeates all, and there is no possible turning away from it. Its intensity and clarity varies in accordance with our focus and attention.

Falsehood, doubts and uncertainty permeate the zone of duality and the confines of space-time. Truth itself is ever in unity, but our world of sensory experiences appears as duality whilst we evolve in consciousness towards higher consciousness and the origin of oneness. Truth has no specific path to it, but the idea of path and direction emanates from it. When all questions end, truth shines. Every flicker of truth, or what appears as real, is a minor reflection of the Real. Truth originates from beyond the limitations of space or time but also permeates the multiverses.

All things that exist are unsustainable and are like all shadows, short or long lived within space. Truth is constant and eternal, everything emanates from It, is sustained by It and returns to It. Truth is the essence of the universe, which is energized by varying levels of intensity and strength of truth. That is why Truth itself is diluted and filtered for us so as to enable us to survive our earthly illusion of separation and independence.

Life on earth in a physical sense arose after the intensity of the light and the atmosphere minimized the heat of the sun. In the same way, the power of cosmic Light and divine Power had to be filtered and reduced before it could bring sentiency and consciousness to atoms and molecules. Truth and Reality are at the source and essence of existence and creation, permeating all to varying degrees of intensity. Since our origin is that zone, we are obsessed with what we consider to be true or real. The human soul carries the imprint of truth and that is the source of our obsession and drive.

Beginning and End

Life is endless, but personal experience of it has a beginning and an end, which our relentless pursuits signify and acknowledge. All human quests end when our consciousness transcends body and mind limitations whilst alive or upon death. The end is the same as its birth, since both emerged from boundless timelessness. We live within the limitations of space-time, which is reinforced by personal and collective experiences. We also perceive the universe as having a beginning and an end. Scientific pursuit seeks the origin and the limits of the universe. The nuclear micro world is one side that doesn't end, the other is astrophysics and what is colossal and beyond limits. Quests to understand the inner world and the nature of the smallest entities are balanced by our quest for the big world and the nature of the universe and cosmos. The more we discover the more there is. Reality is boundless and our life is a limited sample of this reality.

Attempts to solve the mystery of existence tackle countless related issues – except the mystery itself. Life is a perpetual mystery and puzzle, and all outer searches are a distraction from awakening to the truth that transcends this mystery. Our material composition and mental identity relate to metaphysical origin. Whatever we discern physically is a manifestation of a subtle realm of energy that itself has emerged from a subtler origin. The human mind connects physics with metaphysics. The boundless cosmic grace and subtle realities connect with ever-changing local situations through the faculty of the mind and the self. Our mind and thoughts are earthly. Our insights and lights of the soul are heavenly. The two realms define our humanity and divinity. All dualities are from one origin!

It is in our nature to start something new and it is also in our nature to conclude and bring it to an end. The hamster in us is perpetually on that wheel in the cage of space-time, whilst yearning for that which is beyond the cage's boundaries, and that is the nature of our own soul or spirit. Who is it that is looking for what? Differentiation will only come to rest at oneness. Awakening implies accepting the temporary experience of dualities and entities, whilst knowing that Truth transcends all and is the cause of all that moves and changes. One's soul knows the Ever-Constant, and it is our soul that we yearn

Beginning and End

for!

Space – Time

Whatever exists interconnects, relates and communicates through different channels within space-time. The entire universe is held together by vibrations that cause stimulation and response. Our five senses scan a wide range of mediums of connection. Hearing is a vibration that comes to us via the air medium. Sight relates to photons, each one of which is a particle as well as a wave function. A touch is a direct interpretation of what is being touched through the nerves. Thousands of olfactory receptors convey to us the smell that enhances the taste of what we eat.

Our sensory faculties comprise numerous and varied levels and layers, each with their own system of laws, regulations, interactions, and evolutionary changes. All human experiences are like traces made in time within frames of space. So long as we experience life through our sensory faculties we are confined to conditioned consciousness and the limitations of space-time.

