



تَجَلِّي الأَسْمَاءِ

Tajalli al-Asma'

A Guide to Unfolding the Names

A framework for human agency, divine unfolding, and the cultivation of good

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of God, the Infinitely Merciful, the Especially Merciful

Preface

If you carry a sense that what you most deeply have to offer has not yet found its fullest form, that the purpose you are living is real but partial, that there is something more specific, more genuinely yours, still waiting to be brought forth, you are *not* imagining it. And you are *not* alone in it.

That sense is not ingratitude for what has already been given or achieved. Nor is it a sign that something has gone wrong. In fact, the opposite. In the account this school is built on, it is a precise and accurate perception: the soul's recognition that its particular configuration of divine names has not yet been fully expressed or is moving to a name where it expresses itself better. It is pointing at something real.

For some, this sense is a quiet background hum beneath a functioning life, present but not urgent, the shape of something not yet named but perceptible nonetheless. For others, it is more acute: the weight of years in which what you carried found no space to be expressed, the accumulated experience of being overlooked or dismissed, the conclusion reached gradually and painfully that what you have to offer is not needed, not worthy, or that the time for it has passed. For others the fear of being shut out halts the race even before it has begun.

If you are in any of these positions, especially the second, the traditions this school is built on have something specific to say to you. Your *fitra*, the original natural disposition every soul is born with, is not undone by what life does to it. The names inscribed in you before you had any say in the matter were not inscribed conditionally. They are not diminished by years of not being brought forth. They are *latent*, not absent. Obscured, not destroyed. They *wait*.

And when they finally flow, in the person who had almost given up on the possibility, the *tajalli* (the unfolding of divine reality in Sufi thought) that results is not merely equivalent to that of someone who has had every condition for expression. It is unexpected, novel, unmistakable. The divine reality disclosing itself through a configuration the world had written off carries a particular force. Not despite the suppression. In some sense

because of it. These are the unfoldings the world could not have anticipated. And they are among the most needed.

This guide is built for the full range of that experience, for those in whom the sense of unlived purpose is a quiet hum and for those in whom it has become a weight. For those whose names have been flowing partially and for those in whom they have barely begun.

The Guide, *Tajalli al-Asma'*, is not a political movement, a sect, or an organisation, and it is not a substitute for Islamic practice. It introduces no new obligations. Nothing in this framework alters what is obligatory, what is prohibited, or what the tradition has always distinguished as matters of *fard*. The voluntary practices that communities engaged with this framework may develop, like recommended *dhikr*, name-oriented reflection, the rhythms of a particular *tariqa's* or Sufi order's *wird* (litany), sit within the same category as the voluntary practices Sufi orders have long cultivated alongside obligatory Islamic practice, not in place of it.

Indeed, the primary practice this framework cultivates is not interior recitation but *outward* faithful work, the expression of divine names through what each person does in the world. A Muslim engaging with this framework does so from within their existing tradition, carrying what they already practice into fuller conscious expression. The framework is a lens, not a liturgy.

The framework describes three natural stages for those who engage with it:

- 1) The *Salik al-Asma'* or *Salik* (“the Name Seeker”), is someone in the process of discovering which divine names most naturally express themselves through their particular configuration of gifts, personality, and circumstance.
- 2) The *Mujalli al-Asma'* or *Mujalli* (“the Name Expresser / Manifester of the Names”) has surfaced enough of their configuration to be actively expressing it, bringing what they carry into real work in the domain where it belongs. And as part of that expression, the *Mujalli al-Asma'* can act in the following role,

- 3) A *Kashif al-Asma'* (“Name Revealer / Unveiler of the Names”) for those earlier in the process, helping them surface what was always already inscribed in them.

These are not ranks. They are stages of a single continuous unfolding that no one ever completes, because the names go deeper than any lifetime of discovery.

The Qur’anic and hadith basis for this framework is provided throughout the text, with chapter and verse numbers for Qur’anic citations and collection names for hadith. Scholars whose thought informs the framework are identified and their works noted throughout with scholarly tradition summary found at the end of the guide. The reader is invited to verify, explore, and go deeper.

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I. A Cosmos Still Unfolding

The Qur'an opens with a declaration that resonates through everything that follows. Al-Fatiha, the Opening, addresses God as *Rabb al-'Alamin*: Lord of the Worlds, plural. Not one world, finished and sealed. Worlds, vast, multiple, and still in the care of the one who sustains them.

This is *not* a static picture. The Qur'an returns repeatedly to the image of a creation in motion, continuously sustained, never simply left to run. As the Qur'an says:

كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ

*"Day in and day out He has something to bring about."*¹

— Qur'an 55:29

The divine involvement in creation is not a past event. It is continuous, active, and inexhaustible. The universe is not a completed object, it is an *ongoing* act of divine generosity, perpetually bringing forth new realities.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

"We built the universe with great might, and We are certainly expanding it."

— Qur'an 51:47

The thirteenth-century Andalusian mystic Ibn 'Arabi, drawing on these verses, developed a profound account of what this continuous divine activity means. He called it *tajalli*, divine self-disclosure, or more precisely: the unfolding of divine reality into the world. *Tajalli* is the process by which God's attributes, like mercy, justice, beauty, generosity, or life, become expressed and real within creation. It is never repeated. Each moment of *tajalli* is utterly unique.

The philosopher Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi, writing in twelfth-century Persia, described the same reality through the language of light. God is *Nur al-Anwar* or The Light of Lights. All of creation is a cascade of lights proceeding from that infinite source, each level deriving its reality and luminosity from proximity to the divine origin.

¹All Qur'an quotations are from the Mustafa Khattab translation (*The Clear Quran*) which is available via quran.com. All Sunnah translations are from sunnah.com unless otherwise noted.

The cosmos is not empty space interrupted by occasional fire and rock. It is the continuous emanation of light becoming real in form. These are not merely poetic images. They describe a universe in which *something* is *always* happening, in which divine reality is *always* pressing outward into actuality.

Yet, what is the human being's role in that ongoing unfolding?

“He increases in creation what He wills.”

— Qur'an 35:1

II. The Human Station

The Qur'an's account of the creation of the human being is one of its most remarkable passages. When God announces to the angels His intention to place a *khalifa*, a vicegerent, an active representative, upon the earth, the angels are troubled. They ask: will You place there one who causes corruption and sheds blood? (2:30)

God does not dismiss their concern. He responds by teaching Adam the names of all things, a comprehensive knowledge that the angels, for all their obedience, do not possess. The human being is given something unique: the capacity to know, to name, to engage with reality in its full complexity. This is the *very* reason for the appointment.

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا

“He taught Adam the names of all things,”

— Qur'an 2:31

The Arabic of 2:31 says simply *al-asma' kullaha*, the names, all of them. The definite article in the phrase, *al-* “the”, makes them specific but the verse does not itself specify *whose* names or names of *what*. The dominant classical reading, represented by scholars like Ibn Abbas, al-Tabari, and the majority of the *tafsir* tradition (*tafsir* meaning scholarly Qur'anic commentary and interpretation, a discipline spanning fourteen centuries of Islamic scholarship), is that these are the names of created things, *asma' al-ashya'*, a comprehensive knowledge of all that exists in creation.

By contrast, Ibn 'Arabi's reading, which this framework draws on, identifies them with the divine names, the *asma' al-husna*, as a *ta'wil*, an interior (*batin*) interpretive reading that goes beyond the literal and the dominant exterior or exoteric (*zahir*) meaning while remaining coherent within the tradition's own metaphysics.

The two readings are not as disconnected as they first appear. In Ibn 'Arabi's understanding the names of all created things and the divine names converge: every created thing exists as a manifestation of a divine name or cluster of names, and to know the names of all things in their deepest sense is to understand how divine reality unfolds into and for each

created being. The comprehensive knowledge of creation that the majority reading describes is itself, at its deepest level, a knowledge of the divine names through which all things exist.

That the names cannot be linguistic in the ordinary sense is confirmed by the following chain of logic. Languages change over time, they differ, and are mutually untranslatable at the level of their deepest resonances as varying signs for underlying significations. If what Adam received were words in a *particular* tongue, the names would belong to only one language community and not to others, which contradicts the universal human station the passage establishes and the fact that Adam appears in multiple linguistic traditions.

And in the verse immediately following the passage about the faithful spirit bringing revelation to the Prophet's ﷺ heart, the form is described as *a clear Arabic tongue* (26:195), again indefinite, again purposive: *clarity* for this audience, through this vehicle. The purpose clause is consistent across all three: so that you might understand. Arabic is chosen for comprehension by the *specific* community that recitation was designed to be heard by and disseminated. The message to be understood precedes and exceeds the vehicle chosen to convey it.

This is the Quran's own testimony about itself, and it directly confirms what the names argument requires. If the divine message presents itself as one linguistic manifestation of a reality that transcends any particular tongue, then the names taught to Adam before *any* human language existed *cannot* be vocabulary items in *any* specific linguistic system. They are encoded capacities, the underlying reality for which every language provides partial and community-specific vehicles. The nurse in Nairobi and the engineer in Karachi and the farmer in Mali are not expressing pale non-Arabic approximations of names that exist properly only in their Qur'anic form as the Divine names represent a deeper signified reality than the specific linguistic form that conveyed them. They are expressing in action and in their context the same *underlying* divine realities that the Arabic Qur'an conveys with particular clarity and completeness for its community. The linguistic vehicle, the language, is not the cargo, the meaning is. And the cargo: the names, the capacities, the human calling,

belongs to the *whole* of humanity as surely as *Rabb al-Alamin* belongs to *all* the worlds, known and currently unknown.

