



WITNESSING PERFECTION

A SUFI GUIDE

SHAYKH FADHLALLA HAERI



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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	i
Book Description	v
About the Author	vi
Dedication.....	vii
Preface	1
Introduction.....	6
Creational Dynamics	13
Web of Life.....	15
<i>Web of Life – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	21
<i>Web of Life – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	22
Unified Opposites.....	23
<i>Unified Opposites – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	31
<i>Unified Opposites – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	32
Heaven on Earth	33
<i>Heaven on Earth – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	39
<i>Heaven on Earth – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	40
Lights of Consciousness	41
<i>Lights of Consciousness – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	50
<i>Lights of Consciousness – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	51
Adamic Cosmology	52
Primal Blueprint	53
<i>Primal Blueprint – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	59
<i>Primal Blueprint – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	60
The Human Paradox	61
<i>The Human Paradox – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	69
<i>The Human Paradox – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	70
Unity	71
<i>Unity – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	76
<i>Unity – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	78
Truth and Realities	79
<i>Truth and Realities – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	87

<i>Truth and Realities – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	88
The Evolving Self.....	89
Stepping Stones	90
<i>Stepping Stones – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	96
<i>Stepping Stones – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	97
Personality & Character	98
<i>Personality & Character – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	109
<i>Personality & Character – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	110
Journey of the Self.....	111
<i>Journey of the Self – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	120
<i>Journey of the Self – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	121
Relationships.....	122
Connectivity	123
<i>Connectivity – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	132
<i>Connectivity – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	133
Interactive Mirrors.....	134
<i>Interactive Mirrors – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	140
<i>Interactive Mirrors – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	141
Family and Society	142
<i>Family and Society – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	149
<i>Family and Society – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	150
Civilizations & Cultures	152
<i>Civilizations & Cultures – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	165
<i>Civilizations & Cultures – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	167
Information and Transformation.....	169
Suffering and Offerings.....	170
<i>Suffering and Offerings – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	180
<i>Suffering and Offerings – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	182
Pursuing Excellence	183
<i>Pursuing Excellence – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	190
<i>Pursuing Excellence – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	192
Destiny & Freedom	194
<i>Destiny & Freedom – Selected Qur’anic Verses</i>	200
<i>Destiny & Freedom – Relevant Prophetic Teachings</i>	202

Witnessing Perfection.....	203
Reflections of Perfection.....	204
<i>Reflections of Perfection – Selected Qur’anic Verses.....</i>	<i>210</i>
<i>Reflections of Perfection – Relevant Prophetic Teachings.....</i>	<i>211</i>
Self-Realization.....	212
<i>Self-Realization – Selected Qur’anic Verses.....</i>	<i>216</i>
<i>Self-Realization – Relevant Prophetic Teachings.....</i>	<i>217</i>
Living by Grace.....	218
<i>Living by Grace – Selected Qur’anic Verses.....</i>	<i>224</i>
<i>Living by Grace – Relevant Prophetic Teachings.....</i>	<i>225</i>
Responding to Signs: Summary.....	226
The Sentient Map.....	227
<i>The Sentient Map – Selected Qur’anic Verses.....</i>	<i>234</i>
<i>The Sentient Map – Relevant Prophetic Teachings.....</i>	<i>235</i>
Living the Map.....	236
<i>Living the Map – Selected Qur’anic Verses.....</i>	<i>245</i>
<i>Living the Map – Relevant Prophetic Teachings.....</i>	<i>246</i>
Knowledge and Action.....	247
<i>Knowledge and Action – Selected Qur’anic Verses.....</i>	<i>254</i>
<i>Knowledge and Action – Relevant Prophetic Teachings.....</i>	<i>255</i>
Integral Alchemy.....	256
<i>Integral Alchemy – Selected Qur’anic Verses.....</i>	<i>262</i>
<i>Integral Alchemy – Relevant Prophetic Teachings.....</i>	<i>263</i>
Transformation.....	264
<i>Transformation – Selected Qur’anic Verses.....</i>	<i>269</i>
<i>Transformation – Relevant Prophetic Teachings.....</i>	<i>270</i>
Epilogue.....	271
eBooks By Zahra Publications.....	274
General eBooks on Islam.....	274
The Qur’an & Its Teachings.....	274
Sufism & Islamic Psychology and Philosophy.....	275
Practices & Teachings of Islam.....	277
Talks & Courses.....	278
Poetry, Aphorisms & Inspirational.....	279

Autobiography.....	280
Health Sciences and Islamic History.....	280

Book Description

Witnessing Perfection addresses the concerns of those who are aware that an urgent redress in the balance between head and heart is needed and comprehended that this can only be fulfilled by personal spiritual development.

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri explores the process of spiritual growth starting with the discovery that the basic dynamic in creation is duality and the balance of opposites whose roots are the one cosmic source of all life.

Witnessing Perfection delves into the universal question of deity and the purpose of life, with the appreciation that these are dilemmas clarified only by the image of unity, wherein all dualities and diversities fuse cohesively. Durable contentment is a result of this perfected vision.

“This book could just as well have been titled ‘Witnessing God’ for God alone is perfect. Add to that Plotinus’s assertion that ‘he who witnesses beauty becomes beautiful,’ and we are deep into this book’s character. As I read it, it dawned on me early on that I was in effect reading an icon, for I was not so much looking at its pages as seeing God through them” – Houston Smith

“This book’s importance is that it successfully translates the wisdom of Sufism into a universal language accessible to the contemporary world. There are few people alive that could have accomplished this task” – Kabir Helminski

About the Author

Acknowledged as a master of self-knowledge and a spiritual philosopher, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri's role as a teacher grew naturally out of his own quest for self-fulfillment.

He travelled extensively on a spiritual quest which led to his eventual rediscovery of the pure and original Islamic heritage of his birth, and the discovery of the truth that reconciles the past with the present, the East with the West, the worldly with the spiritual – a link between the ancient wisdom teachings and our present time.

A descendant of five generations of well-known and revered spiritual leaders, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri has taught students throughout the world for over 30 years.

He is a gifted exponent of how the self relates to the soul, humankind's link with the Divine, and how consciousness can be groomed to reflect our higher nature.

The unifying scope of his perspective emphasizes practical, actionable knowledge that leads to self-transformation, and provides a natural bridge between seemingly different Eastern and Western approaches to spirituality, as well as offering a common ground of higher knowledge for various religions, sects and secular outlooks.

He is a prolific author of more than thirty books relating to the universal principles of Islam, the Qur'an, and its core purpose of enlightenment.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to everyone who seeks meaning and purpose in life and is not content with conventional answers. It will bring close to heart that which is presumed to be far and connect the precious moment with the perfection it contains. Whoever regards this world as a sample representation of subtler realms will enjoy this book.

Preface

I was born in the ancient religious citadel of Karbala in central Iraq shortly before the Second World War. As a child I was brought in an oasis of stability and contentment amongst people whose life was devoted to the remembrance of the events and meaning of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet. The city was dedicated to religious education, personal piety and preparation for the afterlife. Date palm and fruit orchards crisscrossed with rivulets and canals, surrounded the city. On the west, the sprawling necropolis spread out from the edge of the city towards a vast desert. The atmosphere in the city was inspired by its scholarly leaders and masters in religious teachings and wisdom. Besides these influential theologians, there were a few revered Sufi masters and eccentric dervishes.