The point of conception in the womb is the beginning of an evolutionary process leading ultimately to the human reality, which experiences space-time, and lights and energies that stretch beyond space-time. These lights are boundless and emanate from the cosmic origin beyond our comprehension. The human soul or spirit is like a holographic representation of the cosmic spirit and the life force which we experience and wonder about its purpose and direction. The soul's earthly journey will carry traces of experiences and values that will be shed after death. Our love to connect and communicate simply reflects the cosmic connection of our own soul and its divine origin. We investigate and ponder upon the nature of time and its multifaceted dimensions.

We do not know what time is and how it gives rise to the experience of movement and change. Space-time is very relative and as such we can imagine both timelessness and infinite space. Space-time emanates from a zone of consciousness that is not bound by any time or any space and the human soul carries that imprint and for that reason we can never be content in any of the limitations of space-time.

Light and Darkness

Beginnings and ends merge together into existence and return together inseparably. So too with light and darkness! Between the primal cosmic Light and visible light lies countless levels and zones, like the electromagnetic field spanning a vast array of frequencies. We naturally seek a light that gives us a greater clarity and illumination, yet it is always shadows and darkness that lead us to where light is more effulgent. It is the contrast between light and shadow, ignorance and knowledge that enables us to seek greater light.

We naturally seek ways out of limitations and confinement of space-time, preferring ease and familiarity. Life's journey is like groping in shadows and uncertainties in order to relate, connect and understand. Movement is perceived through our senses when different snapshots are strung together at a speed of about 20 frames a second – a wonderful play of lights, shadows and matter. Most of our experiences vary in clarity, understanding and reliability. Mind and intellect provide rationality, objectivity and a high sense of intelligence. This shared conditioned consciousness enables us to understand the concept of normality, sanity, a healthy mind and well-being.

The move to the energy field of aspiring to becoming a contented being is like coming out of darkness into the light. Body and mind belong to the cave of limitations, and the self – which is only the shadow of the soul – yearns for its origin beyond dark and light. That is light of grace, not visible light: A black hole where all personal consciousness ends and personal life merges back with its origin of cosmic mystery. Each moment vanishes into the black hole for the next instant to appear. Endless light and darkness emanate from cosmic oneness, the mystery that encompasses all.

All stars within a galaxy revolve around a black hole and our experience of space-time is due to our state of experiencing the constantly vanishing moment and the illusion of separation and need to preserve personal life! Time is actually timeless and so is the divine light without shadows. This experience of the movement of time, like every moment or instant, is at the event horizon of falling into the black hole and disappearing.

Light and Darkness

The next moment follows on and on, appearing from nowhere and disappearing into oblivion.

Form and Meaning

The planet is composed of matter energized by numerous entities and strands of energy and radiations. Our visible and tangible world is celestial in origin and terrestrial in form and appearance.

The human being has an earthly frame with a heavenly meaning, drive and purpose. We experience diverse manifestations in life, but always seek to know our origin and the final destination. Whatever exists carries some attributes of its origin; that which is real and perpetual. All the energies, lights and radiation that have emerged from singularity carry traces of that ever-present original state and reality.

Human behavior and attributes relate to fields of energy that our mind resonates with. Anger, acceptance, rejection, generosity, love, hate and all the forces and powers that we experience are fields of energy with different characteristics and degrees of intensity and frequency of vibration. When I act generously, my mind has taken on the frequency and quality of the field of generosity and good will. When I am mean, then I am within the restrictive field of meanness. We naturally prefer expansion and increase and therefore prefer kindness to meanness. The brain is the physical part of our mind, which is naturally affected by subtler energy fields that bring about feelings and emotions. The human mind interacts with numerous fields of energies such as reason, rationality and other conscious and subconscious feelings and emotions.

Carbon is a key foundation for life. Every color signals an aspect of its content and the color that appears is the one that is absorbed, so the transmission is by omission. Black contains all the colors, red signals heat and agitation, blue brings calmness and serenity, green is soothing and reassuring. Every color tells the story of a state.

