

## The Effusion of Unseen (Ghaybī) Sciences in Various Spheres of Human Life, Centered on the Verse "Alastu"

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### Abstract

The verse "*Alastu*" is among the verses of the Quran that has brought valuable horizons to scholars in the fields of ontology, anthropology, and even epistemology. In this regard, it not only unveils the depth of human sciences in the realms prior to the realization of individual souls, but also, with the aid of interpretive narrations, proves multiple levels of the effusion of sciences beyond the material world for humanity. The present fundamental study, by content analysis method, aims to discover and analyze the quantity and quality of unseen (*Ghaybī*) sciences before and after birth for humankind. The findings of this article indicate that, based on intra-religious evidence, unseen (*Ghaybī*) sciences are generally effused four times for humankind: "Before birth and in the realm of *Alastu*", "During earthly life", "In sleep", and "After death". Essentially, apart from the first instance, in the other three instances, there are differences depending on the existential capacity of each human being, in terms of being acquired or non-acquired, as well as in terms of being sudden or gradual. Another finding is that the ranking of human beings depends on the second effusion, that is, after birth and throughout earthly life, and is dependent on the path of perfection-seeking and voluntary sciences in the course of earthly life. Furthermore, some effusions, according to

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divine expediency, are accompanied by unawareness and become unconscious, such as the first and third presentations. Also, the fourth presentation is a matter of degree and depends on the cognitive development of each person in earthly life.

**Keywords:** Prior Sciences, Levels of Sciences, Effusion of Sciences, Realms of Existence, Verse of "*Alastu*."

## Introduction

One of the important issues in the field of ontology that the Quran unveils in numerous verses, such as verse 21 of Surah *al-Hijr*, is the existence of two arcs of descent and ascent, as well as the multi-faceted nature of existence in both arcs, and also the formative and ontological presence of man in all realms before the material world in the arc of descent and after the material world in the arc of ascent, depending on the requirements of those realms.

The four realms that, depending on the language of various sciences, are referred to as the "Realm of *Lāhūt*, Divinity, the Divine Court, etc.," "Realm of *Jabarūt*, Treasures, Intellect, Immutable Entities, etc.," "Realm of *Malakūt*, *Barzakh*, the Imaginal Realm, Separate Imagination, Souls, Spirits, Shadows, etc.," and "Realm of *Mulk*, Nature, *Nāsūt*, etc." Furthermore, the Quran claims that just as the world of nature is filled with countless realities and existences, the unseen (*Ghaybī*) realms of existence also possess beings and entities appropriate to themselves and these unseen (*Ghaybī*) realities in the realms beyond matter are far more numerous than the existences in the material world.

The main question in the present writing is 'Whether the ontological presence of human beings in the descending and ascending arcs is accompanied by sciences of the realities of these realms, and thus has an epistemological aspect, or whether it is merely limited to the formative aspect, and humans, especially before birth, have no sciences or awareness. If the former, what is its depth and quality?'

In response, some Quranic scholars, relying on the apparent meaning of a number of Quranic verses, have denied the acquisition of sciences for humankind before birth. Naturally, a thinker who denies prior sciences and considers humans at birth as a blank slate, devoid of prior sciences, has little difficulty in answering this question. Similarly, those epistemologists who deny intuitive sciences and limit sciences to acquired sciences not only have no concern for the world before birth and after death, but also simply reduce sciences to conventional acquired perceptions (acquired, whether sensory or

intellectual) by considering existence as one-dimensional.

In contrast, the ontological researcher who considers existence to be multi-dimensional and also, in the field of epistemology, believes in the absoluteness of the breadth of sciences and also in intuitive sciences and its hierarchical nature, must take a more difficult path to arrive at the correct answer.

The present study attempts to avoid digression by focusing on the revelatory source of sciences (*Wahy*) and examining relevant Quranic verses, such as the verse of "*Fiṭrah*" (al-Rūm/30), the verse of "*Mīthāq*" (Yāsīn/60), and primarily the verse of "*Alastu*," along with interpretive narrations of these verses, alongside related mystical and philosophical claims. The aim is to arrive at an answer befitting a scholarly research article.

From studying and examining these verses and narrations, one can generally understand that human presence in the two arcs of descent and ascent is not merely a formative presence but is accompanied by the bestowal of sciences pertaining to the realities of those realms. Accordingly, the present article, while revisiting each of the realms of existence in the arc of descent and the arc of ascent, will address the possibility of the bestowal and presentation of sciences in the realms of these two arcs.

The foundational propositions and principles considered as presuppositions are the acceptance of the following:

Firstly, humans possess a "Soul and Spirit" (*Nafs* and *Rūḥ*).

Secondly, the soul is "Immaterial" (*Mujarrad*) from matter.