The word Qur'an itself encodes this. It is not a proper noun naming an unprecedented unique object, it is a verbal noun from the root *q-r-a*, to recite, meaning the recitation, the act of reciting made substantial. *Qur'anan 'arabiyyan* is therefore not saying the unique and irreplaceable object called Qur'an happens to be in Arabic. It is saying *a* recitation, in Arabic, describing a mode of transmission chosen for a specific community, in the same way that a spoken message in any language describes a transmission event rather than an object coextensive with its vehicle. The message recited and the reciting of it are not the same thing. The Qur'an's grammar reveals this.

The names, therefore, are capacities, that is, endowments that are directly known through being, not learned through description, experientially not as vocabulary items. The Qur'an itself describes how this kind of endowment feels from the inside, in fact. Revelation did not arrive at the Prophet's ﷺ intellect as information, it arrived at his heart. Two verses state this explicitly: "The faithful spirit brought it down upon your heart" (26:194), and "it is he who brought it down upon your heart by God's permission" (2:97). The heart in Islamic understanding is the organ of direct knowing, not merely emotion, the faculty through which reality is received and changes the receiver rather than merely informing them. The *sirat* tradition (accounts of the Prophet's ﷺ life) then describes what this felt like in the only language adequate to it: physical, total, overwhelming. Gabriel seizes the Prophet ﷺ and compresses him three times until he can bear no more, then releases him and gives the command *Iqra*, Recite (Sahih al-Bukhari 3). An earlier account records Gabriel opening the Prophet's ﷺ chest as a child, removing a clot described as the portion of Shaytan, washing the heart, and returning it, a purification of the vessel before the content arrives (Sahih Muslim 162). These are not marginal accounts. They are the tradition's most precise testimony about what it means to receive something that *cannot* be described as information as we tend to learn it, but rather a body-involving, transformative endowment that changes the receiver in their very essence.

That is what the teaching of the names to Adam was, not vocabulary instruction, but the *inscription*, the *encoding* of capacity in the descendants of Adam, humans.

Ibn 'Arabi's reading of this passage in his *Fusus al-Hikam* or *The Bezels of Wisdom*, reaches further than any simple claim about human dignity. He opens the chapter on Adam, the first in the volume and the prism through which the other prophets are explored, by asking why the human being exists at all. His answer is striking.

When Allah ﷻ willed that the source of His most Beautiful Names be seen, He willed that they be seen in a microcosmic being which contained the entire matter. The image he uses is a mirror. How a thing sees itself through itself is not the same as how it sees itself in something else which acts as a mirror for it. The human being is that mirror, the being through whom the divine names and attributes become visible, including to their source. According to Ibn 'Arabi, this is not merely a noble role, but a cosmological necessity. Without humanity, the fullness of the divine names has no adequate mirror in which to become visible in our universe of matter.

The mirror function is not incidental to the human being's corruptible embodied existence. It *depends* on it. The capacity to reflect divine names into actuality requires participation in the corruptible domain from within, as an inhabitant shaped by its conditions rather than a manager overseeing it from outside. The angel is luminous but not a mirror in this sense in our reality. A mirror requires a surface, a particularity, a specific angle of reception and return that corruptible embodied existence provides and pure luminosity does not. The very condition that makes the human being a participant in decay and need, the corruptibility that the angels feared would produce corruption and bloodshed, is simultaneously the condition that makes the human being capable of *being* the kind of mirror the divine names require. Corruptibility is not an obstacle to the human vocation. It is its *enabling* condition.

The angels each express one face of the divine reality with a completeness and an unimpededness that no embodied human achieves. But they express it from *outside* the corruptible domain, without the weight of need,

mortality, and choice that gives human expression its particular character. Humanity comprehends collectively what the angelic order expresses in distinct facets — not because the human being stands above the angelic order, but because the human being alone inhabits the domain of genuine need from within, expressing the names through participation in corruptibility rather than governance from beyond it. The angel tends. The human being embodies. The two are not ranked against each other. They are different modes of the same work, each necessary, neither sufficient alone.

The twelfth-century Persian philosopher Suhrawardi, whose account of light and the angelic orders informs this framework throughout, drew a distinction that illuminates precisely what Adam demonstrated and why the angels responded as they did. He distinguished between two kinds of knowing. The first he called *bahthi*: discursive, propositional, step-by-step reasoning toward conclusions, the kind of knowing that arrives through study and argument and can be written down and transmitted in a book. The second he referred to as *dhawqi*, literally ‘tasting’: direct, intuitive, the knowledge that comes through genuine presence to a reality rather than through description of it. The difference between knowing what honey tastes like from a description and knowing it from having tasted it is the difference between *bahthi* and *dhawqi*.

This distinction illuminates precisely what Adam demonstrated and why the angels responded as they did. Adam did not recite definitions of the names. He demonstrated encoded capacity, the living embodied expression of the names through a being formed to be their locus or site of expression. What the angels witnessed was *dhawqi* reality, and their silence was not ignorance of content but recognition that they lacked the encoded capacity to do what Adam was doing and would do. Simply hearing the demonstration did not transfer the capacity. The angels came away knowing that Adam had something they did not have; they did not come away having acquired it. *Bahthi* transmission of a *dhawqi* reality produces exactly this result: you can witness it, recognise it, understand precisely what you are witnessing, and still not possess it. The carpenter watching a master join two pieces of wood understands what is happening.

The understanding does not make them a master. The capacity is in the accumulated embodied knowing and practice that no amount of observation alone produces. The angels' prostration is the evidence that what was demonstrated was *dharwqi* rather than *bahthi*: they recognised through their own perception something that exceeded their nature, and that recognition took the form of prostration rather than replication, precisely because genuine encoded capacity cannot be transferred through witnessing alone.

The entire prophetic chain is a continuous account of the same kind of *dharwqi* transmission. Gabriel's opening of the Prophet's ﷺ chest is not a dramatic metaphor for intellectual instruction. It is the *sirat's* most precise available description of what *dharwqi* transmission actually feels like from the receiving side: embodied, transformative, arriving through the body rather than merely to the mind, leaving the receiver physically exhausted and fundamentally different from what he was before. The revelation arrives like the ringing of a bell, pressing into the Prophet's ﷺ very being.

The Qur'an, as mentioned above, itself already signals this when it describes how revelation arrived. It was not transmitted to the Prophet's ﷺ mind or his intellect but, as two separate verses state explicitly, to his heart: "The faithful spirit brought it down upon your heart" (26:194), and "Say: whoever is an enemy to Gabriel, it is he who brought it down upon your heart by God's permission" (2:97). The heart in Islamic understanding is not merely the seat of emotion. It is the organ of direct knowing, the faculty through which reality is received and transformed into being rather than merely processed into information. The Qur'anic account of revelation arriving at the heart is already a statement about the mode of transmission: not propositional instruction delivered to a passive receiver, but a living endowment received in the very centre of the person.

The *sirat* tradition, the biographical accounts of the Prophet's ﷺ life, then describes what this felt like from the inside, in the only language adequate to it: physical. The first revelation is recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari (hadith 3) in the narration of Aisha, and in Sahih al-Bukhari 4953: Gabriel seizes the Prophet ﷺ and compresses him three times, each time pressing him until he could bear no more, then releasing him and giving the command:

Iqra, Recite. This is not narrated as gentle instruction. It is total, physical, and overwhelming.

The tradition also records an earlier event in the Prophet's ﷺ childhood. Sahih Muslim 162 preserves the account narrated by Anas ibn Malik in which Gabriel comes to the Prophet ﷺ while he is playing with children, opens his chest, removes his heart, extracts a clot described as the portion of Shaytan, washes the heart with Zamzam water, and returns it, a purification of the vessel before the content arrives, the preparatory shaping of the locus before the names are transmitted through it. A second chest-opening on the night of the *Isra*', preserved in Sahih al-Bukhari 349 and Sahih Muslim 163, fills the heart with wisdom and faith from a golden basin, the content now being placed in the prepared vessel. These accounts are not peripheral mythology. They are the tradition's most precise available testimony about what it is like to receive something that cannot be adequately described as information and in human language: a direct, transformative, body-involving endowment that changes the receiver in their very essence. That is what the teaching of the names to Adam was. That is what revelation to every prophet has been like.

Every descendant of Adam, as Ibn 'Arabi and others have shown, thus has the capacity to serve as a locus of divine attribute-expression. The Qur'an reinforces this through another passage of extraordinary weight:

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا
وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ

"Indeed, We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they 'all' declined to bear it, being fearful of it. But humanity assumed it, 'for' they are truly wrongful 'to themselves' and ignorant 'of the consequences'."

— Qur'an 33:72

The heavens declined. The mountains refused. Humanity said yes. This is not simply a story about moral responsibility in the abstract. It is a statement about the unique character of human existence: that we are beings who have accepted the weight of genuine agency, the capacity and the obligation to act, to choose, to shape what becomes real in the world.

Ibn 'Arabi extends the *khalifa* image in a direction that directly bears on what comes after death. Humanity, he writes, is to the universe what the face of the seal is to the seal, the locus of the King's mark on His treasury. As long as the seal of the King is on the treasury, no one dares to open it without permission. And when that seal is removed from this world at death, it does not cease to be a seal. It becomes instead the seal on the treasury of the Next World, for endless time and after-time. The khalifate does not end at death. It continues, in a different domain, at a higher station, with wider vantage. The role of the human being in the cosmic order is not a temporary appointment that expires. It is permanent, this world and the following ones.

Al-Ghazali, writing in the eleventh century, developed this further through his exploration of the 99 recorded names of Allah ﷻ mentioned in the Qur'an. Each of God's attributes, like *Al-'Adl* (the Just), *Al-Karim* (the Generous), *Al-Razzaq* (the Provider), or *Al-Muhyi* (the Life-Giver), is not merely a title. It is a reality that seeks expression in the world. When a human being acts with justice, *Al-'Adl* discloses itself through them. When a human being provides for the hungry, *Al-Razzaq* becomes real through their hands. This is what Al-Ghazali called *takhallaq bi-akhlaq Allah*: taking on the character of God, not through identity with the divine, but through becoming a *vessel* through which Allah's ﷻ qualities flow into the world.