As a teenager I was sent to England on a scholarship to study science. It was in the western world that I learnt to tolerate cultures and religions alien to my own and to enjoy experiencing the diversity of ideas and peoples of the world. These experiences and realizations placed me in a privileged position as I searched for the roots, meaning and purpose of existence and exploration of the inner nature of human beings. This was the backdrop to my quest for self knowledge, the spiritual dimension of life and personal transformation.

I grew up with the certainty that Islam contains the answers for human salvation along the path of wisdom, justice and quality of life, in spite of the lack of evolvement (I prefer this word to 'evolution') of middle-eastern cultures which I attributed to the gap between original transformative Islam and the rigidity of structured religion. Western civilization, in spite of its moral decay and deviation from its original Judeo-Christian values and ethics, owes much of its achievements to tolerance of others, rational conduct, accountability and social justice. I strongly believe that friendly and respectful exchanges between cultures and societies is a huge factor in the development of progress and world peace.

From a very young age I came to accept that a spiritual path or direction with the relevant religious boundaries and commitments may lead to a fulfilled life. The relevance of religion and boundaries were always important issues in my life. So was my rejection, of superstitions, dogmas and irrational mindsets.

With maturity and wisdom it became clear to me that the answers to my serious questions regarding God, creation and the purpose of life lay within me. Thus, self-knowledge, through full awareness, witnessing and ‘reading’ the moment, became the foundation and base of my personal spiritual journey.

As a young student in England I had to register with the home office as an ‘alien’ and always carry an alien registration book on me. Whenever I stayed away from my normal residence I was expected to report to the local police station with my alien card. I envied those who were ‘citizens’ and often wondered what ‘hidden’ goodness there was in this personal indignity and inconvenience. Years later I reconciled myself to being an ‘alien’ in this transient world as the natural lead to being at home within the eternal world of my inner heart and soul. With hindsight I can now say that outer exile is a state which may lead to inner homecoming.

During the last forty years of my life, I have lived in eight different countries for lengthy durations of time. This entailed relating to different cultures, values and languages. I have studied, taught and worked in different commercial fields; managing (not without struggle) to reconcile a well defined eastern culture and religious background with the amorphous prevailing world order. The altar of worship in the first world is personal achievement and success. The emphasis on self importance and image above all else seemed to me an indicator of spiritual malaise.

I have come to realize that the most effective way to deal with disappointment or conflict is to look in to my inner heart for the light of truth to shine upon the moment, irrespective of my personal expectation or judgment. This state of putting into perspective life’s experiences comes about by combining worldly wisdom with spiritual insight. I owe much of this positive disposition to my mother’s joyful outlook on life, my father’s

enlightenment and my consequent worldwide exposures and subsequent understanding and reconciliation of dualities.

From my Islamic background I inherited the gift of trusting in God's compassion and mercy, which manifests in every situation and can be witnessed through the illumined heart. I also learnt that worldly wisdom is based on relating cause and effect and the use of mind and intellect to bring harmony and understanding to every outer experience. The unseen world, however, has different principles and rules. Its access is through a purified heart and higher consciousness. The human being is the meeting point between these two worlds, having the potential capacity of consciousness whose spectrum ranges from the tangible material to the most subtle realms, beyond the limitations of our world of space & time.

Although Adam was in the garden he did not realize its perpetual blissfulness. The descent to earth and the experiences of pain and pleasure, good and bad, light and darkness are necessary foundations to understanding the nature of harmony and unity. Thus, our experience of distance from the original divine 'gatheredness' and restless worldly dispersion is in order to ascend back to the original oneness, which is encoded within every human soul.

The human saga is brilliantly described in the Qur'an and its wisdom has been lived for centuries by many enlightened beings. Success in this path requires trusting the divine presence within the sacred soul. Access to this light brings about inner transformation and the realization of how the outer world is perfect reflection of the inner world. Meaning and form are never separate, for the whole of creation is unified in essence and held by the light of oneness.

My early western education in science opened up numerous vistas of a holistic approach to different fields within life's experiences. This led to a workable 'technology' for self-knowledge and the alchemy of transforming the 'leaden' self into the 'golden' soul. The thrills of new insights along the path of enlightenment through Islam propelled me to make that knowledge accessible to interested people from other cultures and religions.

These wise teachings can be universally applicable as they bring together scientific disciplines with philosophy, religion and spirituality.

To acquire any knowledge one needs serious intention, proper tutelage and disciplined practice. For spiritual knowledge one needs to go beyond mind, intellect and the limitation of thoughts and space-time habits. Then the light of inspiration from the inner heart will radiate. One of the meanings of the “meek shall inherit the earth” is that a genuine state of being inwardly bereft, desperation and humbleness are prerequisites for creative openings, insights and spiritual awakenings.

Reliable spiritual evolvment starts with the discovery that the basic dynamic in creation is duality and the balance of opposites, whose roots are the one cosmic source of all life. Dualities and diversities of experiences are all based on an all-embracing subtle essence, which encompasses the entire macrocosm as well as all the microcosms. Human life is based on two complementary streams of consciousness, one of which evolves and develops, whilst the other is constant and not subject to movement and change. Enlightenment requires the unity of these consciousnesses and their harmony and resonance. The perplexing questions of deity and purpose of life can only be satisfactorily answered by the vision of unity, so that all dualities and diversities are seen as unified harmoniously in essence. Durable contentment is a result of this perfected vision.

In classical times higher education covered logic, aesthetics, ethics, politics and metaphysics. In our present day due to the supremacy of a scientific and technologically driven way of life we need to bring back the study of metaphysics and knowledge of god via supreme consciousness. This will enable us to fill the missing gap in our understanding of cosmic unity and creational diversity.

Every human being is composed of an eternal soul and its companion self, which is driven by the power of love to discover the divine attributes already etched within the human soul. Acts of worship are the expression of human adoration of god’s desirable qualities. Vices are the dark side of virtues. There are dual natural human inclinations towards what brings harmony and ease and away from discord and difficulties. God’s

eternal light and its presence within the human soul is the constant guide and reference point of the self evolving towards unification with its soul and attaining its fulfillment.

Sufism and Islam's path of spiritual transformation is summation of the Abrahamic Prophetic revelations. Understanding and closeness between Christianity, Judaism and Islam and other religions can be understood with the unifying vision and lens of one all encompassing god. This vision can be applied at all times and by all people, irrespective of culture or religion, as it is based upon the unification of self and soul within the purified heart. The globalization of commerce, technology and information means that the old ways of moral and ethical living and being accountable to family and community are not easy to apply. An urgent redress in the balance between head and heart is needed. This can only be fulfilled by personal spiritual evolvement along personal commitment and connections with like-minded and like-hearted others. New clusters of human communities can grow and evolve without the necessity of constant physical proximity. Through the new global communication networks once can attain some compensation for physical distance and lack of community. The personal computer could become one's mirror in the absence of close family members to reflect one's inner state. Every age has its difficulties as well as advantages.

I hope to share with the reader ways to live actively and responsibly, cheerfully and light heartedly in this world. We have no choice other than to aim at outer excellence whilst attempting to witness perfection with our spiritual lens at all times, irrespective of personalized views of each situation. Wherever there is a shadow there is also light and the entire show is contained within an eternal cosmic light.

Introduction

Lasting fulfillment can only be achieved when the perfection of every moment is seen and realized. The rational mind relates to the world of cause and effect and guides us to physical survival and well-being. The heart and soul is what distinguishes humanity and enables us to relate to the unseen and the worlds beyond time and space. This earth is god's nursery where every creation evolves to the highest level of its consciousness within its soul's capacity.