Thirdly, every immaterial being possesses at least self-awareness.

Fourthly, we accept that, based on Quranic appearances, partial souls are eternal and everlasting, not created and perishable. That is, unless we accept that the soul exists and endures before birth and after death, the discussion regarding human possession or deprivation of esoteric sciences related to immaterial realms will not even arise.

## **1. Research Method and Study**

The present research is fundamentally theoretical-basic and of a descriptive-analytical type. It attempts, with an interpretive approach

and focusing on verses (especially the verse known as "*Alastu*") and narrations surrounding these verses, and using a library research method, to investigate the quantity and quality of human sciences in three lives: "Before Birth," "After Birth," and "After Death," through content analysis and exploration of the interpretive texts of philosophers and mystics.

## 2. Conceptology

To avoid problems of homonymy, it is necessary to define some of the words used in the title of this article at the outset:

"*Ifāda*" is derived from the root "*Fayḍ*" and in the terminology of Islamic mysticism, it means: "An increase beyond what the receptacle can hold, because the receptacle only holds what it can contain, which is the measure and the aspect that the creature can bear..." (Raḥīq al-‘Ajām, 1999: 740) Based on this definition, *Ifāda* is an additional imperative, and three elements must be considered: "*Fayyāḍ*," "The place of *Fayḍ*," and "The object of *Fayḍ*." One party, which is the *Fayyāḍ*, possesses something that the other party lacks, and that is none other than God Almighty, who possesses all perfections. The other party (e.g., human), which is the receptacle of effusion, is devoid of the object of effusion and must acquire it. However, the object of effusion in the discussion of this article is "Unseen (*Ghaybī*) Sciences."

"Science (*‘Ilm*)" in the view of Muslim epistemologists, including followers of Avicenna, *Shaykh Ishrāq*, and *Mullā Ṣadrā*, is absolute sciences, whether acquired (*Ḥuṣūlī*) or presential (*Ḥudūrī*), with all its types and levels (Karimiyan, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 15). Consequently, the meaning of "Unseen (*Ghaybī*) Sciences" is presential sciences of the type of unveiling (*Kashf*) and witnessing (*Shuhūd*) of realities related to realms beyond the material world, which are not even perceived by conventional perceptions, i.e., the five senses, and consequently, by posterior reasoning.

"Realms (*Sāḥat* or *‘Awālim*)" is the four levels of existence in the descending and ascending arc, which are "*Lāhūt*, *Jabarūt*, *Malakūt*, and *Mulk*." However, since the latter three realms are considered

manifestations of the first realm, namely "*Lāhūt*," in philosophy and mysticism, only the latter three realms are referred to as "World" (*Ālam*) (Jirar Jahami, 1998: 563).

Based on the verses of the Quran (such as al-Ḥijr/21), every material manifestation of existence, including humans, is realized within the four realms of "*Lāhūt*," "*Khazā'in* or *Jabarūt*," "*Qadr* or *Malakūt*," and "World or *Mulk*."

The Quran, in another classification, names the realm of the hereafter as the "World of witnessing," and the other three realms as the "World of the unseen (*Ghaybī*)," based on the epistemic access of the knowing agent (al-An'ām/73; al-Tawbah/94 and 105; al-Ra'd/9; al-Mu'minūn/92; al-Sajdah/6; al-Zumar/41; al-Ḥashr/22; al-Jumu'ah/8; al-Taghābun/18). Furthermore, according to the Quran, these realms also contain infinite, enigmatic realities and matters that humans have the capacity and potential to recognize (al-Tawbah/72; al-Nahl/41; al-Isrā'/21).

"Realms of Human Existence": Philosophers and mystics, corresponding to the realms of existence, have enumerated four realms for human life and existence, which are: "Human of *Lāhūt*," "Human of *Jabarūt*," "Human of *Malakūt*" and "Human of *Mulk*." (Sabzewari, Commentary on 1981: 8, 134; 9, 71)

The Verse of "*Alastu*": This refers to the verse "*Wa Idh Akhadha Rabbuka min Banī Ādam min Zuhūrihim Dhurrīyyatahum wa aAhhadahum 'alā Anfusihim Alastu Birabbikum? Qālū Ballā, Shahidnā an Taqūlū Yawm al-Qiyāmah innā Kunnā 'an Hādhā Ghāfilīn*," (al-A'rāf/172) which has received significant attention from commentators, Islamic philosophers, and Muslim mystics, and contains a vast treasure of issues in the fields of ontology and anthropology.