In nature, every shape, size and color communicates an aspect of its nature. Whatever exists has a story and the beginning of that tale is revealed through matter and energy. The challenge is to be able to read these messages and to interpret and relate to them appropriately.

Form and Meaning

Physics and metaphysics in essence are inseparable and are always complementary.
Every form tells its story: And that is its purpose and meaning!

Emanation and Return

Whatever begins will end. So where is the security we are seeking? We desire reliability, durability and consistency, yet no two moments are the same. What emerges will change and then vanish. The air we breathe is the precursor to that which we exhale. Every short-lived moment emerges from a previous one and gives birth to the next. Every moment is fresh and new, yet it carries with it traces of the past and points to the future. The love of the past is due to connection and familiarity. It is natural that we become nostalgic and feel grief for anything we perceive as a loss. Fear of losing is a bigger power than anticipating gain. The ultimate fear is loss of life – the ultimate cosmic treasure and grace is eternal by its timeless nature.

Change and disturbance can be frightening unless modified by experience and put in its proper context. Emanation and return leave traces within space-time, but the original energy field of oneness is ever-constant and permeates the universe of diverse and changing realities. Water on earth has been recycled many times. The quantity of water on earth remains constant: It comes down, then is pulled up and filtered once again. The same filthy water, full of disease, seeps underground, is filtered by earth and then is pulled up as pure water, cycle after cycle.

Reality permeates the universe and is ever-constant, yet everything is subject to time and change. Reality appears as countless short-lived realities emanating, interacting and returning back to source. We experience all within space-time. We are within space-time, yearning for what is beyond.

We have all emerged from a mother's womb to the wider earthly womb. The first womb helped us to develop our physical and biological reality and the illusion of identity and separation. The second womb is there for us to experience countless dualities and changes, and then be propelled out of them by the desire to be at one with that which is perpetually One.

The universal challenge of life is to connect with the outer world through the lens of

unity and higher consciousness from where everything had emerged. In this way we awaken to the full balance between our humanity and cosmic divinity.

The Norm

The human drive for stability and security makes us desire durable connections with others; family, friends, people of the same lifestyle, language, religion, and other factors that bond individuals. That is the soil where the idea of normality grows. Cultural habits bring about a certain measure of expectation, stability and conduct. We have a natural tendency to define, measure and categorize what we experience. To share habits and culture and other human tendencies such as ambition, desire for good life, kindness and other emotions are considered to be normal human behavior. Throughout human history great leaders and visionary people were considered special, even abnormal or accused of mental instability. Pricking the balloon of normality even with jokes or shocking swear words can jolt the mind and change the atmosphere of stiffness and the illusion of respectability.

Everyone tries to maintain the appearance of normality, whereas all around us there is a high level of occasional or persistent abnormality. Most minds are colored by prejudice and ignorance and are confused due to lack of a reliable map of life's pattern. The irony is that we generally consider our wakeful state as normal whilst we cannot survive without sleep. Sleep deprivation can cause more damage to our well-being than lack of food and drink. Much healing and repair work of our mental and nervous make-up takes place during sleep.

What is accepted as normal has a strong cultural and collective value, which changes at all times, often imperceptibly. Deviation from the normal is natural as part of our evolution and varies according to time and place and the factors relating to survival and improved quality of life.

Variety is the reason for adaption and the occurrence of today's human being through its evolution from basic life sentiency and animalism. In our earthly life, we strive towards perfection, however defined, and can never attain it for any durable time. Perfection itself is not limited to space or time. It emanates from the perfect essence and origin, which permeates through modified versions within all of existence. Grace is

The Norm

cosmic and our short journey on earth propels us to recalibrate with such grace anytime and anywhere: Supremely normal – beyond all norms!

Life's Challenges

The one certainty in our life is the uncertainty of the future. The extent of control we have is very limited within space-time. Whatever we do now may be regretted after a while, especially with respect to emotions and feelings. It is very difficult to determine the outcome of a situation even if every effort is made toward desirable ends. Whatever is within space-time is changeable, and therefore, not durable or reliable. Yet we identify ourselves with the physical and biological states and agree collectively as to what is real.