The mind and senses connect the individual self with the outer world, whereas the heart connects the self with the soul and the inner world. God's cosmic soul is the source of all created souls, which energize diverse entities and beings. Every soul carries within it attributes that reflect aspects of the cosmic soul. The human soul potentially knows numerous qualitative and quantitative aspects of life, power, knowledge, beauty, majesty and other patterns of energy behaviors and attributes. The soul of the ant only follows a few patterns of behavior such as survival, protection, feeding, procreation and other basic evolutionary programs. Every soul is designed and packaged to carry out efficiently its role in life as part of the universal interplay of dualities and creational possibilities, all within cosmic unity.

The light of the divine soul permeates and envelops every aspect of creation. It is at the root of life, death, understanding, ignorance, good, bad, the seen, the unseen, acceptance, rejection, contentment, discontentment, order, chaos, light, darkness, containing every awareness and consciousness. The human soul is imprinted with this truth, and beams this energy to the self. This relationship is the root of the belief that the human soul knows its lord and the divine qualities; thus, it carries a special responsibility and privilege on earth. Personal consciousness arises from soul consciousness and these two energy streams constitute the unique human state and the need for higher knowledge.

Life is experienced through movement and change. Everything in this world is relative within time and space, yet we always seek the constancy of what is desirable and

elimination of what is undesirable. We prefer lasting health to short bursts of wellness. We look for lasting safety, security, love, contentment and stability. In fact, the human desire for perpetuity and immortality is a direct reflection of the attribute of the eternally perfect soul within our heart.

As the body and mind grow there arises the personal awareness of self consciousness with the idea of individuality, separation and independence. This self consciousness can be the cause of much human confusion and suffering, as well as natural evolvment, harmony and unity with the soul. The self links the mineral, vegetative and animal levels within the human being efficiently and instinctively. The soul is like a divine hologram containing and reflecting all the higher qualities and attributes, which the self admires and loves. A holographic image usually depicts a visible entity but in this case, the example of the hologram is used in a qualitative sense. When the self is in alignment with the soul, it experiences harmony and contentment; otherwise it is restless, confused and demanding. Thus, the question of meaning and purpose of life and psychological wellbeing rests upon the alignment between self and soul consciousness, which can take place within the purified inner heart.

To understand the nature of creation, we need to reflect upon the intricate connections and relationships between dualities and the dynamics of cause and effect and the differences between subtle and gross, meaning and form, inner and outer worlds, the permanent and transitory and what is in space-time and what is beyond.

In our present time, the prevailing global human trend is biased towards material and physical pursuits and outer success. This state needs to be balanced by greater concern for the human soul, psyche and the intricate relationship between body, mind, ego, heart and soul. There are always a few individuals who turn away from worldly pursuits and concentrate on spiritual unfoldment. It is also not unusual for people who have suffered worldly disappointments or failures to search for purpose and meaning in life. Yet every human being at some time or another has questioned their purpose and direction in life and has desired to know what brings about lasting contentment and happiness.

The challenge for all spiritual seekers is the constant need to act appropriately at every moment, aiming for excellence in intention and action. To do the right thing in the right way, at the right time and place, is the foundation of quality living. Freedom from confusing choices and habitual mistakes will increase with higher reference and wisdom. A purified inner heart is a prerequisite for the self to connect with soul consciousness. Lasting contentment is the result of unison between the self and soul at all times.

Human endeavors and desires are balanced between attraction towards that which brings ease and contentment and repulsion from difficulty and confusion. To transcend the battle of dualities we need to refer to a higher consciousness and truth. The first station in this journey is factual awareness and reflection upon outer events and one's own inner state. Then a clear rational mind and intellect could lead to reflection from the heart and soul and thus light and guidance. This process of combining rationality with spontaneous and intuitive insight comes about when head and heart are in unison and consciousness is unified.

In our present world scene, mathematics, physics and most other sciences are the same for everyone, anywhere, in every culture. Ethics, however, have not yet evolved into a universal system acceptable by diverse cultures and religions; this can happen when we acknowledge and experience pure consciousness and tap into absolute truth. From this higher knowledge different levels of ethical boundaries and acceptable human conduct will emerge. It is unethical to steal but if it was the last resort to survive then most people will forgive this "wrong" conduct. Thus there is a hierarchy of understandable behavior based upon seeking the universally desirable state of wellness and contentment through interacting with the world of uncertainties, while aiming for durable harmony and referring to higher consciousness or holding ourselves accountable to divine justice.

A pragmatic, rational approach to everyday life is necessary but is not sufficient for the restless self and its higher quest. It makes 'moral' and cultural norms understandable and explains the natural habits of the mind. It does not provide a lasting, just system for decision-making.

This is a personal book about spiritual philosophy and is condensed within seven chapters, covering a range of issues concerning creation, realities, truth, the different dimensions of the self, levels of consciousness, perceptions, relationships and enlightenment. God and divine lights are the thread throughout the book. Chapter one describes the foundation of existence and creation. Chapter two deals with the human template and the cosmic unity behind all diversity. Chapter three describes the growth and evolvement of the human self through its journey to the wisdom and serenity of the soul. Chapter four describes the different levels of relationships in creation and their interplay. Chapter five addresses the human purpose and meaning in life. Chapter six discusses the root of the human quest and desire for security and perfection. Chapter seven presents summaries, prescriptions and descriptions of the fulfilled self. At the end of each chapter, a brief selection of verses from the Qur'an, Prophetic teachings and quotations, which are relevant to the chapter, have been added. Readers who are interested in greater Islamic and Sufi spiritual foundations and doctrines can satisfy this need through other easily available literature and relevant sources.

This book requires the reader's serious involvement and deep interaction for it to yield the intended benefit of transformation. Please pay attention to the words and terms used in this text, as they differ from other popular versions. I have tried to avoid unnecessary religious or spiritual or philosophical jargon in the hopes of communicating simply and clearly. The lack of capitalization was a deliberate act to reduce our human conditioning for names and concepts. Open the book at any place and you will gain some wisdom and insights according to your readiness and the level of your freedom from mindsets and other cultural limitations and habits. The major theme which is woven throughout this book is that two different domains meet within the human heart. It is this convergence that can generate confusion as well as reliable guidance. These two worlds have different cosmologies and logic, and need to be distinguished with every move. The first domain is the outer world of time and space: this requires rationality, a clear head, the reasoning and wisdom of causality and context, appropriate skills, training and disciplines. The other domain is the inner, unseen spiritual world whose supra-logic relates to soul and heart. These two worlds meet within every human being; they need to be acknowledged and their consciousness unified. Success in the outer world needs ambition and drive

whereas the spiritual world needs submission and abandonment to god and his agent, the soul within.

To fully benefit and be transformed by this book you need to read, reflect and apply what touches and benefits you most. Then repeat this process until you gain access to your inner heart by having blocked mental interference. Apply what is relevant to you at the time and trust that there is perfection within every situation and experience if seen through the divine lens. We experience time and space through the self, which has been empowered by its partner, the soul. The personal and conditioned consciousness is energized by soul consciousness. Unison between personal and soul consciousness will produce true unison based on witnessing perfection along the whole spectrum of consciousness.

The journey of the serious seeker of truth begins by looking for meaning and purpose behind events, feelings and experiences. The compass of this journey is the reference to the source of existence and life, which is the soul within the human's inner subtle heart. When all dualities and opposites are seen through this unified lens, all experiences and events in life will change in meaning and significance. Conflicts, difficulties and disappointments will no longer bring about undue suffering and emotional reaction or pain. This state of authentic presence enables the person to interact wisely with the outer world, whilst experiencing harmony and ease at heart.