### 3. Background

Despite searching in indexes such as "National Library and Archives Organization," "Noormags," and "SID," no independent work was found that, under the title of this article, addresses the quantity and quality of intuitive sciences in the Verse of *Alastu* and then compares

this realm of existence with other realms of existence in terms of the intended aspect. However, some works that have a look at the variables in the title include:

1) Mofatteh et al., in their article "The Covenant of *Alast* and a Critique of the Views of Commentators from Both Sects Regarding the Verse of the Covenant," (Mofatteh et al., 2016 AD/1395 SH: 128-153) as is clear from the title, are concerned with discovering whether esoteric and celestial findings are authoritative for those in the earthly realm. In other words, can findings related to the realm of the Kingdom (*Malakūt*) be prioritized over what the senses and intellects influenced by the senses perceive in earthly life? As can be observed, this article pays no attention to the totality of the unseen (*Ghaybī*) realms and only focuses on a scholarly effort to discuss the authority of the latter two realms over each other.

2) Siyah Koohiyan, in the article "The Witnessing of the Divine Time in Islamic Mysticism," (Siyah Koohiyan, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 223-236) attempts to argue that in the realm of *Alast*, sciences distinct from time is attained by the individual. Fundamentally, the existence has several levels, and the interrelation of these realms with each other, as well as the extent of sciences and truths in each of the realms, and whether these sciences are acquired or non-acquired, and other matters have not been examined.

3) Khavaninzadeh, in the article "Explanation of the Geometry of Sciences in Quranic Thought," discusses the relationship and encounter of sciences with the evolution and transcendence of personality from the perspective of the Quran, as well as the inherent characteristics of sciences (Khavaninzadeh, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 57-80).

4) Shayesteh Nezhad, in the article "Human in the World before the World," not only does not pay attention to all the worlds before the material world, but is only focused on the world of Imagination (*Mithāl*). Also, despite the repeated use of the verse of *Alast*, no attention has been paid to the epistemological issue of man, even in the world of *Alast* (Shayestehnezhad, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 127-146).

However, among the interpretive, mystical, and philosophical books,

as mentioned, no independent book or even an independent section of a work that is close to the focus of this article has been observed. This statement does not mean denying the partial attention of some researchers. For example, Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī in the book "*al-Mīzān fī Tafṣīr al-Quran*" and also his student, Allamah Javadi Amoli in the book "Tasnim," as well as numerous other sources that have been used in the compilation of this article, have stated points depending on the context of the discussion, but in no way do they correspond to the main structure of this article.

#### **4. First Manifestation: "Witnessing the Detailed in a Summary Form (*Shuhūd al-Mufaṣṣal Mujmalan*)" before Birth**

The Quran considers the *Fiṭrah* (primordial nature) as a vessel for wisdom and sciences (Javadi Amoli, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 443-444). Based on the apparent evidence from numerous religious sources, not only did human souls exist in the unseen (*Ghaybī*) realms before birth (the pre-existence of the soul), but they were also sciencesable of sciences at the level of those realms (Sabzevari, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 408). Among these verses, the one that has received the most attention from commentators, especially commentators of Mysticism and Wisdom, is the verse known as the "*Alastu*" verse, in which God says:

"*Wa Idh Akhadha Rabbuka min Banī Ādam min Zuhūrihim Dhurrīyyatahum wa aAhhadahum 'alā Anfusihim Alastu Birabbikum? Qālū Ballā, Shahidnā an Taqūlū Yawm al-Qiyāmah innā Kunnā 'an Hādhā Ghāfilīn*" (al-A'rāf/172) means: "And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This was] lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware."

Not only interpretive narrations (Şaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 71; Furāt Kūfī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 148-149), but also scholars of exegesis, philosophy, and mysticism (Tustarī, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 68; Junayd, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 134 and 149; Ghazālī, n.d.: 1, 148; Abī Yāsir 'Ammār bin Muḥammad Badlīsī, 1999: 56; Baqlī, 2008: 1, 491;



Ibn Fāriḍ, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 83, 95, 169 and 189) explicitly state that this verse – which recounts a discourse based on heart-based witnessing in the realms prior to matter, indicates the intuitive and pre-existing sciences of humankind.

Based on the ontological foundations of Islamic wisdom, the highest form of sciences is witnessing the truth that existence is nothing but the One Existence with numerous manifestations (‘Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, 1961 AD/1341 SH: 29; Nasafi, 1972 AD/1352 SH: 277; Mullā Ṣadrā, 1981: 1, 46-47; Tehrani, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 1, 66). That is the Absolute One Existence of God, which is the text and arena of existence. All longitudinal and latitudinal realms of multiplicity and creation exist, but in a limited, integrated, and diminished manner, as shadows, absorbed and immersed in the Essence and Names of God. Existence has only one text and arena, and that is the Existence of God Almighty. Multiplicities are modes and aspects of that same One Text (Qaysari Rumi, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 702; Mullā Ṣadrā, 1981: 1, 46 and 80-81).