What the acceptance of the *amana* or Trust/Responsibility implies about the human being's constitution is something the Islamic philosophical tradition has articulated with particular precision. Every human soul that accepted the *amana* carries within it the angelic capacity *in potentia*, that is, as a possibility, a potential, as a description of ontological reality, both in the potential we have in this corporeal reality and what comes next in the world beyond. The divine names inscribed in each person are not a curriculum to be completed, however. They are the angelic function the soul already is *in potential*, waiting to be cultivated into actuality through faithful expression.

The eleventh-century Islamic philosopher Nasir-i Khusraw, drawing on the Quranic description of the human being as God's representative on earth, argued that the divine purpose in the visible creation is precisely to

bring the angelic potential that exists in human beings into actuality. The stars and spheres are intermediaries between the angelic orders in actuality and human beings who are angels *in potentia*. The human being's trajectory is *not* toward something alien to its nature. It is toward the fuller expression of what it *already is* and where it can be actualised best, in the physical universe. The soul does not become an angel at death. It becomes, if it has cultivated faithfully, what it was always already constituted to be.

The Names as a Species Endowment

A further reading of the teaching of the names deserves attention, because it has profound implications for how the human calling is understood. The names were taught to Adam, to humanity as a collective, but not as a curriculum for individual completion. The reason God needed a being who knew all the names was not so that individual humans could each achieve encyclopaedic mastery of the divine attributes, but so that the species as a whole could steward and maintain a creation that requires all the names expressed through it.

Creation is not a simple thing requiring one or two divine qualities. It is infinitely complex, requiring justice and mercy, provision and guidance, beauty and strength, subtlety and revelation, patience and generosity, healing and wisdom, and the full range of everything the names name, continuously, across all its domains and all its scales. No single human being could carry all of that. The species can, however. The teaching of all the names to Adam was not a personal curriculum but a species endowment, the full instruction set, as it were, encoded in the human form and distributed across the diversity of human beings, each expressing a particular configuration most naturally and most powerfully.

Ibn 'Arabi's own *Fusus al-Hikam*, the work that grounds this framework's account of the human station, demonstrates this through its architecture rather than merely stating it. The *Fusus* is structured as twenty-seven chapters, each named for a prophet, each concerned not with that prophet's comprehensive realisation of all the divine names but with the particular divine wisdom, or *hikma*, that their specific prophetic configuration most fully expressed. The range and unexpectedness of Ibn

'Arabi's assignments is itself the argument. These are not character sketches predicting the obvious from the familiar narrative. They are portraits of what each configuration *most purely carried*, and the surprises are the point.

Adam carries *al-hikmat al-ilahiyya*, or divine wisdom, as the first and most comprehensive mirror: the human being whose species-endowment capacity for all the names makes him the polishing of a previously unpolished universe. Seth carries the wisdom of the angelic breath, *nafas rūhānī*, the understanding of gifts given without being asked for, knowledge that arrives as pure bestowal from the divine Presence. Noah carries the wisdom of divine transcendence (*tanzih*) expressed through patient warning: the prophet who speaks across an entire lifetime to those who cannot hear, and whose wisdom is the knowledge that transcendence and immanence must be held together or both are lost. Idris carries the wisdom of sanctification (*quddus*), the one elevated to the highest sphere, whose domain is purification of rank and station. Ibrahim carries the wisdom of the intimate friend (*khalil*): the one whom God has so thoroughly filled that the divine qualities become his own, like hearing, seeing, acting, until the creature and the Real are mutually indwelling. It is the wisdom of total suffusion. Ishaq carries the wisdom of the Real itself (*al-haqq*), expressed through correspondence and sacrifice, the weighing of what is truly equivalent. Isma'īl carries the wisdom of elevation (*rifa*): the one who was pleasing to his Lord, whose submission expresses the deepest structure of lordship, which depends on the beloved object as much as the beloved depends on the Lord.

Ya'qub carries the wisdom of the spirit (*ruh*), specifically the wisdom of *deen* or religion as the double path of surrender, both toward God and among people, embodied in a patriarch whose life was the transmission of that doubled faithfulness to his sons. Yusuf carries the wisdom of light (*nur*), but this is not beauty as an aesthetic quality; it is the light of the imagination (*khayal*), the mode in which the Real arrives dressed in forms that require interpretation, as Yusuf's dream required interpretation: a truth clothed in image, which the wise know how to read through to its reality. Hud carries the wisdom of divine unity (*ahadiyya*): the prophet

whose Lord holds every creature by the forelock on a straight path, and whose wisdom is the knowledge that nothing moves except by the One who is on the straight path, a merciful inescapability. Salih carries the wisdom of revelation and opening (*futuh*), the knowledge that the divine word *kun* (meaning “be!”) opens existence from every side, and that each creature receives it by the triple act of hearing, accepting, and being. Shu‘ayb carries the wisdom of the heart (*qalb*): the gnostic’s heart that encompasses the divine, vaster than mercy itself, which shifts in its *tajalli* as Allah ﷻ shifts His forms.

Lut carries the wisdom of power (*malk*), not power exercised outward over others, but the transformative recognition of human weakness as the ground from which genuine divine strength is given; it is the prophet who cried for a strong pillar and was told he was already leaning on it. ‘Uzayr carries the wisdom of the divine decree (*qadar*), that fate is only decreed for things by themselves, that the known determines the knowing, that the judge is always sentenced by what he sentences. It is the wisdom of hidden circularity, that what appears to come from outside comes, in the end, from the nature of the thing itself. Isa carries the wisdom of prophethood (*nuburwa*) itself, the deepest inquiry into what the prophetic word is, in the one whose entire being *was* a divine word spoken into matter through a breath: a spirit from God, such that life flowed wherever he walked, because that is what spirits do. Sulayman carries the wisdom of mercy (*rahma*), and this is the *Fusus*’s most startling placement, mercy with the sovereign: the chapter opens on the two divine mercies, *al-Rahman* and *al-Rahim*, and Sulayman’s kingdom over jinn, animals, and wind is read as mercy operating at the scale of dominion, a sovereignty that is, at its root, all-encompassing care. Dawud carries the wisdom of existence (*wujud*): the prophet gifted with kingdom, wisdom and decisive speech simultaneously, whose chapter explores what it means for existence itself to be a pure gift, the Giver who demands no recompense.

Yunus carries the wisdom of the breath (*nafas*), the divine breath as both creative act and the mystery of preservation: the human being as a structure whose disintegration can only be undertaken by the One who fashioned it, whose chapter turns on the theme of compassion for the

servants of God as more proper than zeal on His behalf. Ayyub carries the wisdom of the unseen (*ghayb*), the knowledge that life flows from water as its secret basis, that everything that is alive, that the divine is both above and below with no direction excluded, a wisdom that belongs to the one who endured the hidden workings of divine testing across time. Yahya carries the wisdom of majesty (*jalal*), the one whose very name means *he lives*, given by God as a name unlike any before it: a divine act of naming that itself confers life, and whose chapter is about the power of the name as the living transmission of what the father asked for and the son embodies. Zakariyya carries the wisdom of sovereignty (*mulk*) expressed through the structure of mercy itself, whose prayer for an heir was answered with a name that was itself a divine attribute, the chapter exploring how divine mercy encompasses even the Divine Names before it encompasses creation. Ilyas carries the wisdom of intimacy (*uns*), the knowledge that gnosis requires both transcendence (*tanzih*) and connection (*tashbih*) together, and that pure intellect freed from appetite possesses only half of what knowing God requires.

Luqman carries the wisdom of *ihsan*, not prophetic wisdom in the formal sense, since Luqman is the *Fusus*'s sole non-prophet, which is precisely the point; his chapter is about the wisdom that speaks without speaking, the silent wisdom that points to the One who brings forth without naming to whom the brought-forth is given. Harun carries the wisdom of the *imam*, the leadership that flows from mercy, since his prophethood came from the divine presence of *rahamut*, and his entire conduct toward his brother Musa is an expression of mercy that refuses to harden even under accusation. Musa carries the wisdom of sublimity (*ʿulw*), the prophet who absorbed within himself the life-force of every male child killed in Pharaoh's decree, making him a concentration of many spirits, a synthesis of potentials the world had tried to destroy, and whose chapter traces the knowledge that guidance leads to bewilderment (*hayra*), and that bewilderment is movement, and movement is life. Khalid ibn Sinan carries the wisdom of *al-samad*, the one turned to, the recourse, in a chapter about a largely unknown prophet whose Prophethood was entirely in the interspace between worlds, whose goal was that all creation would believe in the Messengers, and who was squandered by his people;

a wisdom of intention, of what is counted when the deed is willed but cannot be completed. And Muhammad ﷺ carries *al-hikmat al-fardiyya*, the unique, singular wisdom, as the seal who contains all that Adam's names named, the one given all the words, whose wisdom is uniqueness itself because he is the most complete mirror of the comprehensive human station that Adam inaugurated.

Not one of these twenty-seven chapters depicts a prophet whose luminosity derived from encyclopaedic coverage across all the names equally. Each is a portrait of a specific divine configuration expressed with particular excellence and completeness in one human life, and the configurations are irreducibly distinct. Mercy belongs to the sovereign, not the healer; light belongs to the dreamer, not the beauty; sublimity belongs to the one who absorbed others' lives, not the lawgiver in any obvious sense; *ihsan* belongs to a figure who was not even a prophet. The *Fusus* does not distribute the familiar qualities to the expected prophets. It surfaces what each one most *deeply* was, which is often not what the surface narrative would predict. This is Ibn 'Arabi's own picture of how the teaching of all the names to Adam is fulfilled: not within individual human beings straining toward impossible comprehensiveness, but distributed across the diversity of prophetic configurations, each complete in its own expression, each necessary for the full portrait of divine wisdom that the species as a whole constitutes.