When you begin to see the perfection within different events and experiences, irrespective of personal and cultural judgment, you are at the shores of the divine ocean of bliss. Your heart is now the altar of your worship and the home of lasting security and joy. Your soul is the residing king and god's sole representative as your self and ego are in joyful surrender and peace. This state of awakening combines worldly rationality and wisdom with spontaneous spiritual light and perfect presence.

All human beings desire perfection and most of us struggle to transcend the changing world of dualities and opposites. The ever-perfect presence reveals itself when all dualities have been submerged in the divine light of unity. One thereby sees the utter

perfection of every moment throughout existence. The notion that the one god is the light of lights from which all other lights and entities have emanated now becomes a profoundly realized truth.

This book is about how people can be transformed their understanding and perception to witness reality through the lens of the soul's pure consciousness. This transformation or attunement does not deny your personal experiences of conflict or difficulty; but by looking at them through your inner lens you can realize their insignificance and thus move on past them. Even an inkling of this possibility and understanding will reduce the impact of life's stresses upon you and produce spiritual hope and progress.

The prophetic Sufi path shows us how to navigate in life by concentrating upon 'how', whilst postponing the 'why' questions. This concern fades away and becomes redundant in the light of self realization and access to 'how' to live with awakened joyfulness. This state of living in contentment is due to the unity of consciousness reflecting the unity of god, the one creator and master of the supreme cosmic consciousness.

Much of this book is easy to follow but there are parts which require careful reading through a spiritual lens, otherwise they will not be understood and could be misleading. Even the book's main theme of 'witnessing perfection' has to be put into perspective. It is undeniable that on a day-to-day basis we often struggle to bring about balance and harmony in our lives. Yet it is only by stepping out of one's self that the impartial, illumined heart is able to experience perfection in all circumstances. The aphorisms interwoven throughout the text are points of contemplation and reflection rather than punctuation; they help the reader to look again with a new focus and deeper insights.

I therefore request the reader to approach this book with an open mind and heart and resonate with it. Let it 'take you', rather than you 'get it'. It is like a tapestry with patterns and colors appearing in clusters and patches, making it a living flying carpet. Accept the recurring designs and colors for they are part of the multi-dimensional design of this prayer mat. As you read, leave aside your critical mind and participate with the author in living the process of transmitting the text, then reading and absorbing it. We human

beings are all like the changing shadows illumined by the one eternal light whose spark shines in our heart.

Your sickness is from you - but you do not perceive it,

Your remedy is within you - but you do not sense it,

You presume that you are a small entity - whereas within you is enfolded the entire universe.

You are indeed the evident book, by whose alphabet the hidden becomes manifest.

Therefore you have no need to look beyond yourself; what you seek is within you, if only you reflect.

(Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib)

Creational Dynamics

Existence contains every conceivable and imaginable creation and combination of forms and energies. Everything that exists connects and relates to everything else within space-time and beyond.

Rain began to fall a few billion years ago; for centuries it never stopped. The vast oceans and barren rocks continued the long process of upheaval and massive change. After many millions of years the cosmic rays connected the atoms of carbon and hydrogen, giving birth to the primordial cell and the spark of life. A few million years later, tiny sticky gel droplets began to develop membranes, leading eventually to the emergence of the protein molecule. The identity of a living being was seeded, the cosmic ray being the father and mother, the primeval sea of primitive flotsam of living cells being the womb. After a few hundred million years, multi-cellular life began and the semi-permeable membrane veiled the mysteries of the cosmic enactment within the cell. The urge of survival, growth and procreation is rooted in the divided cell, from its early separation, as distinct from its cosmic parentage. Thus, our evolving world emerged from non-existence by the power that gave its essence to every creation.

Energy and matter are ever bound to each other, interacting and reflecting the connections between all tangible and non-material entities in the heavens and on earth. The human being's unique position in this world is due to self-awareness and the complementary links in consciousness between body, mind, intellect, heart and soul. The human psyche is the meeting place of what is seen and the unseen. The universe is like a vast ocean and each person is like a little boat in need of direction and efficient steering. To arrive at the intended destiny along the shore of one's origin, we need awareness of the outer situation, whilst intuitively unifying the skipper, the ocean and the boat.

All worldly experiences occur in relationship to numerous opposites, which originate from one eternally present source. This essence, where all relative and transitory events are unified, is the cause of the human drive towards meaning and purpose in life. It is also what brings about lasting harmony between mind and heart and awareness of that event.

The ultimate human quest for permanent happiness can only be attained by witnessing the eternal perfection emanating from this essence, which contains all the divine qualities of beauty, majesty, love, generosity and other desirable attributes, which permeate creation. Vices and difficulties are also part of god's designs of shadows or darkness, guiding us towards the light behind them. A disappointment is simply the dark side of the 'appointment'. The physical world is a theatre where all possible tangible manifestations and subtle realities – qualitative and quantitative, seen and unseen – exist and interact. All these worlds are illuminated and permeated by the one divine unique light of lights, giving rise to consciousness, discernment and infinite varieties of lights and shadows, forms and energy waves. Human beings have the potential of awareness and knowledge of this immense creation by connecting and reconciling the self/mind consciousness with higher soul consciousness, by means of the purified heart.

The billions of years during which complexities of creations were coming together and evolving, the unifying essence remained unknown until the advent of the adamic soul and its consciousness. The light of our consciousness contains the originating impulse, which was there before the first flicker of life within the cell. We experience life from its inception and in all its associated forms and manifestations. Within the inner folds of the human heart and soul lies the design of whatever occurred over billions of years yet is still happening now. Therein lies the meeting point between the supreme source of creation and all that emanates from it and depends upon its perfection.

Web of Life

The life forms we see today have arisen and evolved naturally from the patterns of the distant past and the singular tree of life tree of life.

Our world is comprised of innumerable complex systems, delicate domains and ecosystems inhabited by countless definable, as well as intangible, energies and entities. These all interact and influence each other via numerous networks of channels and fields of forces and energies. This world of appearances and energy streams constantly interact with other seen and unseen entities at physical, chemical, electromagnetic and other gross and subtler levels. Every substance is characterized by color, shape, size, smell, taste and other discernible qualities and sensory distinctions. Every molecule vibrates at a frequency according to its density. Every entity broadcasts its natural characteristics whose code and language can only be understood by other creations connected to its sphere, life and influence. The web of life contains worlds within worlds relating to other worlds of wider dimensions and durations.

Every created entity follows its innate program, manifests its state and returns to its basic origin, which is already decreed within it.

Our discernible earthly macrocosmic world is reproduced and complemented by countless microcosmic worlds, which include dark matters, plasmas and numerous other unknown forces and energy fields. All of these domains are held together within a space-time web by the supreme divine essence, whose domain extends beyond our perception and imagination. This most subtle unifying power is truth, this zone of absolute perfection and essence which leads to other levels of relative absolute where qualities of complementarities appear as refractions of the essence. Then come the spheres of creational powers and 'archetypes' followed by the world of dominions and focus with multi-projections. All diverse entities in our physical world remain connected to the original essence through souls at different levels of sentiency and consciousness, patterns and limitations.

Witnessing Perfection by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri
Creational Dynamics

God is the light of lights and the source of all conditioned and modified lights in heaven and earth. Everything in existence has its root in this essence and aspires to its perfection according to its soul's ability.