Mystics have offered numerous analogies for this unity within multiplicity, including the analogy of the "Mirror." When a person stands before several mirrors with varying concavities and convexities, their image will naturally appear different in each mirror. In such a situation, we are faced with a single person whose different manifestations are revealed in different contexts. This multiplicity of manifestations does not lead to multiplicity in the essence of that person; rather, they remain the same single truth, only appearing in diverse forms. Similarly, in the theory of the unity of existence (*Waḥdat al-Wujūd*), we have a single, absolute essence with countless manifestations and appearances (Yazdanpanah, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 165).

In any case, this multiplicity contained within unity in the realm of ontology can be interpreted in two ways:

A) *Shahūd al-Mujmal Muḩaṣṣalan (Ru'yat al-Aḩadīyyah fī al-Kathra: Seeing Oneness in Multiplicity)*: The intention behind seeing the One in the Many is that the essence of God Almighty finds itself as the

single self in which multiplicities are immersed. All longitudinal and latitudinal multiplicities exist through relational existence and are dependent on Him, arising and manifesting through His merciful breath. Therefore, God Almighty knows things with comprehensive sciences that are simultaneously detailed (Ashtiyani, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 318). All immutable archetypes (*A'yān Thābita*) and possible quiddities (*Māhīyyat Imkānīyyah*) are witnessed by God in a detailed manifestation. The archetypes and longitudinal and latitudinal multiplicities, following the divine names and attributes, are realized in the station of Oneness (*Wāḥidīyya*) through conceptual affirmation and the cognitive determination of God Almighty (Ashtiyani, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 328). The world is a manifestation, and the friend is the manifest, the whole world is filled with His epiphany (Kharazmi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 524). The merciful soul and the Sacred Effusion, when contemplating itself, finds itself to be the inner reality and truth of all beings, in such a way that everything is manifested to it (Manifestation Epiphany) ('Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, 1961 AD/1341 SH: 29; Nasafī, 1972 AD/1352 SH: 277; Mullā Ṣadrā, 1981: 1, 46-47; Tehrani, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 1, 66). Therefore, it possesses detailed intuitive sciences of all manifestations and appearances (Ashtiyani, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 358).

B) *Shahūd al-Mujmal Mufaṣṣalan (Ru'yatul Kathrah fī al-Dhāt al-Aḥadīyyah: Seeing Multiplicity in the One Essence)*: The purpose of seeing multiplicity in unity is a revelatory witnessing from the creature. It is that he finds himself and all accidental and longitudinal multiplicities immersed in the One, Unique Existence, and existing by the being of the Exalted Truth (Qaysari Rumi, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 56; Ashtiyani, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 188). Therefore, this type of witnessing is attained by servants and is the Kaaba of the hopes of mystics and the ultimate degree of mystical journey and spiritual striving (Kāshānī, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 135). The impeccable Imam requests it thus: "O God! I ask You for the pleasure of gazing upon Your Noble Countenance." (Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, 1947 AD/1367 AH: 612)

Now that we know where the highest level of sciences and scientific development lies, the question is, if man possessed sciences

before birth, to what extent is the depth of these revelatory sciences?

Commentators from the people of unveiling and mysticism believe that the phrase "And made them bear witness against themselves" in the verse famous as "*Alastu*" refers to the unveiling of "Annihilation of existence in the Divine Essence" and the witnessing of the "Manifestation of the Essence and Attributes of the Lord in the multiplicities of existence" by the spirits (Baqī, 2008: 1, 492) and "Witnessing the detailed in a summary." (Jandī, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 142; Qaysari Rumi, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 56; Jurjānī, 1950 AD/1370 AH: 15; Jabalī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 114; Jāmī, 1950 AD/1370 AH: 34, 41, 53; Sirhindī, n.d.: 1, 16; Khomeini, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 15-16) Therefore, the spirits of all humans (Attar Nishapuri, 2009 AD/1430 AH: 633; Asiri Lahiji, 1932 AD/1312 SH: 108; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 83) – and not specific humans – in the realm of atoms and before the realization of the material body, attained the deepest level of revelatory sciences.

The important point is that the verses of the Quran and also mystical claims appear in this reality that the initial presentation of sciences in the realm of *Alast* was sudden and actual (Amoli, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 5, 361), including all sciences in various realms of existence (Amoli, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 539; Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 1, 181).

The Greatest Name is with us, ancient, that is, "In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful." (Shams Maghrebi, 1979 AD/1358 SH: 266)

For, in a narration from Imam *Bāqir* (AS), it is narrated that the soul of the infant, before physical birth, is also aware of all the destinies and details of his worldly life, and every moment of his optional worldly life that occurs for him after birth is dictated to him compulsorily before birth (Kulaynī, 1945 AD/1365 AH: 6, 13-15).