This framing sits in revealing tension with what later Sufism *derived* from Ibn 'Arabi's metaphysics: the programme of the Perfect Man who completes all the names within a single individual. That reading treats the *Fusus's* prophets as stages on a single individual's journey toward total realisation. But Ibn 'Arabi's own structure resists this in several ways. The prophets are not chapters in one person's biography of spiritual achievement. They are distinct human configurations, each expressing one face of divine wisdom with a completeness that the other configurations do not replicate. Ibn 'Arabi's own book is itself a portrait of the species endowment, distributed, irreducibly plural, each bezel holding one gem.

Take Adam, the closest to all the divine names, and the first corporeal human. If the teaching of all the names constituted an individual comprehensive realisation, the *insan al-kamil*, the Perfect Human, fully formed from that first moment, then several things that *immediately* follow in the Qur'anic account become inexplicable. Adam was *deceived* by Iblis. The Qur'an states this plainly: *wa-'asa adamu rabbahu fa-gharwa* "Adam disobeyed his Lord and was led astray" (20:121). Yet, a being who had comprehensively realised names like *Al-'Alim* (the Omniscient), *Al-Khabir* (the Totally Aware), *Al-Hakim* (the Wise), *Al-Muhsi* (the Knower of Each Separate Thing), *Al-Raqib* (the All-Observant), and *Al-Haqq* (the Truth), would not have been led astray; it would not be possible.

Yet, Adam desired the tree of immortality and a kingdom that does not fade away (20:120), a desire that arises from felt lack, from the incompleteness of a human who does not possess everything. A comprehensively realised being has no such lack according to Ibn 'Arabi. And God's response to Adam's fall was not to restore him to some prior state of comprehensive *gnosis*. It was *thumma-jtabahu rabbuhu fa-taba 'alayhi wa-hada*, "then his Lord chose him, turned toward him, and guided him" (20:122). For a being already bearing the name *Al-Hadi* and who should, according to Ibn 'Arabi, be the perfect guide, this is strange. Adam after the fall is *more* recognisably human, particular, guided, walking a *specific* path, than any image of Adam before it would suggest.

The fall is not an embarrassment to the species-endowment reading. It is its confirmation. Adam carried the comprehensive endowment of the species, not comprehensive individual realisation. His faults were not his failure of being the Perfect Man, but rather his special configuration was specific not comprehensive, no humans is. He was the first human being, as particular and as limited as every human being after him. The names were inscribed in his descendants collectively, not exhausted in him alone. There would be no need for further humans were this the case.

His specific configuration, *the hikmat al-ilahiyya*, divine wisdom, a connection to the divine, the wisdom of the first comprehensive mirror, was his to carry. The rest was always already distributed across the human

beings who would follow. This is why revelation did *not* end with Adam. The species endowment was given once; the task of expressing it has occupied all of human history since, and will continue for as long as the species endures.

This reading is more consistent with the Qur'an's account of human diversity than the gnostic reading, which treats the goal of individual human life as the complete actualisation of all the names within a *single* person, the Perfect Man of the philosophical tradition. That reading has a structural consequence that the Qur'an does not support: it makes the vast majority of humanity into supporting material for an elite of philosophical mystics, rather than genuine participants in the human calling. Its promises of paradise and *barakah* (blessings) are made to believers who act well, a category whose breadth the address to all humanity insists on. And the one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets mentioned in the hadith tradition, made up of shepherds, carpenters, merchants, warriors, fathers, community builders, and others (not just philosophers and scholars) suggest that the fulfilment of the human calling has *never* required initiatory *gnosis*.

The Qur'an is explicit that human diversity is a *key* design feature in human flourishing, a key to our *success*:

وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا

“O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another.”

— Qur'an 49:13

The diversity of humanity, our different and individual personalities, capacities, interests, and talents, is precisely what allows the full range of divine names to be expressed across the full range of creation's needs. No single human being carries all the names into full expression. The species does, through the multiplicity of human configurations each expressing their particular subset most naturally and most sincerely, a humanity designed for all challenges. The community tapestry is not a consolation for those who have not achieved individual perfection. It is the primary

form in which the teaching of all the names to Adam is fulfilled, distributed across the species, woven together through the diversity of faithful lives, each thread contributing what no other thread can.

The scope of this stewardship extends further than human communities alone. The corruptible domain the *khalifa* is appointed to tend encompasses *all corruptible corporeal existence*, not only the human portion of it. The Qur'an affirms that everything makes *tasbih*, glorifies God, in its own mode. The human being as steward of the corruptible domain creates the conditions in which that glorification can occur more fully, across the full range of corruptible being, rather than being suppressed by the corruption and bloodshed the angels feared. The diversity of human name-configurations maps onto the diversity of what corruptible existence needs from its stewards. The farmer expressing *Al-Muhyi* (the Life-Giver), the ecologist expressing *Al-Hafiz* (the All-Preserver), the healer expressing *Al-Shafi* (the Healer, cf. Sahih al-Bukhari 5675 (<https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5675>) as Al-Shaif is not one of the commonly cited 99 Names of Allah), none of them are serving only other human beings. They are tending the conditions of corruptible existence itself in all its dimensions.

The species endowment was given once, comprehensively, to Adam. But the human beings who carry those names forward across generations are separated from that original moment of direct divine teaching by time, by cultural accretion, by distortion, and by the ordinary processes of transmission across history. What was clear in the first instance becomes progressively obscured, not through any single catastrophe but through the accumulation of distance. Names that were transparent in their origin become opaque through inheritance, misidentification, cultural suppression, or generations of separation from the source. This is why revelation does not end with Adam. The Qur'an describes itself as a *dhikr*, a reminder, not a fundamentally new communication but a restoration of clarity to what was always already present in the human constitution but has become difficult to read. The prophets are sent not as innovators bringing alien wisdom but as clarifiers who surface what was always already inscribed in their communities but had been obscured by time and

circumstance. Musa (Moses) does not invent the wisdom of sublimity. He restores access to it for a people whose connection to it had been suppressed through generations of enslavement. The same logic applies at the communal scale within each generation. The *kashif al-asma'* function exists not because the names are absent from the people who carry them but because the generational and biographical obscuring is real, and the individual alone cannot always easily recover through introspection alone what was inscribed before they had any say in the matter.

This also clarifies the goal of the spiritual life. The calling is not to strain toward the names furthest from your natural configuration in pursuit of an impossible encyclopaedic completeness. It is to express *your specific* configuration more fully, more sincerely, and more excellently, and to deepen what is genuinely *yours* rather than to force what is not. The judge and the healer and the teacher and the parent and the engineer and the artist and the planter are each fulfilling the human calling completely, in the specific form their configuration allows. Together they constitute what Adam received and what creation requires.

The distinction worth making explicit here is between *comprehensiveness* and *completeness*. Comprehensiveness, containing all the names in some degree, is a species endowment that every human being already carries by virtue of the *fitra* (our nature) and the *amana*. It is not an achievement to work toward. Completeness is different: the full and faithful expression of the particular subset most alive in you, taken to its depth, with nothing held back, in the domain where it does real work.

A clarification that resolves what might otherwise appear as a tension in the framework. If all the names were inscribed in every human being as a species endowment, given to Adam and through Adam to all of humanity, then what does it mean to say that certain names are most alive in a particular person, or that one person carries *Al-Adl* most naturally while another carries *Al-Latif*?

The answer lies in the difference between inscription and expression. Every human being carries the full endowment, this is what the species endowment means, and it is why the framework insists that comprehensiveness is already yours, not an achievement to work toward.

But inscription is not the same as expression. In each person, certain names are differentially expressed, more alive, active, more naturally flowing, more powerfully present in their particular configuration of temperament, domain, and circumstance.

A useful analogy from the natural world: every human being carries the same genome. But gene expression is differential, certain genes are activated, upregulated, expressed prominently in a given organism based on its particular nature, history, and conditions. The unexpressed genes are not absent. They are present but latent. What the organism actually *is*, in functional terms, is determined by which genes are expressed and at what intensity, not by the full theoretical range of what its genome contains.

The names work the same way. All the names are present in every soul. But in any given human being, certain names are upregulated, more naturally, more powerfully, more authentically expressed. The calling is not to activate every name equally but to express, to activate, the ones most alive in you with the greatest depth and excellence, *itqan*. The dispersion of effort across all names equally is not comprehensiveness. It is the loss of the depth the world actually needs.

This also means that the claim "*you cannot express Al-Adl because that is not your primary name*" is false. Everyone is called to justice, as to all the ground-layer names. What the framework identifies is not an exclusive territory but a degree of natural expression. The judge through whom *Al-Adl* flows as their deepest nature produces a quality of justice that changes things, that becomes a reference point, a model, a gift to the domain that persists beyond them. The same judge can and should act mercifully, generously, with care and subtlety. But justice is where their specific disclosure of divine reality is most pressing to emerge. That specificity is the gift. Protecting it from dispersion is the discipline.

The tradition has a word for the depth of expression this requires, already mentioned above: *itqan*: mastery, precision, doing something to its fullest and with complete excellence. The Prophet ﷺ said: "*God loves that when one of you does a work, they do it with itqan*" (Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat lit-Tabrani 5735). *Itqan* is not comprehensiveness, rather it is specialisation and

precision. It is the full inhabiting of what you are actually doing. The judge who has achieved *itqan* in justice over a lifetime has expressed *Al-'Adl* at a depth the same judge could never have reached by also pursuing mastery in medicine, architecture, and music. The dispersion would have been real and the depth would have been lost. The world needed the depth. The specific greatness of a life fully expressed in one direction is not a consolation for those who could not manage comprehensiveness. It is the form human calling was always meant to take, and it is what the 124,000 prophets, most of them known to history only by their specific work in a specific place with a specific people, collectively demonstrate.