Everything in existence is in constant flux. Today is the child of yesterday and the mother of tomorrow. The world is crisscrossed by highways and strings of changing energies and vibrations, creating the illusion of a stable and continuous reality. Living cells are bounded by semi-permeable membranes and as such constantly interact with their surrounding environment. Yet every cell maintains an individual identity and dynamic stability. The evolution of the human self from a single cell to a full complex being mirrors the evolution of life on earth. The moment of conception echoes the cosmic big bang. Both these two events signify outer personal birth, dispersion and growth towards eventual disintegration and death. Yet the soul's ongoingness reflects god's eternal nature and drives of the human search for knowledge and discovery.

The divine light gives rise to cosmic consciousness manifesting as dual consciousnesses - the personal short-lived and the soul on-going.

It is through movement and change that the human self is motivated to seek satisfaction of needs or wants in order to attain stability and contentment. Life, as such, is a constant quest for balance and harmony within ever-changing conditions, polarities and dualities. The self is faced with structured confinement within space-time, whilst its source of life is the soul, which is eternal and connects all that is on earth with what is in the heavens.

There are as many ways to god as there are human beings or creations. In truth there is only god and everything else is from his grace.

Love is the primal divine power permeating all of creation and holding the universe in dynamic balance. Love is the cause of all actions, desires, connections, relationships, dispersions and unifications. When love becomes directed towards another person or entity it becomes restricted and limited. Divine love propels us to seek knowledge and relevant actions, whereas hate is its shadow or dark hole and is based on ignorance and alienation. A heightened state of love and understanding; emanates from the heart or soul

Witnessing Perfection by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri
Creational Dynamics

and engulfs the self and ego in its wake. God's love is a quality of his original light and creative cosmic energy. For love and goodness to manifest in our world, hate and badness are there as indicators of the positive attributes.

All levels of consciousness are energized and relate to actions by the powers of attraction (love) and repulsion (non-love) or hate.

Survival of the fittest in the species implies flexibility, durability and adaptability in changing circumstances. Eternal fitness and immortality are the soul's qualities. These are transmitted to the self, which is identified with a mortal body and mind. Thus, whoever knows the nature of the self and soul – and their relationship – is indeed most fit to understand the key elements in all of creation. Other knowledges include what is seen or unseen, the subatomic realm, the patterns of interactions in the world of time and space and the changing realities within those confines and limitations.

The human soul carries the code and patterns of the universe in meaning and appearance. The self's desire for worldly control and dominance is a reflection of the soul's kingdom.

In every desire and action there is a hierarchy of priorities. Personal survival, safety and security are placed before caring for emotions, or reflecting upon the beauty of natural surroundings. You need to have good health and clear hearing to appreciate the harmony of a musical performance. Well-being starts with the physical and material and ends up with the subtle state of inner consciousness and spiritual health.

All actions are motivated by durable self-interest. Knowledge is sought at numerous levels in order to maintain well-being and contentment.

Every creation resonates and vibrates according to a designated range and level of frequency, which reflects its position in nature and its evolvement of consciousness. The bereaved mother will cry at separation from her offspring, the agitated dog will bark, while within the micro depth of the subatomic world, particles and energies follow different sets of patterns and destinies. The shell around the seed cracks and withers as

the kernel is activated to grow and reproduce its genetic code and fulfill its intended destiny. Every entity in existence has a beginning and an end, grows up and then withers away within the confines of space-time. The human soul energizes the self to evolve through its worldly phase of life. The self-soul combination carries on after departure from the body towards the hereafter and subtler levels of evolution.

Life is fragile in its specific manifestations but durable in its ongoingness. It ends and never ends at the same time.

Creation on earth is due to energy and matter interchange according to numerous patterns, laws, layers and levels. Causes and effects are the strings that hold earthly and heavenly waves connected and unified in dynamic stability. The forbidden tree in the garden of paradise bore the fruits of good and bad, cause and effect. Before adam (adam here denotes the generic name rather than the biblical and therefore is written in the lower case) tasted this duality he lived in innocent ignorance without differentiation or discernment. We had to descend to the world of multiplicity so as to climb the ladders of consciousness towards unity.

When you are experience duality, the light of oneness is out of focus. When you are truly engulfed by unity, you have no notion of duality. The gift to adam is access to both.

Time appears to flow in a certain direction, yet all natural events and occurrences are simply illusory appearances. As such, they are not stable or absolutely 'true'. The illusion of time and its direction is a common experience due to the confining curvature of our earthly womb of space-time, as well as the mind's association with the senses, memory, the physical body and its biological growth. Personal consciousness, however, is experienced within these confines and awareness of it is due to the non-space-time energy filled with pure consciousness.

Truth is independent of all things and events in existence, whereas everything else is dependent upon truth and relates to it.

Witnessing Perfection by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri
Creational Dynamics

Within the creational web there are numerous levels of connectedness, relationships, attractions and repulsions and degrees of awareness. Every self or form has a soul that contains its ‘software’ program. The soul or consciousness of a plant is very limited. Animal consciousness is less complex than human consciousness, which is multifaceted and connected to cosmic consciousness. For this reason, humankind is the pinnacle of creation; as such, it is most powerful, as well as vulnerable. The human self can be easily distracted from its evolution towards its original state of soul beingness.

Every sentient living entity strives towards the highest level of consciousness that it is capable of. Every entity aspires to its root and origin. Every shadow reveals traces of light.

The human soul contains all the divine attributes of perfection. The soul is the energizer and source of life, activating the body, limbs, organs, mind, intellect and all that is considered human make-up. We shall progress to look deeper into the details of the inner and outer maps of human creation, its motivations and drives.

All human endeavors, worldly successes and adventures are futile unless they lead the self to discover the soul and inner treasures.

The whole universe is brought to life by one divine light, which is reflected, modified and conditioned by countless interactive movements. Nature functions holistically, in harmony and ease, but with determination and forcefulness. Earth, water, air and fire are all modes of manifestation with different natural qualities of heat or moisture and other qualities and energies. A flower opens naturally to release its specific fragrance. A rock rolls off the top of the mountain to rest securely in the valley below. A river flows downward towards the ocean and is recharged by seasonal rain. Human beings desire to experience physical, mental and emotional well-being. Everything in existence looks for stability, whilst the soul is ever-constant, always secure and content through its spiritual umbilical cord to god – the ever present light of lights.

What is most needed in life is most available and ever present: god’s universal light, encompassing and permeating existence.

Witnessing Perfection by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri
Creational Dynamics

Life appears as emanation and return, ebbing and flowing. The swings and changes are founded on the eternal truth, which is ever constant and perfect. The beams of luminosity of the one creator and sustainer manifest and radiate as streams of consciousness. Divine consciousness is beyond space-time but permeates existence and gives meaning and direction to all that is in time and beyond.

Stress, strife and desires are at the root of experiencing life. They drive the self towards the perfect soul. The universe is built on duality, whilst its foundation is rooted in unity.

Creation is held together in a dynamic pulsation by the creator's perfect presence, which is broadcast by souls and appears as lights and shadows. It is god's perfect qualities, which are the threads and beams of energies that hold the cosmos together in dynamic flux. We love power, strength, knowledge, beauty and other names given to god's attributes, which the human intellect can understand and desire. All of these are etched within the soul and call on the self to experience them and be attuned to their presence.

Creation is held by the fields of energies, which relate to different divine attributes - qualitatively and quantitatively.