Collective consciousness has a big influence over our thoughts and actions. We are confined within space-time groping for a constancy that is perpetual. This situation is fundamentally absurd:

- We seek reality and that which is considered true in a zone of existence whose nature is ever changing – how absurd.
- No two moments are ever the same, and yet we expect perfect repetition and dependence – how absurd.
- We get bored with routine and get excited with new toys or ideas, yet we consider security and certainty as essential – how absurd.

We all conspire to respect the king, the hero, or a great leader, yet anyone can be a victim of foolish behavior or suffering from dementia. Those who do not conform are subjected to scorn and rejection. The line between insanity and genius is thin; many a time a person who was rejected as odd will be regarded as a genius later on. We feel comfortable and are at ease with others who conform to the familiar of the norm and what may be commonly considered agreeable and fits in with expectations.

The human mind draws its energy from higher consciousness, but it can deviate into all kinds of absurdities. Much human destruction and bloodshed has been due to mental ideas, beliefs, fears, greed, anxieties and other animalistic tendencies. Looking at human history, we can laugh and cry at the same time. Only a few see the comedy within the

Life's Challenges

tragedy. Most humans are scared to discover that whatever they considered important or real is in actual fact inconsequential. The worries of a few years ago are no longer here. Even today's concerns and drives are postponed for a while when you are asleep deeply and completely nullified when you die. All endeavors become absurd compared to awakening to the all-prevailing divine Reality.

Evolverment

With the rise of consciousness we experience countless
dualities and pluralities that connect the physical,
chemical, emotional
and higher levels of awareness.

Dualities from Unity

The metaphor of the fall of Adam from paradise can be read as the rise of consciousness of duality. First consciousness was that of absolute unity without the constraints of space or time.

All human experiences are within duality – hard and soft, comings and goings, births and deaths, good and bad. The human project is balanced between the seen and the unseen, and the outer and the inner states. All of life relates to conditioned consciousness, which draws its energy from supreme consciousness, which is beyond birth and death, being awake and asleep, the past and future. Our world has countless material entities and energies that connect, disconnect and interact. We experience life as a bushy tree of dualities emerging from the seed of singularity. The desire for connectedness and continuity are due to the primary state of our origin – Oneness.

The two lovers hug, hope and pretend to be one. We are from the One and our earthly experience is preparing us to return to the perpetual state of oneness. Death ends the experience of duality and conditioned consciousness. This world is a nursery to practice higher consciousness and oneness. We are like photons, both a particle and a wave function. Our identity as a particle is due to changing conditioned consciousness and its evolution. We are always challenged with the inherent instability of our experiences, whilst seeking the security of what is permanent. Sometimes, dualities complement each other; at other times, cancel or destroy each other. At all times we seek peace, harmony, and the joy of unity.

Balance brings about stability, reliability, consistency and the illusion of continuity. Yet, we always seek that which is unusual and extreme – we resent being confined or trapped. Our love for extreme sports, the desire to break new records, or go beyond boundaries, are all echoes of the truth that the light in our own soul is boundless. It is perpetual, eternal, constant and beyond any evaluation of the mind or reason.

Human experiences are held between the terrestrial and the celestial, the physical and

the metaphysical. Our attempt is to be balanced between dualities, whilst being energized by cosmic unity.

Evolution and Revolution

Consciousness descends from the celestial realm, energizing the terrestrial. This heavenly descent arches back to an origin where beginnings and ends meet in timelessness and singularity of essence. In truth, there is only that origin. Everything else emanates from it as a natural consequence of what appears as separation and distance. Within space-time everything evolves from nothingness back to source. Evolution is a natural outcome of the emergence of duality. From singularity, multiplicity and all dualities move back to singularity. Nothing is constant except the original essence and sacred oneness.