Humanity is therefore not a passive figure in the cosmos. We are the beings through whom divine reality most fully unfolds into the world, visible reality, collectively the mirror of all the divine names, individually the mirror of those most alive in each of us, the seal of the treasury, the ones who said yes when the mountains said no. This is the station *we* accepted. This is the calling *we* have *always already* been given.

There is a further dimension to this that deserves stating directly. Ibn 'Arabi's foundational claim about *tajalli* is that divine self-disclosure never repeats itself, every moment of divine unfolding into the world is utterly unique and non-recurring. If this is true of *tajalli* as such, it is *equally* true of the human configurations through which *tajalli* flows. Your specific constellation of names, that is, the particular subset most alive in you, combined with your personality, your domain, your context, the specific historical moment you inhabit, has never existed before and will never exist again. You are not one instance of a type. You are a unique and non-repeating locus of divine disclosure.

For example, two people both primarily expressing *Al-Muhyi* are not doing the same thing. One restores physical health through clinical precision and steady presence. Another revives neglected knowledge that had nearly been lost. Another tends relationships that had nearly died through patient and costly faithfulness. Another restores degraded land to life through decades of unglamorous labour. All *Al-Muhyi*. None interchangeable. The world needs all of them and none of them can do what the others do. The same holds for every name across every domain across every

configuration. The space of distinct and irreplaceable human expressions of divine reality is not a space of sixteen types or nine. It is as *inexhaustible* as the names themselves, which the tradition insists are beyond enumeration in reality. Your position within it is genuinely singular. What flows through you, when it genuinely flows, has not flowed that way before and will not flow that way again.

This singularity is not a source of pride. It is a source of *urgency*. The names inscribed in you before you had any say in the matter are the angelic function you already carry *in potentia*. This life is the *only* opportunity you have in *this* form, in this configuration, in this moment of history, to bring that potential into actuality. Not because Allah ﷻ cannot find another way, divine generosity is inexhaustible and creation continues. But because this specific and unrepeatable locus of divine disclosure will have been what it was. Irreversibly. The people and the domain that need what your configuration carries are alive right now, in your life, needing it now. The future needs it too. And the soul you become through faithful action is becoming it in every ordinary moment, cumulatively, without pause. What you demonstrate here, what you actually do with what you were given, is what you will be. Not what you will receive. What you *will be*. The Qur'an's urgency is not rhetorical: race toward good, compete in good deeds. It is the *urgency* of a being who has accepted the weight of genuine agency in a real world where choices are real, irreversible, and observed by the one whose observation is the only one that finally counts.

This singularity is also the most direct answer to one of the defining anxieties of this particular historical moment. Each new technology, like writing, the printing press, industrialisation, and computing, has produced the same fear: that the human being is being made redundant, that what is *distinctively* human is being displaced, that the space for genuine human contribution is shrinking. The current anxiety about artificial intelligence follows the same pattern, and like its predecessors it mistakes a question about outputs for a question about being. The framework's answer is not reassurance. It is a reorientation of the question entirely.

The question is not whether a capable AI system can produce what *you* produce. The question is whether *you* are expressing what *only you* can

express. These are not the same question. A system of any capability, however vast, cannot be the specific person whose particular configuration of *Al-Muhyi*, expressed through decades of patient relationship with their community, in this place, at this moment in their history, brought something into actuality that the world genuinely needed and that no other means could have produced. AI cannot be the engineer whose specific attentiveness to a specific problem, combined with a specific configuration of *Al-Hakim* and *Al-Latif*, produces an insight that was waiting for precisely *that* combination of gifts and domain and relational context to become real. The expression of a divine name through a unique human configuration in a specific moment of history is not a function that can be replicated. It is an ontological event, a moment of *genuine tajalli*, that either happens through you or does not happen at all. You are unique. The Islamic tradition has always known this. The *Fusus*'s prophets are not interchangeable. Ibrāhīm cannot do what Mūsā does. 'Isā cannot do what Sulaymān does. The diversity is *not* inefficiency. It is the point. Every human configuration that does not express what it carries leaves a genuine absence in the world, not a gap that will be filled by a more capable system, but a specific unrealised *tajalli* that was this person's to bring and no one else's. The anxiety about technological displacement is at its root a failure to understand what the human being actually is.

The Angel as Model

But how does the human being go about fulfilling what they are? The Sufi tradition, and the school of Ibn 'Arabi in particular, has tended to answer this with an epistemological programme involving the removal of veils, the lifting of obscurities, the attainment of a particular interior state of experiential finding in which the knower and the known are no longer fully separate. This is a serious tradition and it has produced serious humans and benefit. But it is worth asking whether this is what the Qur'an describes as the primary or only form of the human calling, or whether it is just *one* valid path within a *much* wider commission.

The angels offer a different model, and they are worth attending to precisely because they are the beings the Qur'an depicts most consistently

in their relationship to God and in the exercise of their function. No Qur'anic verse depicts an angel seeking to find God through the removal of epistemological veils. No angel retreats from the work of creation in order to cultivate interior illumination as a prerequisite for action. The angels praise, obey, and act. Gabriel brings revelation, an outward act directed toward the world and its inhabitants. The angels praise, obey, and act. The Qur'an itself swears by them through their functions, not their nature:

وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا وَالنَّاشِطَاتِ نَشْطًا وَالسَّابِحَاتِ سَبْحًا فَالسَّابِقَاتِ سَبْقًا فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا

"By those 'angels' stripping out 'evil souls' harshly, and those pulling out 'good souls' gently, and those gliding 'through heavens' swiftly, and those taking the lead vigorously, and those conducting affairs 'obediently'!"

— Qur'an 79:1-5

And:

فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا

"and 'the angels' administering affairs by 'Allah's' command!"

— Qur'an 51:4

Different classes, different tasks, different intensities of agency, all defined entirely by what they do rather than by what they contemplate or attain. Gabriel brings revelation, an outward act directed toward the world and its inhabitants. The angels fight alongside believers at the Battle of Badr. They descend upon the righteous with reassurance. They seek forgiveness for those on earth. They record deeds. They travel the earth conveying the salams of the Prophet's ﷺ community to him (Sunan an-Nasa'i 1282). Their orientation toward God and their function in the cosmos are not two stages, preparation and then action. They are a single continuous reality.

The angels do things in the corruptible world that human beings cannot do alone, they bring revelation, carry souls at death, and deliver reassurance that originates beyond this world. These are *crossing* operations: the information, the guidance, the comfort has to come from somewhere outside the domain of need, and only a being that can cross

that threshold can carry it across. No human being, however cultivated, generates revelation from within themselves.

But the reverse is equally true. The angels cannot do what the human being does from inside the domain of need. They do not hunger, age, lose people they love, or face death themselves. They cannot be the nurse who has watched a hundred people die and learned from that what care actually requires. They cannot be the judge who has made difficult decisions under pressure with incomplete information and real consequences. The divine names of mercy, provision, healing, and justice become actual in the corruptible world through beings who are themselves subject to what those names address.

Neither role substitutes for the other. The corruptible world needs both: beings who can cross the threshold and bring what cannot come from within it, and beings who live within it fully enough to express what can only be expressed from inside.

The Islamic philosophical tradition of Avicenna, Ibn ‘Arabi, and Mulla Sadra, independently of one another, converges on the recognition that the soul’s trajectory is *toward* the angelic. For Avicenna, the soul’s conjunction with the Active Intellect, identified with Gabriel not by Avicenna himself but by the later Islamic philosophical tradition that received him, is the destination of genuine intellectual and moral cultivation (*Kitab al-Najat*, trans. Fazlur Rahman as *Avicenna’s Psychology*, Oxford University Press, 1952).

For Ibn ‘Arabi, the righteous dead *continue* to unfold through the divine names they most fully embodied in earthly life, becoming *ever* fuller *loci* of the attributes they expressed in life, which is precisely the function the angelic orders fulfil.

For Mulla Sadra, the soul that has cultivated genuine luminosity through faithful action is, in his own words, potentially either an angel or a follower of the Devil, the trajectory is real, the destination is genuinely angelic, and it is established by what the soul does in the body rather than by what the soul renounces.

This convergence matters because the angelic destination is what faithful cultivation in this life is actually moving toward, not as a metaphor but as one of the tradition's most serious philosophical topics, of what the soul is becoming through sincere action. What the soul carries into that angelic station matters. The angelic order tends the corruptible and incorruptible domains continuously, actively directed toward the world it governs rather than withdrawn from it. The soul that joins this order does not leave behind what the corruptible domain taught it. The nurse who expressed *Al-Muhyi* through decades of clinical work, the judge whose life was the patient expression of *Al-'Adl*, the farmer who tended what the land needed across a lifetime, these souls bring to the governing order something a being who never inhabited the domain of need could not bring: the experiential knowledge of what corruptibility actually costs, what genuine provision actually requires, what real justice actually demands from the inside. The angelic order's capacity to guide the corruptible domain is deepened by every soul that enters it having genuinely inhabited that domain faithfully.

This is one reason why what you do here is not merely personally consequential. The depth of your engagement with the names in this life, how fully you inhabit the domain of need, how completely you bring your particular configuration to bear on what your life actually requires of you, is what you will carry forward. The corruptible domain's needs are not left behind at death. They travel with the soul that learned them from within.

There is also a redundancy in the gnostic programme that this functional programme avoids. Why would God create beings whose purpose is to attain knowledge when He already possesses infinitely and completely? The question has no really satisfying answer that does not compromise divine self-sufficiency. But the functional account has *no* redundancy problem. God creates beings who carry the divine names into this corruptible world of matter and express them through faithful action, provision, justice, care, beauty, guidance, protection, and healing. This is not knowledge God already has in any sense that would be diminished by its absence. It is something that comes into actuality through the agency of created beings: the atom's weight of genuine good that this person, in

this moment, with these specific gifts, brings into a world that would otherwise not have contained it.