Life can only be experienced as ever-changing realities or states. These manifest according to an individual's values, needs, perception and the extent to which consciousness is evolved. The web of life is the womb from which every generous gift is born, culminating in the knowledge of the ever-perfect, ever-present creator and sustainer of life. The countless twos are suspended by the invisible subtle webs and threads of the one. God's cosmic soul is reflected in various levels and degrees in the souls of all creations. It is the light of this essence which bestows the mysterious, yet common, day-to-day human experiences. The ultimate miracle is the amazing possibility that everything is in the one and the one is in all.

You may be different and unique as an individual but essentially all human beings have the same aspirations and potential. All human souls are similar but selves differ and change constantly.

Web of Life – Selected Qur’anic Verses

1. And not the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from your lord, no anything less than that nor greater, but it is (all) in a clear book. (10/61)
2. Whatever is in the heavens and in the earth declares the glory of God, and he is the all-mighty, the all-wise. His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and causes death, and he is able to do everything. (57/1-2)
3. And to God belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. And God ever encompasses all things. (4/126)
4. O my son, even if it be the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, even though it be in a rock, or in the heaven or in the earth, God will bring it forth. Surely God is most subtle, well-aware. (31/16)
5. So he who does an atom’s weight of good will see it. And he who does an atom’s weight of evil will see it. (99/7-8)
6. He knows that which goes down into the earth and that which comes forth out of it, and that which comes down from heaven and that which goes up to it. And he is with you wherever you are. And God is the seer of what you do. (57/4)
7. And the heaven, he raised it high, and he set up the balance. (55/7)
8. By the sun and its brightness. By the moon as it follows it. By the day when it reveals its light. (91/1-3)

Web of Life – Relevant Prophetic Teachings

1. You were not created for the temporary life on earth, but were created for eternity and you will only be transferred from one home to the other.
2. God has created the angels from light, jinn from fire and adam was created from earth.
3. He who has no compassion for others is disobedient to his creator.
4. It is charity to plant a tree or cultivate land which provides food for birds, animals and humans.
5. This world is a prison for the believer and a paradise for the unbeliever.
6. There are those who worship god out of fear of punishment, and there are those who worship god wanting paradise. As for the people of knowledge, they worship god in adoration of his perfections.
7. He is the first before he is the last. He is the outward manifest before he is inward hidden. Creation was perfected by his command and submitted in obedience to him and responded to his call.
8. God is close to all things without being associated with them. He speaks without speech and wills without wanting.
9. This world was created for other than itself (as a step to the hereafter).
10. Be merciful to those who are weak and god will show mercy to you.
11. Habits are second nature.
12. Every creation is born in this world with its primal pattern that leads him along.
13. There is no creation without containing within it its seeds of destruction.

Unified Opposites

There is a ceaseless interplay between all opposites in creation. All opposing principles or energies are never apart and each contains the germ of the other.

From ancient times, human beings wondered about cause and effect and the nature of duality and opposites. In ancient Persia, India, China, Greece and elsewhere, the ideas of unity and multiplicity were a part of religion and philosophy. Great thinkers and prophets expounded on duality as the foundation of causality and that all discernible worlds are but outer manifestations of cosmic unity. Paradise, redemption, resurrection and nirvana were often described as liberation from duality.

Everything is revealed through its opposite. Truth is known by falsehood; 'bad' is simply the other side of good.

Whatever manifests in life is one of two. Every event or manifestation in life moves between two complementary opposites, reinforcing each other and in their co-existence. The universe as macrocosm and man as microcosm correspond, relate and reflect each other. Whatever is there in one is present in the other. Dualities are like two fingers of the hand – they unite at the palm but their shape and function are different. We cannot know or discern any entity or quality unless its opposite or mirror image exists: happiness is known by contrast with misery; calmness is opposite to agitation; sweetness offsets bitterness; love of life counterbalances fear of death. Whenever a trait reaches its extremity it reverts to its opposite: good food, for example, when eaten in excess will bring about bad health.

All opposites complement each other, connect in essence and reinforce each other through contrast and discord.

Dualities, multiplicities and opposites are the threads that weave together our life. We experience life/death, growth/decline, strength/weakness, attraction/repulsion, stability/instability, separation/gatheredness, matter/anti-matter, time/non-time etc. Life's

Witnessing Perfection *by* Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri
Creational Dynamics

experiences swing like a pendulum from one end to the other, passing through the mid-point of neutrality. Human consciousness inherently encompasses all the opposites and what lies between them.

Whatever expands can also contract. Gatheredness is a prelude to separation and divergence can lead to convergence.

At no time can one freeze a state or feeling in the world of perpetual movement and change. You may experience time as slow or fast but the self cannot get out of the space-time dimension, except through the gateway of death or by the occasional glimpse of pure consciousness or truth. We cannot ward off all undesirable events or difficulties, for they are the opposite and counter balance to desirability and ease. Once you accept this dynamic situation, you will begin to witness the perfection of the appearance of these diverse realities in existence, irrespective of your personal state, evaluation or needs.

Strength has its root in weakness, health in illness, light in shadows and darkness.

The wise person will accept the world of interchanging dualities and understand the presence of the constant changeless truth behind them. The soul transmits pure consciousness to the self, which experiences changes and awareness of these opposite experiences through the senses and the mind. Love and hate, beauty and ugliness, contentment and discontentment, friendship and enmity, security and insecurity, knowledge and ignorance, hardship and ease, are all two sides of the same coin, whose invisible metal is pure consciousness or truth. All so-called negative qualities, such as meanness, hatred, impatience, etc. belong to the self and ego, whereas positive qualities, such as courage, generosity or mercy, belong to the soul and can be reflected upon the self through consciousness.

All opposites have their roots in the one source from which they emanate and to which they return.

Witnessing Perfection *by* Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri
Creational Dynamics

All opposing qualities reinforce each other in an exclusive pluralistic partnership. A 'good' is understood as not being 'bad'. Yet what is judged as good today may be seen as bad tomorrow. Every good or bad is relative. Virtues or vices can change positions depending upon the context. To be a good listener to others is a virtue which becomes a vice when you lend your ear to backbiting. Only the essence or truth is ever constant and perfect at all times. It is the foundation which enables change to appear; like an ocean floor, it is constant, whereas the surface waves rise and subside with varying force.

Countless diversities are sustained for different durations by the eternal divine unity.

All activities in life are powered by the forces of attraction and repulsion (felt as love and hate) and all human endeavors are directed towards achieving balance and stability in body, mind and soul. As the soul needs the body to manifest, any feeding of the body is tantamount to feeding the soul; thus prayer or acts of worship which relate to the soul help to sustain the body. Thus, eating nourishes the soul and prayers the body – whereas common belief would have it otherwise.

All human love relates to knowledge and understanding, whereas hate is ignorance and disconnection.

Love, understanding, compassion and harmony are all based upon knowledge and are desirable. Sexual attraction, for example, reflects the desire of the self for complementarity and fulfillment by engagement with its soul-mate. Discord and enmity relate to ignorance and thus are repulsive. From early childhood we are attracted by what is familiar and repulsed by what we hate, fear or do not know. However, most of our values and their priorities change as the self evolves and grows from a childish ego – which only knows instant pleasure and fleeting emotions – to a mature and rational self guided by intellect and wisdom.

Cause and effect are like two mirrors reflecting aspects of each other, whilst the truth is the light and energy between them.