Every now and then we also experience a revolutionary burst of energy. A young child wants the sweet now, not tomorrow. The poor parent tries to bring reason to a level of consciousness that is dominated by the powerful presence of the soul. The child's ego is not developed yet. The child's mind is in a revolutionary mode and wants instant gratification – the soul is in a perfect state and has not been veiled by the lower self. The adult mind is developed to living in space-time, it therefore accepts, delays and postponements. The child's soul is not shielded yet by mind and ego. The soul is ever-revolutionary. It lives in the instant, perpetually, here and nowhere, within time and beyond time.

Human nature encompasses revolutionary modes on occasions, whilst coasting along an evolutionary course. We ride on the arrow of time with all its interconnectedness to other entities in space-time, with pleasant or unpleasant shocks and surprises. We are given the opportunity to get out of the habitual lethargy that governs most of our life. Nature is so generous that no one is spared regular opportunities to wake up to the light of the soul. Our habits give the illusion of desirable continuity. Most spiritual paths prescribe the breaking of habits and stepping away from mental and emotional traps.

The soul is spontaneous, lives in a perpetual, boundless mode and is at one with divine unity. It is the lower self, which is the shadow of the soul, which desires to be like the soul – in charge. Life's direction is to transcend from self to soul, from the temporary to the perpetual – beyond any evolution or revolution.

Quality and Quantity

It is the nature of the mind to discern and describe quality and quantity of experiences and events. We cannot survive without a minimum quantity of water, yet we can choke and die in a flood; same water, different quantity and quality. A high tide can destroy or damage life whilst a glass of water quenches thirst pleurably. The human brain develops much faster due to cooked food, but the same fire, when out of control, can destroy all.

Quality and quantity define what is acceptable or not in human life. It is natural for us to strive towards greater quantity of what we consider as good quality. But where will it end? How much is enough? Reason and wisdom attempt to curb greed and the love of extreme, but the heart remains discontent. How much love is enough? How much wealth is enough? How much power is enough? How long a life is enough?

Anything that is measurable is a precursor of what is immeasurable. The finite is one possibility of the infinite. Time is one aspect of timelessness or infinite time. Every quality or quantity has an origin and a destiny, with a range from the physical to the metaphysical. All human experiences are samples and metaphors of full boundless consciousness. Within the limited box of space-time, the lower self drives you on to break through it and touch upon higher consciousness, where quantity and quality vanish. It is in our world of duality and discrimination that we have these numerous categories within attraction and repulsion, which include quality and quantity. All these experiences and fields of energy will disappear with deep stillness and silence of head and heart. At that point our human conditioned consciousness connects with its origin and source.

Life begins as pure consciousness with no content, but as we evolve in experiencing dualities and relating them, we experience the fields of quality and quantity as part of the balancing act within space-time. A state of pure consciousness is where all discernible experiences emerge from and return to. Pure consciousness is devoid of any values and judgments and can only be accessed by transcending all sensory consciousness and human limitation.

Signs and Symbols

Dualities relate to the mind and the senses and create the temporary experience of separate identities along with fear of disconnectedness or discontinuity. The soul beams a light that dispels the darkness and confusion of duality and otherness. What is good or bad, or soft or hard are mere signals confirming the existence of the original Light that enables them to appear. A fully awakened being witnesses the light of Truth and eternal Oneness. The presence of an enlightened being can inevitably cause apprehension and even confusion for anyone unfamiliar with these ideas and concepts. Most people are fully immersed in conditioned and temporary states of consciousness and experience.

The normal human conditioning is the wall that blocks the view of higher or durable consciousness and what is durable and real. Sometimes the obsessive love and total absorption in the One will appear as harsh, possibly even cruel, to those beings preoccupied with the primary concerns of survival and fulfilling earthly needs. Those who live at the lower level of consciousness are in perpetual struggle and have become habituated to the lower self and ego. As for the serious spiritual seeker, s/he has one main concern – and that is to be at all times at one with the One.