This does not make the interior dimension irrelevant. Al-Ghazali's account of the heart's diseases in other works, the ego's strategies for corrupting sincere action into performance, is indispensable precisely because the human being, unlike the angel, is subject to the distortions of the *nafs* (ego) and is affected by needs. The angel's orientation toward God is unimpeded by ego or bodily needs. The human being's is not. The interior work of clearing the channel, of recognising and restraining the *nafs*, of returning the intention to its proper source, of asking whether the act arises from genuine care or from the desire to be seen caring, is necessary for the same reason the angel does not need it: because humanity carries what the angels do not, which is the weight of genuine choice and the risk of genuine corruption. The interior discipline is the price of the freedom that the *amana* carries. It is the price, not the destination.

The destination is the work. The model is the angel: active, purposive, oriented toward God and simultaneously directed toward the world, the two not sequential but simultaneous. Not finding God as a preliminary condition for acting. Acting as the form in which the faithful created being expresses what it is and who it serves. The illumination is *not* the prerequisite for the work. The work, done faithfully and sincerely, from the specific configuration of names most alive in each person, in the domain where that configuration produces real effect, is itself the cultivation of luminosity. The practitioner learns to express the name by expressing it. Indeed, the prophet said, 'Given that God is characterized by the ninety-nine [names]; whoever is characterized by one of them enters paradise' (Al-Ghazali, *The Ninety Nine Beautiful Names Of God* §163, transl. Burrell and Daher).

There is a further dimension to the angelic model that bears directly on the community engaged in this unfolding together. Nasir-i Khusraw, in his philosophical work *Between Reason and Revelation*, argues that whoever brings a potential angel into actuality has reached an angelic rank, performing on the human and communal scale the same function the

angelic order performs on the cosmic scale. The *kashif al-asma'*, the Name Revealer, the one who helps another soul surface what was always already inscribed in them, is doing precisely this. Not conferring something the other person lacked. Not initiating them into an esoteric chain. Recovering what was placed there by Allah ﷻ before any human structure existed to authorise its expression. This function does not require an institutional hierarchy. It requires someone who has walked far enough on their own path to recognise the configuration in another, and who cares enough to name what they see. That is an angelic act. It is the angelic act performed at the scale *this* life provides.

III. Agency and the Unrealised Good

If the human being genuinely shapes what becomes real in the world, then human inaction is not neutral. It is the loss of something that could have existed and did not. This is one of the most distinctive and urgent insights the framework carries.

The Qur'an's framework of accountability makes this clear from the outset. The smallest unit of good is not too small to matter:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it.”

— Qur'an 99:7

And God does not diminish even the smallest good action:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِنْ تَكَ حَسَنَةً يضاعفها

“Indeed, Allah does not wrong ‘anyone’ even by an atom's weight. And if it is a good deed, He will multiply it and give a great reward out of His grace.”

— Qur'an 4:40

The logic here is total and non-selective. There is no minimum threshold of significance below which a good action fails to register. There is no act of genuine good that is wasted, overlooked, or forgotten. The cosmos is configured to retain and multiply every good that enters it.

But this cuts both ways. If every good is retained, then every good that fails to be done is a genuine absence, a real loss. The Qur'an names this explicitly in Surah al-'Asr:

وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالْحَقِّ
وَتَوَّصُوا بِالصَّبْرِ

“By the ‘passage of’ time! Surely humanity is in ‘grave’ loss, except those who have faith, do good, and urge each other to the truth, and urge each other to perseverance.”

— Qur’an 103:1-3

Loss, here, is the default condition of a life not directed toward good. And the regret of unrealised good is captured in one of the Qur’an’s most poignant images, the person who, at the point of death, cries out:

“My Lord, if only You delay me for a short while, I would give in charity and be one of the righteous.”

— Qur’an 63:10

The tragedy is not punishment. The tragedy is the good that could have been done and was not. The charity that could have been given. The help that could have reached someone. The world that could have been a little more luminous.

IV. Planting and Cultivating

The Qur'an describes the companions of the Prophet ﷺ with a remarkable image:

كَزْرَعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سُوْقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ

“...like a seed that sprouts its ‘tiny’ branches, making it strong, and it grows thick, standing firmly on its stem, to the delight of the planters.”

— Qur'an 48:29

What this verse describes is one of the central patterns of this path: something small is planted. Over time, with patience and care, it grows, strengthens, and stands. Those who planted it are delighted, not because they made it grow, but because they did their part in a process larger than themselves.

This is the responsibility humans have undertaken. It is not the path of the hero who single-handedly transforms the world. It is the path of the faithful actor who plants what can be planted, tends what can be tended, and trusts the process of growth to the one who is the true source of all increase.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ gave the clearest possible expression of this principle:

“If the Final Hour comes while you have a shoot of a plant in your hands and it is possible to plant it before the Hour comes, you should plant it.”

— *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*, Book 27, Hadith 4

At the end of time, with everything *apparently* finished, plant the sapling. Not because it will be remembered. But because the planting is real, because the good is real, and because Allah ﷻ observes all.

A companion of the Prophet ﷺ, Abdullah ibn Salam, extended this even further in a hadith:

“If you hear that the Dajjal has come out while you are planting young palm trees, it is not too late to plant it, for people will still have livelihood after that.”

— Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 27, Hadith 5

The future is still open. There will still be people who need what is planted today. Even the most extreme circumstances do not cancel the value of faithful action.

The Distinction from Preservation

It is important to distinguish this generative ethic from the ethics of mere preservation. Much Islamic environmental thought has emphasised maintaining balance, *mīzan*, and preventing harm. This is genuinely important and Qur’anicly grounded (30:41). But stewardship means *more* than not damaging what exists.

True stewardship is *generative*. The Qur’an places humanity as *khalifa* upon the earth, but *not* as a museum curator, but as an active cultivator. God settled humanity in the earth and asked it to cultivate (*ista‘mara*) it (11:61). The reviving of dead land, *ihya’ al-marwat*, is actively encouraged in the tradition. The Prophet ﷺ said that whoever revives dead land, it is his (Jami` at-Tirmidhi 1379). Letting fertile land lie unused is a failure of stewardship, not a virtue. A neglected orchard is not a preserved orchard. A talent left buried is not a protected talent.

The cultivation of the divine names of Allah, therefore, includes not only protecting what exists but bringing into being what could exist, realising beneficial possibilities that would not exist without faithful human effort. The scale of what can be planted is not fixed. The sapling the Prophet ﷺ described is a single tree. The palm the companion planted is a single palm. But the logic of planting is not bounded by the scale of the individual act. It is bounded only by the scope of what faithful human effort can reach. And in this specific moment of history, that scope is expanding in a direction the tradition has always implicitly permitted but never before needed to name directly.

The Qur'an addresses God as *Rabb al-'Alamin*, Lord of the Worlds, plural. This is not incidental. It is the very first substantive description of God in the entire text, placed at the opening of the *Fatiha* that every Muslim recites in every prayer. Not Lord of the World, finished and sealed. Worlds. Vast, multiple, extending wherever creation extends, all of them in the continuous care of the one who sustains them. The *tajalli* does not stop at the edge of the atmosphere. The divine names do not cease to seek expression at the boundary of *this* earth. The *amana* was offered to the heavens themselves before humanity accepted it. There is something cosmologically fitting, not accidental, not merely permitted, but fitting, about a species that accepted what the heavens refused now carrying that acceptance into the heavens themselves.

The human being who helps establish the conditions for faithful human life beyond this earth is planting at civilisational-cosmic scale. The logic is the same as the sapling at the end of time. The good is *real*. The future is *still* open. There will be people, in places no human being has ever yet stood, who need what is planted now, in the decisions and the work and the faithful effort of *this* generation. The names inscribed in the human species before it had any say in the matter are waiting to be expressed in domains that have never yet received them. That is not technological ambition dressed in religious language. It is the planting ethic taken seriously at the scale this moment makes possible.

V. Choosing Among Paths

The cosmos, in this framework, is not a single determined track along which history rolls inevitably. It is a landscape of real possibilities, of futures that could unfold, worlds that could become actual, among which human choice genuinely navigates.

The Qur'an is explicit about this:

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ

“and shown them the two ways?”

— Qur'an 90:10

More than one path exists. Choice is real. And the paths lead to genuinely different outcomes:

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَائِرٌ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَيْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

“It is upon Allah ‘alone’ to ‘clearly’ show the Straight Way. Other ways are deviant. Had He willed, He would have easily imposed guidance upon all of you.”

— Qur'an 16:9

Notice the plurals. Not one narrow road that most people miss, but multiple routes of divine disclosure, multiple ways of faithful, generative engagement with reality. These paths are named in the Qur'an itself, and it is their multiplicity that the framework takes as its organising truth. It is human's choice that is key.

The Qur'an is also clear that choice shapes trajectory, that the direction of one's life is not fixed but responsive to action and intention:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

“Allah would never change a people's state ‘of favour’ until they change their own state ‘of faith’.”

— Qur'an 13:11

Change is real. It begins within. And it ripples outward into the world. The future is not sealed. The hadith tradition confirms this: nothing changes divine decree except supplication (*du'a*); maintaining ties of kinship expands provision and life:

"The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Nothing extends one's life span but righteousness, nothing averts the Divine Decree but supplication, and nothing deprives a man of provision but the sin that he commits.'"

— Sunan Ibn Majah 90

These are not reassuring metaphors. They are descriptions of a genuinely *responsive* reality.

The philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, who described himself as a student of the Qur'an, argued in his landmark lectures collected in *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* that the universe is not finished. It is in process. Humans are not passive observers of a completed creation. They are, in his words, co-workers with God in the ongoing shaping of reality. The self, *khudi*, grows through purposeful action, through creating, through striving toward something larger than itself. Iqbal's insight is that this is not arrogance. It is the precise calling described in the Qur'an for the being who bore the Trust that the heavens refused.

Iqbal's striving finds its proper orientation here: the self does not strive for its own aggrandisement, but toward divine unfolding, this is its purpose, its way of serving creation. The paths it walks are God's paths. The *tajalli* it pursues proceeds from a source infinitely beyond it. Human agency is real and consequential, but it is responsive agency, drawn forward by a disclosure that precedes and exceeds it.

VI. A Social and Collective Path

This is not a solitary spiritual journey. The Qur'an is emphatic that righteousness is *inherently* social, that the good life cannot be separated from benefit to others, engagement with community, and active participation in the world beyond the self.

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces to the east or the west, but righteousness is one who believes in Allah... and gives wealth, despite love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy...”

— Qur'an 2:177

True righteousness is measured in what reaches others, not in private spiritual states. And the community of believers is defined by its orientation toward the world:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ

“You are the best community ever raised for humanity.”

— Qur'an 3:110

For humanity. Not for yourselves. The best community is defined by its contribution to others, by enjoining good and forbidding wrong on behalf of a world that extends beyond its own membership.

The Prophet ﷺ made the metric explicit in a hadith:

“The companion who is the best to Allah is the one who is best to his companion. And the neighbor that is the best to Allah is the one that is best to his neighbor.”

— Jami` at-Tirmidhi 1944

And benefit, in this tradition, is *not* measured in scale. The smallest act of genuine help counts:

“On every joint of a person there is a charity, every day that the sun rises: administering justice between two people is a charity; helping a man with his animal is a charity; a good word is a charity; every step you take toward the prayer is a charity; and removing something harmful from the road is a charity.”

— Hadith 26, 40 Hadith an-Nawawi

This is a vision of societal *tazkiyah*, purification that flows outward from the individual into the community and the world. Not withdrawal into private holiness, but continuous engagement with the reality around you, removing harm, adding good, helping others to do the same. *Surah al-Asr* names this explicitly: the saved are not only those who believe and do good, but those who advise each other toward truth and patience. This path is walked together.

The impact of such action does not require public recognition to be real. The most consequential good may be done in complete anonymity. A kind word that changes a life’s direction. A quiet act of justice that nobody recorded. A child raised well whose goodness ripples forward for generations. None of this requires a monument. Allah ﷻ observes *all*, the atom’s weight is seen, retained, and multiplied. This is perhaps the most liberating dimension of *tajalli*: the anxiety of legacy is dissolved. You do not need to be remembered to matter.

Sincerity, Performativity, and the Absence of a Scale

A framework whose primary practice is outward and visible faces a risk that any honest account must name directly: the risk of performativity. Good action done in public can be genuine. It can also be the ego (*nafs*) wearing the costume of good action, the appearance of generosity deployed for the reward of reputation, the performance of justice calibrated to an audience. The tradition identifies this precisely. It is called *Riya*, ostentation in worship and righteous conduct, and is described in the hadith as one of the things most feared for believers, a corruption of the sincere act that *voids* its spiritual weight entirely.

The framework’s own logic makes performativity not merely morally inferior but cosmologically self-defeating. If luminosity and angelicity accumulates through the sincere expression of divine attributes outward,

if *Al-Karim* discloses itself through genuine generosity, then the performative act does not do what it appears to do. It is not an expression of *Al-Karim*. It is the ego's desire for recognition dressed in the guise of generosity. No divine attribute is actually flowing through it. No *tajalli* unfolds. The tailor is not sewing. The appearance of sewing is present but the fabric is untouched. Performative virtue does not accumulate luminosity in this framework. It spends it.

The tradition's answer to this risk are the concepts of *niyyah*, or intention, and *ikhlas*, sincerity. The Prophet ﷺ said: actions are judged by their intentions, and every person will have what they intended. This is not merely a legal principle. It is a metaphysical description of how the act actually works. The same external act proceeds from entirely different spiritual realities depending on the intention from which it flows. Allah ﷻ observes not the surface of the act but its source, its intention. The anonymous good done for Allah's ﷻ sake alone is therefore not a lesser version of the public good, it *is* the paradigmatic form of it, the *clearest* expression of generosity. It is the ideal.

The continuous interior practice this path asks of us is the return of intention to its proper source. Not a forty-day retreat. Not a measurable station reached and displayed. But the quiet, private, repeated act of asking: is this genuine? Am I acting for Allah's ﷻ observation or for human recognition? Does this act actually produce benefit in the world or only the appearance of benefit? Is the good real, does it reach someone, change something, bring a possibility into actuality that would not otherwise exist? These questions have no scoreable answers in the here and now. They are the practice though. They are the interior discipline that accompanies the exterior path, available in every ordinary moment of every ordinary day, requiring no master and no institution.

No human-readable scale of spiritual advancement is offered here, and this is *deliberate*. The only complete account of any soul's luminosity and station belongs to Allah ﷻ alone. No human framework can offer a metric without creating the very incentive for performance it seeks to prevent. The absence of a scale is not a gap. It is honesty about what only Allah ﷻ can know, that the atom's weight of genuine good, unseen and unrecorded by

any human account, is fully observed, fully retained, and fully real. The practitioner does not need to know their station. They need to act sincerely, and trust the rest to the one whose mercy precedes everything, including our accounting.

For those who want practical guidance in developing this sincerity, in learning to recognise the ego's many strategies for hijacking good action and returning the intention to its proper source, the most useful companion in the Islamic tradition is found in the work of Al-Ghazali. His *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* or *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, and its accessible abridgement, the *Kimiya-yi Sa'adat* (or *The Alchemy of Happiness*), provide the most systematic account available of the heart's diseases: *riya*, pride, envy, self-admiration, and the subtle ways each corrupts sincere action into performance. Al-Ghazali's diagnosis is precise enough to catch forms of self-corruption that most practitioners would never notice in themselves, the person who gives with genuine sincerity but then savours the memory of having given, which is already a dilution of the act. His practical ethics function as the interior training that expressing the names faithfully requires. Where Al-Ghazali stops, treating the polished interior self as something close to the destination, the argument here continues: the purified self is the instrument through which divine light reaches the world more clearly, not the end of the journey but the beginning of its fuller expression.

There is a further dimension that the performative act entirely misses, and that makes the sincere act not merely morally superior but genuinely different in kind. The sincere good deed transforms the person who performs it, not only the world it enters. When *Al-Karim* genuinely flows through a person in an act of real generosity, when they give from what they love, when it costs something, when it reaches someone and changes something, the person who gave is *not* the same person afterward. The attribute that flowed through them leaves a trace. The capacity to express it is slightly more developed, slightly more natural, slightly less effortful the next time. This is what the theologian Mulla Sadra's concept of transubstantial motion refers to in its most immediate and practical form: the soul growing in its very being through the sincere act, not merely

accumulating merit but becoming different, more itself, more luminous, more capable of the work it was designed for.

The performative act produces none of this. The person who films their charity for recognition has received their return, attention, approval, the warm feeling of a transaction completed, and moves on essentially unchanged. The act passed through them without touching them. No divine attribute flowed. No luminosity accumulated. No *tajalli* unfolded, in them, or through them, or in the world they briefly visited. The receiver may have received something material. But the encounter between doer and receiver was a surface meeting, not a genuine exchange of light. Unless the intention is true, for instance to reach larger audiences and inspire them. By contrast, the sincere act, given quietly, given at cost, given for Allah's ﷻ sake without an audience, transforms both. The receiver is changed by what reaches them. The doer is changed by what flows through them. And the world is changed by what becomes actual that was not actual before. This is *tajalli* not as a philosophical concept but as a living reality, available in every sincere act of genuine good, irreversible in its effects, cumulative across a lifetime, and, as Chapter VII, will argue, not ending at death.

VII. Luminosity and the Life to Come

What happens to the light that a human being accumulates through faithful action, good works, and sincere cultivation of *tajalli*? Does it end at death? And what kind of existence awaits a soul that has spent a lifetime genuinely cultivating its capacity for good?

The Qur'an's description of Adam's condition in the garden before the eating is precise in a way that repays careful attention and is informative here as to what the afterlife is or may be. Hunger, thirst, nakedness, and exposure to the sun are explicitly absent, these are the four markers of corruptible need that define embodied existence as we know it (20:118-119). Adam converses *directly* with God and the angels in a mode that no subsequent encounter in the Qur'an replicates: no mortal can witness God unfiltered, as the tradition consistently affirms, yet here the conversation is immediate and direct. Whatever the garden was, it was not corruptible existence as this life knows it.

Adam is also the only being in the tradition who crossed that threshold in both directions, and what he could say about what he left was limited entirely to the absence of what he had just discovered. He could not describe the garden positively, because he had no corruptible categories that could capture it. The tradition's images of paradise like rivers, shade, provision without limit are exactly the same and the best language available to corruptible beings for a condition in which corruptibility itself is absent. They describe the removal of need in terms of need's satisfactions. The soul that faithfully inhabits the corruptible domain returns at death not to a better version of this life but to a fundamentally different mode of existence, one that Adam briefly occupied before the eating made him fully what we are, and that the cultivated soul moves toward through everything it becomes here. The garden never disappeared and it may be very different than we imagine once there.

Consider first the nature of the cosmos as it has been described here. It is dynamic, still unfolding, continuously sustained by a God who is every day upon a matter (55:29). The *tajalli* does not slow, does not stop. Creation does not pause. The divine purpose of bringing good into actuality across *all* the worlds, of the universe, and is not a finite project with a completion date. It is the *ongoing* expression of an inexhaustible divine generosity.