Therefore, assuming the acceptance of these insights, not only is a human being not a blank slate at birth, devoid of sciences, but they are equipped with the highest level of sciences and insights, indeed the ultimate degree conceivable for humankind (Ibn 'Arabī, 1950 AD/1370 AH: 2, 72).

But what is the philosophy behind possessing all these sciences? Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) considers the philosophy of such a matter to be that if God had not taught these sciences to humans before earthly life and had not intertwined human nature with them, humanity would not have been able to learn and understand who their Creator and Sustainer is during their earthly life (Qummī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 248). In other words, if the constant power of perceiving the One in absolute unity were not inherent in human nature and a matter of *Fiṭrah* (Jawadi Amoli, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 443), no one would find their way to it through their own efforts, and we would be an example of "*Lan Ta 'lamū*" (you will not know) rather than "*Lā Ta 'lamūn*" (you do not know).

#### **4.1. Birth as a Factor of Neglect or Forgetfulness of "*Shuhūd al-Mafaṣṣal Mujmalan*" (Witnessing the Detailed in Summary)**

It appears from the narrations that divine wisdom has decreed that all of humanity's prior sciences regarding the unseen (*Ghaybī*) realms of existence should be subject to forgetfulness or neglect (Barqī, 1951 AD/1371 SH: 1, 281), and not the conventional "Ignorance" (Amoli, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 313; *ibid*: 2001 AD/1422 AH: 1, 411; Jiyli, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 64; Sha'rānī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 206; Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 1, 181). That is, this science is with humans in an "Unconscious" form. Therefore, the human journey in earthly life is not a journey from ignorance to sciences, but rather their state is one of remembrance and recollection after neglect and forgetfulness of what was known; but not with the understanding that the Platonists had, who considered the teacher's role to be the "Reminiscence" of the soul's sciences in the "World of *Muthul*." (al-Dhārīyāt/21)

Humanity enters the world outside the mother's womb in such a way that it seems as if it knows nothing, and not that it actually knows nothing. Indeed, we all find through direct experience in our newborns that they know nothing, and no sign of sciences is seen in them, and for many years they need the scientific supervision of their parents and even make mistakes in their decisions.

#### **4.2. The Philosophy of Neglecting "*Shuhūd al-Mufaṣṣal Mujmalan*"**

It seems that one of the wisdoms behind this neglect is to provide a natural ground for the voluntary development of each person's status and, consequently, for the wise ranking of human beings' affairs in relation to each other and in comparison with other creatures. It is as if God has orchestrated such neglect for humankind so that the impact of intervening variables in humanity's evolutionary journey throughout earthly life is neutralized, and humans are truly placed in a testing ground. This allows each person's worth to be determined by the extent of their effort to discover the hidden truths of existence, rather than by innate, non-acquired sciences. God has made it difficult for humans to grasp the secrets of the supernatural in earthly life so that none of us would consider ourselves superior to others for free.

Furthermore, its wisdom can be seen as preventing compulsory submission. If humans could see the inner reality of their actions and thoughts with a divine eye, would there be any room left for error and corruption? It is said that the secret of the infallibility of prophets, imams, mystics, and even angels lies in this. When they reach the stage of witnessing the realm of the Divine Kingdom in the course of their mystical journey, this acquired science helps them to refrain from committing ugly deeds even more. Although sciences of the inner reality of actions in the Divine Kingdom is not a sufficient condition for abandoning sins, if all humans were to encounter even this much of the inner reality of their actions, undoubtedly many of them would refrain from committing such actions and would be compelled in their actions and thoughts.

#### **5. Second Presentation: Regarding the Existential Capacity of the Seeker in Worldly Life**

It appears from some religious documents and some mystical confessions that the ultimate degree of intuition, namely "*Shuhūd al-Mufaṣṣal Mujmalan*" and the discovery of the annihilation of existence in the Essence and Attributes of God, is the very goal for which humans were created. After the imposed neglect, they must

strive to recall it (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1981: 1, 46-47; 'Ayn al-Qudāt Hamadānī, 1921 AD/1341 AH: 29; Nasafi, 1972 AD/1352 SH: 277; Tehrani, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 1, 66; Ashtiyani, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 328; *ibid*: 1997 AD/1376 SH: 318).