The experience of sacred oneness enables your awareness and acceptance of duality and otherness in the earthly sense. It is due to these shadows, that the ever-present divine light can be discerned and experienced. Wherever there is light there will be darkness, so do not deny the darkness but seek the spark of light that illumines it. When you are illumined by your realization of the perfect presence of oneness, the earthly experiences will not be dominated by fears or sorrow.

To convey this truth, symbols, metaphors and a language that uses signs and examples, are used, and often considered to be hard to understand. Spiritual consciousness transcends the mind's limitations. Religious scriptures are often regarded as obscure or incoherent, especially by those who do not believe in them. The ultimate natural state of the evolved human being is to dwell within this universal abode that contains all and has emerged from a Light that transcends everything and yet permeates all. Truth is the light

Signs and Symbols

of lights, and is discerned as sparks and beams that are diluted versions of the origin. God's Light pervades all. Everything emanates from It and returns to It.

What Rises Will Fall

If the sky is the limit, will you be falling from it?

Whatever appears will also disappear. Whatever exists will return to nonexistence. Whatever is born will also die. Whatever is right contains falsehood within it. Whatever gives you pleasure can give you pain. There is no success without it carrying the seed of failure at a personal or collective level. The cycle of emanation and return is ever-perpetual. It is only the speed and way of manifestation that varies. The life of a corporation is prolonged due to limited liability enabling the top executive to make big mistakes without being held personally responsible.

Changes in fashion and fading memories give us the pleasant illusion of newness and freshness. Every generation simply rides on the Ferris wheel of change and its distractions. Changing times and ideas are the great deceptions that conceal the ever-present permanent. It is most refreshing to meet a cheerful yogi living a colorful life, whilst wearing the same color saffron robe summer and winter. If the inner state is vibrant and alive you care less for the outer. The more concern you have for the outer state the more likely it is that your spiritual consciousness is at a low ebb.

Sensory experiences are bracketed between arrival and departure, stimulation and response. Stability lies in the zone of consciousness that is beyond space-time. Once our day-to-day life is stable, we look for new interests and excitements. In today's world, outer success, wealth, holidays, special occasions and parties are commonly regarded as highlights in life. Equally, we have hope and expectations of leaders and heroes whom we can identify with and look up to. But in most cases, the more we expect of a hero the more we will be disappointed. Our heroes often end up as zeros. After all, as humans we are both nothing and everything. Our bodies return to the earth and disintegrate, our minds also vanish and the soul drifts back to its origin – the source of all. So where is the hero?

If any good idea or guidance has been helpful to you in a durable sense, then it may

What Rises Will Fall

lead you to the cosmic perpetual Truth that is beyond any description of confinement. The sacred Light is not subject to any human evaluation. It is the cause of what is up as well what is down! Truth neither rises nor falls – It always is!

Relative Judgment

The nature of the mind is to discriminate, accept or reject. The reason that bad news prevails over good news is due to our fundamental concern with survival, so we pay attention and fear losses and threats that may come from bad news. We are passionate and obsessed with life and we reject death. Mind and thoughts help with physical survival and also the drive towards arrival. Whatever the senses bring to us we try to benefit from as part of our drive for a better outcome and destiny. At the age of four you were begging for a tricycle, but when it is given to you at the age of forty you question the sanity of the uncle who presents it to you. What is a correct judgment? Our earthly existence is a shadow play of original patterns and as such they are temporary and not real – with a touch of truth only. We are constantly trying to discriminate as to what is truth and what is a lie, what is honest and what is not.

Existence emanates from and returns to the perfect point of singularity, ever at peace and stillness. Appropriate judgment is that which does not disturb the natural flow of existence but enhances the evolution of consciousness. It is human interference that may bring about irreversible changes on earth and undesirable outcomes. Our spiritual inadequacy is the cause of ecological disaster. An idea that seemed good to a people at the time may cause much regret later on as the outcome is not reversible. We desire correct judgment to reduce regrets, sorrow and suffering.

There are local judgments with minor implications, and others that can have major repercussions. The most correct judgment is made when head and heart are in unison and reference is made to higher consciousness. Then you are simply reading the situation in its fullness rather than interfering clumsily. If your heart agrees with your mind, and you reflect upon the issue from the highest level of awareness, then you avoid regrets and enjoy the perfect flow of life.