Since every good and bad are relative, we always need to consider the value given to an issue according to the context and situation. The Masai welcoming ceremony for an honored visitor may appear as threatening gestures to a peasant from Korea. ‘Absolute good’ is a unique divine quality that is not subject to worldly wisdom or logic. At all times human beings seek goodness and security in a world of change whose very nature continually creates new and challenging situations. This paradox is resolved when it is realized that it is the soul that is ever-secure but the self is restless.

The term 'evil' implies total badness, whereas in the world of duality everything is relative: there can be no bad without the seed of some goodness lying dormant within it.

The soul contains all the patterns of creation and is the source which energizes the human self. This is why the self loves to explore and discover root causes in life. The self delves into discernible realities and the soul beams truth upon all realities. Hence it is natural for the self to seek outer power and strength, overlooking the reality that every strength is also accompanied by a weakness. In the outer world, dualities and opposites are inseparable; when they neutralize each other, peace and stability is the outcome. This is depicted by the yin/yang symbol, which contains the design of the two complementary opposites dovetailing into each other. Each has a speck of the other in its main mass. This graphically symbolizes that all dualities contain within themselves the seed of their opposite.

Vices and virtues are ever connected to one source, which creates them. Virtues reflect perfections and vices are their dark shadows. Turn your back to a vice and you face the relevant virtue.

Duality and plurality is the foundation of human nature, which is composed of two different facets. The one is the material, causal, rational and worldly self; the other is an inner, intangible and non-worldly soul. The exclusive relationship between the perfect, constant soul and the ever-restless and changing self is the supreme paradox of life, which drives us to knowledge and discovery. For thousands of years, humankind has tried to resolve this issue through reason, meditation, religion and other means. Those

who arrived at a satisfactory answer reached it through transformation, rather than logic and reason. This process is called ‘self-realization’, or ‘enlightenment’, and it takes place within the purified heart, where earth and heaven meet and space-time merges with the timeless.

Whatever is within your heart will show itself somehow in spite of your desire to conceal it. The outer and inner always meet each other.

If one desires to know the sacred and the unseen worlds then the first steps begin in the physical world of causal patterns and forms. The root of all earthly life is heavenly and the foundation of the material world is spiritual. The light that illumines all is god’s unique light from which all other lights, colors and existences emanate. It is god’s supreme consciousness that produces pure consciousness and countless spectrums of personal and other consciousnesses.

Creation is based on movement and change emanating from the eternal stillness, to which it returns.

The wise seeker knows that no worldly state or condition will remain forever. Neither ease nor difficulty have any durability; nor do good and bad, as they always alternate. Recognize the light that produces the shadows and you will understand the nature and meaning of the shadow without much difficulty. Durable inner joy and bliss is beyond cause or effect, as are all authentic spiritual experiences, which are flashes of the light of truth or signals from the soul. Outer changes and movements are balanced by the potential of inner stillness and ease.

Expansion is the other side of constriction; wellness is the better side of illness.

In the human search for knowledge, each question triggers off the answer, which has always been there but not close at hand. In truth, all causes and effects are connected and united; as are all questions and answers. Although it appears logical to us that the questions precede the answers, the reverse could equally be true. Problems and solutions

are not separate: the solution is always part of the problem. Truth, which is beyond time and space, is where cause and effect, question and answer, are at their origin of unison before separation. Since we are bound by time and space, our experiences follow chronologically in space. The answer can be found because the question is looking for it. 'Eureka' literally means 'I have found it!' A spark of eternal truth has illumined the moment in time. Duality has acknowledged its origin of unity.

Wherever there is sickness, there too lies the remedy. One can also say that the remedy wanted to be known and therefore sickness appeared.

Attraction and repulsion relate to acceptance and rejection. When you accept silence, you reject noise. This is also the case with peace/war, pleasure/displeasure, contentment/discontentment, order/chaos, beauty/ugliness, ease/difficulty, agreement/objection, calmness/agitation and other choices and experiences. Greater outer wealth and power is often balanced by lesser wisdom and inner knowledge. More earthly concern implies less of heavenly lights. The outer world appears real and secure, although it is in constant flux. The inner world's nature is beyond mental logic and reason for the soul is ever-content and secure.

The more one seeks worldly pleasure, the more elusive will be the discovery of lasting inner joy.

The wish for death occurs due to looking at the dark reverse side of the mirror whose front shines with the joys of life. The restless self is now confused and has given up the search for the peaceful domain within the heart. Love for living is also often accompanied by distractions, excitements and attachments to earthly life. The awakened ones see this temporary life as a nursery and preparation for the hereafter. Boundless perfections are present now but are veiled by the illusion of time. 'Hell' or 'oblivion' is the condition of missing paradise and can be sampled in our own world as the undesirable opposite to paradise.

Accepting and submitting to limiting boundaries are preludes to insight of the boundless. These two states always occur together.

Every experience or event reflects an aspect of a divine quality, such as power, knowledge, life; or the opposite, such as impotence, ignorance and death. When the self is at one with the soul it experiences completion through this union. When it faces the opposite side it experiences the bleakness of the shadowy ego. The unevolved self is closer to its own reflected images and ego than the soul. The mature self experiences generosity, mercy, patience and other divine qualities as transmitted by the soul when it refers to it. The self (as a shadow) experiences weakness, insecurity, harshness and impatience unless it connects with its light of higher intellect and soul consciousness.

Understandable causal connections and reasons lie hidden behind every difficulty and conflict. With insight, order will be discerned within chaos and perfection within what was judged as imperfect.

Life is experienced by movement and change and is perceived through different levels of consciousness. Death is the zone where outer action and change cease but soul consciousness continues tinted by cumulative personal consciousness. Life has its origin in pre-existence and is the essence in all worldly events, which emanate and return to the same origin. Life before death is ephemeral and confused; after death it is eternal and can be clear and sublime.

In this world we act and know; in the hereafter we cannot act but only know.

The most basic sets of complementary opposites are inner/outer, meaning/form and earthly/heavenly. Every outer occurrence contains an inner purpose or meaning. Chaos and wars are worldly outer events due to diversity, dispersion and pluralities, whereas peace is heavenly, inner, and reflects gatheredness, connectedness and unity. Every form or shape (a moving fist) betrays a meaning (anger) and everything on earth (terrestrial) has its archetype or pattern in the unseen (heavenly or celestial). Whatever is below is like that which is above and vice versa. All human attempts and endeavors in this life are to balance these sets of opposites. Maturity and wisdom implies being at the midpoint and at the center, whilst witnessing the peripherals. The sages, prophets and enlightened beings were the middle-most people.

Witnessing Perfection by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri
Creational Dynamics

A fault or vice can be the door to its companion opposite, described as virtue. Otherwise the self will be engulfed in vices.

The ancients have described earthly experiences and entities by the four qualities of hot/cold and wet/dry. The earth is cold and dry and is surrounded by water which is cold and wet; then comes air which is hot and moist; then fire which is hot and dry. Stability and harmony occur when these opposite qualities meet and neutralize. Attraction and relationships between entities are due to their original unity and connectedness in essence. The yin/yang balance means just that. The earth is the life giver, as well as the life taker with earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts and other catastrophes. Water is the same, where nearly three-quarters of the human body is water, but floods and contaminated water are big takers of life. The brain ceases to function after five minutes without air, but air is also the cause of hurricanes, tornados and other destructive winds. There would be no life on earth without the heat and energy of the sun, yet raging fires destroy much of our forests and drought can turn previously flourishing landscapes into aridity or semi-deserts. Heat gives life and destroys life. Human life is due to a fine balance between opposing forces.