It should be clarified that the states of human beings in worldly life are not uniform, and the rank of each person depends on the nature of their mystical journey and the extent of their witnessing of the unseen (*Ghaybī*) realms (Rafā'ī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 94). The Quran believes that the best type of journey is a perfection-seeking, voluntary, and scientific journey, in the light of which the traveling human being can, while living in the world of matter and nature (the world of "Mulk"), expand their intuitive capacity to discover the truths of the world of "*Malakūt*," then witness the world of "*Jabarūt*," and finally, attain the existential breadth to discover the most secret of existence, namely, the witnessing of the Divine Essence and Attributes in the realm of Divinity and *Lāhūt*. It is in the light of this sciences that one finds that everything in the material world has an inner dimension in the realm of *Lāhūt*, and that one has not only a "*Mulk* self" but also a "*Malakūt* self," a "*Jabarūt* self," and a "*Lāhūt* self" (Gunābādī, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 2, 216). Not only oneself, but all of existence, are annihilated in the annihilation of God and, through serial gradation, are gathered in the One. Therefore, if a being reaches the station of witnessing the Divine realm, their witnessing and awareness of the realms below that realm will be inevitable, for "When one hundred arrives, ninety is also present with us."

In conclusion, man is created to recall all his previous sciences, including the primordial covenant and encounter. This is not only not impossible (Jiyālī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 64), but has also actually happened. For example, some confessions in this regard are mentioned:

- 1) When the verse "And when your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants..." was recited to Imam Ali (AS), he wept and said: "I remember the time when God Almighty took the covenant from us." (Allamah Ḥillī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 419).
- 2) It is attributed to *Sahl ibn 'Abdullāh Tustarī* that he said: "I have

known my students since the Day of *Alast*, and I have been training them since then, until now that they have been naturally born from their mothers and joined me." (Sha‘rānī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 1, 206)

3) *Sha‘rānī* also claimed that if someone considers himself an Arif (Gnostic) and *Murād* (spiritual guide) but does not recognize his *Murīds* (disciples) on the Day of *Alast*, he is lying (Sha‘rānī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 24).

4) Some mystics have also claimed that as a result of mystical journeying and spiritual exercises, they have reached a point where even if the verses of the covenant had not been revealed, they would still remember what happened before birth in the realm of *Alast*, which they had forgotten due to birth and engagement in worldly affairs, and are now witnessing that divine scene (Ibn ‘Arabī, n.d.: 1, 670; Kāshānī, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 385 and 680).

Although the soul possesses a wealth of authentic sciences and wisdom before the world of matter and birth, with birth, on the one hand, it becomes bewildered by worldly appearances, and on the other hand, by committing sins, this sciences becomes more hidden, and this precious treasure is afflicted with negligence (Ibn ‘Arabī, n.d.: 1, 381; Shabestari, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 17). Therefore, over time, through the external and internal senses, and through mystical journeying and spiritual exercises, he must prepare himself to recover the sciences he found in the covenant and the initial presentation (Ibn ‘Arabī, n.d.: 4, 268). It is at this time that a second presentation takes shape, but this time, unlike the first time, it is no longer obligatory but rather acquired and the product of the seeker's merit and the expediency of the Almighty.

## **6. The Third Presentation: To the Seeker's Existential Capacity in Sleep**

Divine grace has decreed that in sleep, it is possible for every human being to have the presentation of the unseen (*Ghaybī*) realms to the extent of his intuitive capacity in his worldly wakefulness, and his spirit, which is referred to in narrations as the "Spirit of Intellect," has an intuitive journey in the world of dreams. "The Spirit of Intellect,"

which is the same ancient spirit in the realm of atoms and is breathed into the fetus during gestation, becomes detached from the management and distracting engagement with the body during sleep and engages in the discovery of the realities of the realms beyond matter. This causes the individual to remember some future events that he saw in the kingdom of existence when he wakes up from sleep, and to express that it is as if he has seen these scenes before.

Imam Ali (AS), the Commander of the Faithful, stated:

"When a person sleeps, the spirit of life remains in the body, and only the spirit of intellect depart from it." (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 58, 43)

But where does this spirit go when it separates from the body during sleep?

Imam *Bāqir* (AS) stated in a narration:

"There is no one who sleeps but that his soul ascends to the heavens... [A metaphor for realms beyond the material world]" (Ṭabrisī, 1952 AD/1372 AH: 8, 404)

In those realms, the soul repeatedly witnesses countless realities and then carries them with it upon awakening and renewed engagement in managing the body. That is, after the two previous presentations – the "Obligatory presentation in the realm of *Alast*" and the "Voluntary presentation in worldly life, influenced by the voluntary path of perfection" – we have a third presentation of realities that is also not within our control and to which we are subjected during sleep. However, God's wisdom has decreed that we should be oblivious to this third presentation, remembering only a small portion of it, mostly related to the material future and upcoming events, when their time arrives.