We naturally prefer judging others than being judged. Often, people will defend themselves by saying, “you really don’t understand me.” They are quite right. They are also wrong because they too do not know themselves. How can you know your soul

Relative Judgment

which itself is the source of all knowledge? Only your soul knows itself. Or as they say, only God knows God.

Confusion and Fusion

Consciousness begins to build up early on, from a place of no content to what we hope ends up as intelligent and sensible. To begin with, the baby starts choosing, accepting and rejecting. With maturity we may end up confused by choice. This is when we become wasteful and move from functional use to frivolous choices, which may be attractive for a moment, then discarded soon after. Confusion and uncertainty are among the foundations of the thinking process. We are as much confused by ignorance as by knowledge. A little knowledge is dangerous. This applies even more aptly with spiritual knowledge. People on the lower end of the spiritual ladder can cause more damage than those who have no spiritual pretense. Superstition, fear of the unknown and the desire to be with soothsayers or readers of the future can cause more harm than goodness.

Nowadays we are saved from much quackery and even dangerous use of what would have been considered as a remedy not long ago. The prevalence of the allopathic medicalization and its vast industry is based on physical, chemical and biological sciences and as such it does work at those levels. The side effects and the danger of dependency is of course the big price that we all pay. Due to our love of power we all have the tendency of being helpful by recommending remedies to heal others from pain or illness. You have to be careful when you complain about an illness to someone else for it is likely that the hidden healer emerges to prescribe to you what he or she considers necessary for you. Playing as a doctor or teacher is a common human tendency.

We live in the confinement of space-time and the duality of causalities. No matter what we do that, which involves our body, mind and emotions, may be right or wrong depending on the context. Our earthly living is like travelling along a foggy terminal except for situations where cause and effect can be demonstrated clearly. Our journey on earth is from complex confusions towards another zone which is beyond duality and that is where perfection of fusion lies. The grace of this journey encompasses every living entity and the critical point that is discerned by all is the moment of death. Beyond that lies unmasked Reality or Truth.

Towards Higher Consciousness

Human beings always desire a new experience. We are on the ladder of higher consciousness whose end is cosmic consciousness or pure consciousness.

It is wonderful that we have great love and reverence for nature. We love, respect and try to be at one with nature. Our most intricate physical and biological reality has evolved in nature over millions of years. It is natural for us to love Mother Nature. The only difference between us and other species is higher awareness and consciousness of consciousness. We are part of nature but equally need to participate as a gardener to do a certain amount of housekeeping and improving. We need to learn how to knot the umbilical cord of a newly born baby. We learn how to use tools and have, during the past few centuries, become almost totally dependent on technology.

With the rise of the mind and intellect we are often curious as to the limits of the universe, as well as what is within the atomic world. A fully awakened being would have experienced the vastness and boundlessness of the universe and that which is immeasurable in minuteness is connected and on the path to discover oneness, which may take a multitude of paths and directions. A child's mind evolves due to desires and needs. Many religious people want to be God's agent or representative. The love of knowledge and power drives everyone towards endless illusions as to what is important for them to have a fulfilled life. Everyone desires something or another at all times. That includes the yogi in the cave who was asked by a passing being, *"I was told you don't need anything. What can I do for you?"* The answer was, *"Yes, move away from the entrance. So, I too have a desire."*

To be fully awakened you need to combine all your childhood desires into one – to desire not to have any desire which is not completely possible so long as you are still connected to your body and the mind. We tend to accept the natural drive towards higher consciousness but what does it really mean and what is the end of it?

We are all climbing up ladders towards the subtler and more powerful realms of

Towards Higher Consciousness

energies, yet we are uncertain as to what that means. The awakened sage declares that pure consciousness is beyond any measure of perfection, beauty or majesty. It is simply boundless joy, the ultimate gift.

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Edited By: Munawar A. Anees

Foreword By: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

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