The agitation of opposites comes to rest when they meet and reach the state of equilibrium from which they emerged in the first place.

The traditional world view of the heavens being the masculine pole of existence, while the earth under its influence gives birth to all living creatures and thus is the feminine pole, is another paradigm of parallel dualities. Everything in existence has a qualitative aspect and a quantitative measure. Life's qualitative origin does not lend itself to step-by-step logic and reason, for it belongs to the zone of inner vision not outer division. If you try to reduce the world to quantitative aspects only, all of existence will be out of balance. We are limited quantitatively and unbounded qualitatively.

The universal soul overflows into countless souls and entities. All is within all yet appearing temporarily with distinct identities.

Unified Opposites – Selected Qur’anic Verses

1. And of everything we created pairs that you may remember. (51/49)
2. He it is who created you from a single soul (adam), and from it he created his mate... (7/189)
3. And who has created all the pairs, and made for you ships and cattle on which you ride. (43/12)
4. And that he creates the pairs, the male and female. (53/45)
5. Who made the earth for you an expanse and made for you therein paths and sent down water from the clouds. Then thereby we have brought forth with it various kinds of vegetation. (20/53)
6. And he it is who spread the earth, and made in it firm mountains and rivers. And of every kind of fruits he has made in pairs, two (of every kind). He makes the night cover the day. Surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect. (13/3)
7. The creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you mates from among yourselves, and pairs of the cattle, too, multiplying you thereby. Nothing is like him; and he is the all-hearing, the all-seer. (42/11)
8. And God is the rich, and you are the poor. (47/38)
9. And of everything we have created pairs that you may remember. (51/49)

Unified Opposites – Relevant Prophetic Teachings

1. Among the things which expiate wrong actions are helping the unfortunate and relieving someone's affliction.
2. Truly, the greatest of trials will be compensated by the greatest rewards. If God loves a slave, he tests him with the greatest trials: whoever accepts with contentment will find contentment.
3. If the believer knew the reward contained in affliction he would desire to be afflicted all the time.
4. Good fortune is theirs who are humble, who spend of their wealth which they have gained lawfully, who have mercy on the abased and poor and who keep company with scholars and the wise.
5. Fear and hope are the two wings of faith by which the slave flies to the pleasure of God.
6. God loves the person who responds with kindness when subjected to anger.
7. No one humbles himself to God but that God raises him.
8. Exchange presents and gifts for they remove discord.
9. There is no disease for which God has not sent a cure.
10. Forgive whoever wrongs you.
11. Your friend is the one who restrains you and your enemy is the one who agrees with you always.

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An exposition of the Qur'anic verses relating to the nature of physical phenomena, including the origins of the universe, the nature of light, matter, space and time, and the evolution of biological and sentient beings.

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Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A unique collection of articles presenting an outstanding introduction to the areas of Sufism and original Islamic teachings.

The Elements of Sufism

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Sufism is the heart of Islam. This introduction describes its origins, practices, historical background and its spread throughout the world.

The Journey of the Self

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

After introducing the basic model of the self, there follows a simple yet complete outline of the self's emergence, development, sustenance, and growth toward its highest potential.

The Sufi Way to Self-Unfoldment

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Unfolding inner meanings of the Islamic ritual practices towards the intended ultimate purpose to live a life honorable and fearless, with no darkness, ignorance or abuse.

Witnessing Perfection

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Delves into the universal question of Deity and the purpose of life. Durable contentment is a result of 'perfected vision'.

Practices & Teachings of Islam

Calling Allah by His Most Beautiful Names

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Attributes or Qualities resonate from their Majestic and Beautiful Higher Realm into the heart of the active seeker, and through it back into the world.

Fasting in Islam

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This is a comprehensive guide to fasting in all its aspects, with a description of fasting in different faith traditions, its spiritual benefits, rules and regulations.

Prophetic Traditions in Islam: On the Authority of the Family of the Prophet

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Offers a comprehensive selection of Islamic teachings arranged according to topics dealing with belief and worship, moral, social and spiritual values.

The Wisdom (Hikam) of Ibn `Ata'allah: Translation and Commentary

Translation & Commentary by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

These aphorisms of Ibn `Ata'Allah, a Shadili Shaykh, reveal the breadth and depth of an enlightened being who reflects divine unity and inner transformation through worship.

The Inner Meanings of Worship in Islam: A Personal Selection of Guidance for the Wayfarer

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Here is guidance for those who journey along this path, from the Qur'an, the Prophet's traditions, narrations from the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and seminal works from among the *Ahl al-Tasawwuf* of all schools of thought.

The Lantern of The Path

Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq (Translated By Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri)

Each one of the ninety-nine chapter of this book is a threshold to the next, guiding the reader through the broad spectrum of ageless wisdom, like a lantern along the path of reality.

The Pilgrimage of Islam

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This is a specialized book on spiritual journeying, offering the sincere seeker keys to inner transformation.

The Sayings & Wisdom of Imam `Ali

Compiled By: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Translated By: Asadullah ad-Dhaakir Yate

A selection of this great man's sayings gathered together from authentic and reliable sources. They have been carefully translated into modern English.

Transformative Worship in Islam: Experiencing Perfection

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri with Muna H. Bilgrami

This book uniquely bridges the traditional practices and beliefs, culture and language of Islam with the transformative spiritual states described by the Sufis and Gnostics.

Talks & Courses

Ask Course ONE: The Sufi Map of the Self

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This workbook explores the entire cosmology of the self through time, and maps the evolution of the self from before birth through life, death and beyond.

Ask Course TWO: The Prophetic Way of Life

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This workbook explores how the code of ethics that govern religious practice and the Prophetic ways are in fact transformational tools to enlightened awakening.

Friday Discourses: Volume 1

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The Shaykh addresses many topics that influence Muslims at the core of what it means to be a Muslim in today's global village.

Songs of Iman on the Roads of Pakistan

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A series of talks given on the divergence between ‘faith’ and ‘unbelief ‘ during a tour of the country in 1982 which becomes a reflection of the condition occurring in the rest of the world today.

Poetry, Aphorisms & Inspirational

101 Helpful Illusions

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Everything in creation has a purpose relevant to ultimate spiritual Truth. This book highlights natural veils to be transcended by disciplined courage, wisdom and insight.

Beyond Windows

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Offering moving and profound insights of compassion and spirituality through these anthologies of connections between slave self and Eternal Lord.

Bursts of Silence

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Inspired aphorisms provide keys to doors of inner knowledge, as well as antidotes to distraction and confusion.

Pointers to Presence

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A collection of aphorisms providing insights into consciousness and are pointers to spiritual awakening.

Ripples of Light

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Inspired aphorisms which become remedies for hearts that seek the truth.

Sound Waves

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A collection of aphorisms that help us reflect and discover the intricate connection between self and soul.

Sublime Gems: Selected Teachings of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani

Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani

A collection of extracted spiritual nourishment from Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani's existing works.

Autobiography

Son of Karbala

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The atmosphere of an Iraq in transition is brought to life and used as a backdrop for the Shaykh's own personal quest for self-discovery and spiritual truth.

Health Sciences and Islamic History

Health Sciences in Early Islam – Volumes 1 & 2

Collected Papers By: Sami K. Hamarneh

Edited By: Munawar A. Anees

Foreword By: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Health Sciences in Early Islam is a pioneering study of Islamic medicine that opens up new chapters of knowledge in the history of the healing sciences. This two volume work covers the development of Islamic medicine between the 6th and 12th centuries A.D.