But why do we not remember all of our observations during our dreamlike journey in the realms beyond the material world? What is the philosophy behind this second forgetting? Perhaps the answer is similar to the reason for forgetting after birth. That is, if the ranking of people depends on their voluntary actions, then any factor that has a neutralizing and negative effect on that evaluation must be diminished so that people freely choose happiness and misery, not by coercion or



psychological pressure.

### **7. The Fourth Presentation: To the Existential Capacity of the Seeker (*Sālik*) After Death**

With death, another presentation of unseen (*Ghaybī*) knowledge and true sciences occurs, but not the second presentation (Ikhwan al-Safa, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 3, 219), but the fourth presentation. God says in this regard:

"[It will be said to him], You were certainly in heedlessness of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp." (Qāf/22)

Because the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) said: "People are asleep, and when they die, they awaken." (Warām ibn Abī Firās, n.d.: 1, 150)

Interestingly, in none of these four presentations is any human being excluded, and humankind, through intuitive discovery, gains sciences of the realities of the unseen (*Ghaybī*) world. Even in the second presentation, which is acquired, there is no prohibition from the side of the unseen (*Ghaybī*) realities for humans, unless someone deprives themselves with their own hands.

Now, the question is, in the fourth presentation, what realities are revealed to humans and at what level?

We know that the Resurrection (or the realm of the *Malakūt*), is the key to entering and the first step in discovering the unseen (*Ghaybī*) realms of existence (Ghazālī, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 539). But are all human beings, upon death, made aware of all the unseen (*Ghaybī*) realms of existence? There is no doubt that the world of matter, compared to the world of the Kingdom, and also the world of the Kingdom compared to the world of Dominion, and also the world of Dominion compared to the realm of Divinity, is nothing more than a dream (Ghazālī, n.d.: 11, 179; ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, 1962: 51-52; Jām, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 232; Ibn ‘Arabī, n.d.: 1, 313; 2, 351; ibid.: 1950 AD/1370 AH: 2, 219-220; Qaysari Rumi, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 564 and 721). But is death absolute awakening, in such a way that with it, the realities of all realms are revealed to humans all

at once? Or is the revelation there general but gradual? Or does the revelation of the unseen (*Ghaybī*) worlds there depend on the worldly status of individuals and the development of sciences in worldly life?

The language of the verses and narrations, in general, is detailed in response to these questions, and it is understood that the state of individuals after death - in terms of the revelation of unseen (*Ghaybī*) realities - is not the same. For example, the Quran, with the verse: "And whoever is blind in this [life] will be blind in the Hereafter and further astray in way," (al-Isrā'/72) generally restricts the verse: "You were certainly unmindful of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp," (Qāf/22) and shows that some people in that abode will be deprived of the revelation of realities. This blindness and deprivation is not visual blindness, but rather blindness of insight.

Furthermore, Imam *Riḍā* (AS) in his decree to *Ishāq ibn Ismā'īl* considered the intended meaning of worldly blindness in the verse to be blindness of the heart, not physical blindness (Kashshī, 1969 AD/1348 AH: 575). Nevertheless, these kinds of narrations, regarding the questions raised, possess ambiguity and vagueness. This very ambiguity has led existentialist interpreters, drawing from the traditions of philosophy and mysticism, to elaborate and interpret this collection of evidence, bequeathing a valuable discourse inspired by the guidance of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS).

For example, the late Qaysari, in his commentary on the verse "We have removed from you your covering, so your sight, this Day, is sharp," (Qāf/22) believes that this verse does not contradict the verse: "And whoever is blind in this [life] will be blind in the Hereafter and further astray in way." He believes that blindness in the Hereafter is relative and influenced by the extent of each person's unveiling and witnessing in worldly life, and in comparison to blindness from our witnessing of God. Therefore, the perfect human being who, in worldly life, has succeeded in witnessing the vastness of the Essence of the Almighty and the Absolute Unity in the realm of *Lāhūt* and Divinity, will, after death, witness not only the realities of the realm of *Malakūt* and *Jabarūt*, but also the realities of *Lāhūt*. But a person,

who, in worldly life, has only succeeded in witnessing the realm of *Jabarūt*, will also, in the Hereafter, in addition to the unveiling of *Malakūt*, perceive the realities of the realm of *Jabarūt*. But a person who, in worldly life, has perceived, in addition to the world of *Mulk*, the world of *Malakūt*, or that person who is only preoccupied with the world of *Mulk* and is unable to comprehend the world of *Malakūt*, will, after death, only find the realities of the world of *Malakūt*, which is the inner dimension of the world of *Mulk* (Qaysari Rumi, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 564 and 721). That is, after death, not all realms are manifest for everyone, but are relative, and only for someone who has found a path to the realm of *Lāhūt* in worldly life, no realm is "Unseen (*Ghaybī*)," and all are "Manifest," although for others, some realms will still be "Realms of the unseen (*Ghaybī*)" in proportion to the person's level of sciences.

Thus, through death, the possibility of lifting all veils entirely exists (Tustarī, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 152). However, its extent, considering hadiths such as the saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): "A man dies in the state he lived in, and he will be resurrected in the state he died in." (Warām ibn Abī Farās, n.d.: 2, 133; Ibn ‘Arabī, 1950 AD/1370 AH: 2, 315; Dabbāgh, n.d.: 13)

Depending on one's worth and merit, one progresses and evolves in this worldly life (Baqī, 2008: 2, 374; Sha‘rānī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 650; Dehdar, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 208; Ibn Nāblusī, 2008 AD/1429 AH: 2, 30; Hasan Zadeh Amoli, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 1, 229), and one enters the afterlife in the same state as one lived in this world. However, the unveiling of the realities of the realm of *Malakūt*, which is the closest realm to the material realm, is a certainty of witnessing after death (Ibn ‘Arabī, n.d.: 4, 424), even for those who did not attain a *Malakūti* eye in this world.

Indeed, from the verse "And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind," (Ṭāhā/124) it can be understood that whoever's heart was blind in this worldly life, unable to see the Benefactor, and turned away from the Divine Truth, will also be blind in the Hereafter and will not see the Benefactor (Tustarī,

2002 AD/1423 AH: 96; Qushayrī, n.d.: 2, 486; Mullā Quṭb, 1964 AD/1384 AH: 445). Tasting the pleasure of nearness to the True Beloved is an injustice to those who have attained union with the Friend in the commotion of the afterlife for a heart that did not desire the True Beloved in this worldly life and did not enjoy divine intimacy (Hajwīrī, 2007 AD/1428 AH: 85; Ibn ‘Arabī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 15), and their punishment is nothing but the ever-increasing fire of separation from the pleasure that the content souls enjoy (Qushayrī, n.d.: 2, 362). That eye which was not adorned with the kohl of guidance and was immersed in carnal desires and illusory anxieties – in a word, whoever blinded the eye of their heart in this world will also be blind and veiled there (Tehrani, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 5, 222).

According to Imam *Bāqir* (AS), how many are those who not only do not want to attain the unseen (*Ghaybī*) reality through intuitive unveiling, but also through rational analysis, and even deprive themselves of rational sciences of the Divine Truth, and in reality, they are the blind in the Hereafter (Shaykh Ṣadūq, 1978 AD/1398 AH: 1, 174). It has been said that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) described the state of these people on the Day of Judgment as follows: "One of them will say on the Day of Judgment: "O! Lord, my God!" A voice will come: "Do not call upon Me, for you did not recognize Me in the world." (‘Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, 1921 AD/1341 AH: 59) So, whoever is blind to the sciences of God in this world will be blind to the vision of God in the Hereafter. "No! Indeed, from their Lord, that Day, they will be veiled," (al-Muṭaffifīn/15) "By no means! Surely, they will be veiled from their Lord on that Day."

In conclusion, in the fourth presentation of sciences, which occurs in the afterlife, although the witnessing of the most secret mysteries of existence, namely, the unveiling and intuitive perception of the Divine Essence, Attributes, and Names, is possible in the realm of *Lāhūt* and according to the expansive existence of individuals, the witnessing of each level and realm depends on the extent to which each person has remembered the sciences from the first presentation in the realm of *Alast* through their worldly journey of perfection. The most painful torment in the afterlife is realizing that before our worldly creation, we

"Knew Everything," but due to our mismanagement, we did not recall them in our worldly life and in the afterlife, we will envy those Gnostic and realized beings that are immersed in the ecstasies and delights of witnessing Divine proximity and intimacy.


### Conclusion

After reviewing the evidence presented in this discourse, the findings of this writing can be summarized as follows:

1. Not only is possessing prior sciences not impossible, but before creation and in the first presentation of sciences, an acknowledgment was taken from humanity regarding all sciences and wisdom related to the most secret mystery of existence, so that humanity would not have an excuse in the afterlife claiming ignorance of it.
2. Before birth, hidden sciences were presented to humankind at the highest level, not just to prophets and divine saints.
3. Since this degree of witnessing is predicated on, and indeed encompasses, the witnessing of lower realms, in the first presentation, humankind gained sciences not only of the realm of *Lāhūt* but also of the realms of *Mulk*, *Malakūt*, and *Jabarūt*.
4. Hidden sciences are presented to humankind three more times, apart from the first presentation, namely, in worldly life, during sleep, and in life after death.
5. Among these presentations, the first, third and fourth presentations are obligatory, and only the second presentation is realized through voluntary action.
6. The scope of the third and fourth presentations depends on the development of intuitive perception in the second presentation.

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