A growing enterprise needs more experienced workers, not fewer. A cosmos still unfolding needs more participants in its unfolding, not fewer. And the soul that has spent a *lifetime* cultivating its capacity for good, accumulating luminosity through faithful action, developing its ability to serve as a locus of divine attribute-expression, is *precisely* the soul most equipped to continue that work at a higher level. The idea that such a soul simply stops at death, that Allah ﷻ creates an immortal soul, shapes it through a lifetime of effort and cultivation, and then simply retires it, sits uneasily with everything else the tradition teaches about the nature of God, the nature of the soul, and the nature of creation.

The Qur'an itself resists the retirement model. It insists that the righteous dead are not simply absent:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أحيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ

“Never think of those martyred in the cause of Allah as dead. In fact, they are alive with their Lord, well provided for.”

— Qur'an 3:169

Alive, and receiving provision, not suspended, not waiting, but in active, sustained existence with their Lord. The tradition of intercession, *shafa'a*, implies that the righteous dead retain relational capacity, awareness, and genuine engagement with the unfolding of events. They are not sealed off from the world whose *tajalli* they helped cultivate.

The tradition is concrete about what this continued engagement looks like. The Prophet ﷺ said: "On the mountain roads of Medina there are angels, neither plague nor the Dajjal can enter it" (Sahih al-Bukhari 1880). Angels stationed on physical roads, guarding a specific city against specific harms.

And in another narration: "Allah has angels who travel around on earth conveying to me the salams of my ummah" (Sunan an-Nasa'i 1282), angels moving through the world, carrying something between the living and their Prophet ﷺ. These are not images of beings withdrawn into pure contemplation. They are beings *present in the world*, stationed at its thresholds, moving through its roads, attending to its inhabitants. This is what angelic function could look like in the tradition's own account: embedded, directional, world-attending. And it is toward this function, not away from the world but more fully and freely within it, that the soul cultivated through faithful earthly action is moving.

The Hierarchy of Lights

Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi, writing in twelfth-century Persia, provides one of Islamic thought's most developed accounts of what this continued existence involves. In his *Philosophy of Illumination, Hikmat al-Ishraq*, the cosmos is understood as a hierarchy of lights proceeding from *Nur al-Anwar*, the Light of Lights. Each level of this hierarchy is not a passive rank but an active, governing intelligence, a purposeful being that participates in the management and unfolding of creation at its level.

These are the *anwar qahira*, the dominating lights, and the *anwar mudabbira*, the managing lights, also called the lordly lights or regent lights. They are *not* idle. They govern, they sustain, they intermediate between the pure and the corruptible. They are, in the language of the tradition, the angelic orders, understood not as static figures of worship but as *active* agents in a cosmic project.

Suhrawardi's cosmological architecture describes the angelic orders as active governing intelligences, not static worshippers but purposive agents continuously tending the corruptible domain. What is significant here is not the specific narrative detail but the underlying cosmological claim: the angelic orders are defined by what they do, and they do it from a station of luminosity cultivated through their orientation toward the Light of Lights. This picture of active, world-directed angelic function is what Suhrawardi contributes to the eschatological argument, and it is a picture

that sits in revealing tension with his own prescribed path of withdrawal, a tension addressed directly below.

The convergence of the broader tradition on the soul's angelic destination is the more secure ground for the eschatological claim. The soul that has genuinely cultivated its luminosity through faithful action in this life, through expressing the divine names it most naturally carries, in the domain where they do their real work, joins an order of active intelligences at death appropriate to the luminosity it has developed. This extends Avicenna's account of the soul's conjunction with the Active Intellect, the governing cosmic intellect of the sublunary realm, into its eschatological dimension, a development the later tradition drew from his psychology (*Kitab al-Najat*, trans. Rahman). It is Ibn 'Arabi's continuing *tajalli* through the names most fully embodied in earthly life. It is Mulla Sadra's soul that has moved through transubstantial motion from the merely human toward the genuinely angelic. These are not peripheral figures appealing to contested sources. They are the architecture of Islamic philosophical thought's most serious account of the soul's post-mortem reality. Suhrawardi's light hierarchy provides the spatial and structural language for this destination. The destination itself is established on broader and more secure ground.

This is a vision of the afterlife as *promotion, not* retirement. Not the end of purposeful engagement with creation's unfolding, but its continuation at a higher station, with wider vantage, freed from the constraints that earthly embodiment imposed. The soul that cultivated *Al-Razzaq*, divine provision, through, for instance, acts of generous giving in this life, continues to be a locus of that divine attribute at a higher level. The soul that cultivated *Al-'Adl* through acts of justice continues to serve justice from a station the living cannot yet reach. Service is not a burden the soul is relieved of at death. It is the expression of what the soul most *deeply* is, now finally freed to operate without constraint.

The angelic order that guides and tends the corruptible domain is not separate from the faithful human lives that have joined it across all of human history. What those souls learned here, they carry there. The guidance that reaches back into the corruptible domain carries the weight of having once been inside it.

Three Stations and the Causal Connection

Suhrawardi's eschatology makes the connection between earthly cultivation and post-mortem station explicit and causal. He identifies three groups of souls with respect to their degree of purification and illumination, and establishes a direct relationship between what is cultivated in this life and the station occupied in the next.

Those who remained in the darkness of ignorance, the *ashqiya*. Those who purified themselves to some extent, the *su'ada*. And those who purified themselves and reached illumination, the *muta'allihun*, literally those who have become god-like in their attributes. It is the *muta'allihun* who return to the angelic order. The causal connection is not arbitrary or merely judicial, it is ontological. The luminosity cultivated in this life is the soul's actual degree of being, the intensity at which it exists. The station in the hereafter is the natural continuation of what was genuinely achieved here.

This three-station schema is Suhrawardi's cosmological contribution, a structural account of how earthly cultivation maps onto post-mortem participation. It is valuable precisely as structure, corroborating what Mulla Sadra establishes through transubstantial motion and what Ibn 'Arabi establishes through the continuing *tajalli* of the divine names. All three converge on the same fundamental claim: the soul's post-mortem *capacity* is not assigned from outside but is the *continuation* of what its earthly life genuinely built.

The soul is, in any case, immortal regardless of degree. The question is not whether the soul continues but at what station, with what luminosity, and

with what capacity for participation in the ongoing unfolding of creation. That is determined here, by how faithfully and genuinely the soul cultivated its configuration of names in the brief span of embodied existence.

The connection is irreversible and it is worth stating plainly. What you are becoming through faithful or faithless action in this life is what you will be, not what you will receive, but what you will *be*. The soul that cultivated *Al-Muhyi* through genuine acts of restoration is becoming, through the doing of it, a more genuine and natural locus of *Al-Muhyi*, and that becoming carries forward. Mulla Sadra's transubstantial motion is not a gradual accumulation of merit toward a reward. It is the soul's actual growth in its degree of being through the sincere act. The becoming is real and it is cumulative and it is irreversible. This life is therefore not a waiting room for what comes after. It is the *demonstration* of what you can do with what you were given, and what you demonstrate here determines the station from which participation continues there. The angelic orders are *not* fixed ranks that souls are assigned to as reward. They are intensities of being and participation that souls grow into through the trajectory their earthly lives established. Every act of genuine service in this life is already that work, at the scale embodied existence allows. Death does not begin a different work. It continues the same work, at wider vantage, freed from constraint.

The Contradiction Suhrawardi Left Unresolved

There is, however, a significant tension at the heart of Suhrawardi's system, one that the argument presented here both identifies and resolves. It is worth mentioning directly here, because it is the most important reason the framework cannot simply adopt Suhrawardi wholesale, however illuminating his cosmological architecture remains.

Suhrawardi's prescribed practical path is almost entirely one of ascetic withdrawal from the world: fasting and hunger as the foundation, sleep deprivation, forty-day retreats, interior *dhikr* until the tongue goes silent and the whole being invokes inwardly, submission to a spiritual master. The path is inward, bodily mortifying, and world-negating.

But the angelic order he describes as the destination of this path is defined entirely by active, world-directed, purposive engagement. The governing intelligences, the *anwar mudabbira*, tend the corruptible domain. They intermediate between the pure and the human. They guide. They sustain. Their function is outward, continuous, and directed toward those below them in the hierarchy. This is what Suhrawardi's own cosmology says the angelic orders do.

The question the system raises but never answers is fundamental: how does a path of intense interior withdrawal and bodily mortification produce beings whose defining function is active engagement with the world? If the destination is characterised by outward care and continuous tending of creation, the preparation for it cannot be the deliberate negation of those very capacities. A path of withdrawal does not cultivate the habits of engagement. An asceticism that negates the body does not develop the soul's capacity for the world-directed work it will apparently be doing at a higher station.

The contradiction is resolved not by rejecting Suhrawardi's angelology, which is genuinely illuminating and helpful, but by correcting his practical path in light of his own cosmological claims, and in light of what the Qur'an shows us angels actually do.

If the angelic function is to sew the world, to actively tend the corruptible domain, to intermediate, to guide, to illuminate downward toward those in need, then the capacity for that function is developed through its practice, not its negation. The planter who tends a sapling, removes harm from a road, teaches a child, builds something honest, gives to the one who asks, speaks truth when it costs something, this person is already doing what the angelic tailors do in Suhrawardi's work *The Chant of Gabriel's Wing*, at the scale available to embodied human existence. They are already sewing. Death and the removal of material limitation does not transform a contemplative who spent their life turned away from the world into an active servant of it. It extends and elevates a capacity that was already being exercised.

This is also more consistent with the Qur'an's own picture of what angels do. The Qur'an's angels are never depicted as contemplatives absorbed in

interior silence. They bring revelation. They fight alongside believers at Badr (3:124–125). They descend upon the righteous with reassurance, do not fear and do not grieve (41:30). They seek forgiveness for those on earth (42:5). They record deeds. They are active agents with specific purposes directed toward the living world and its inhabitants. If purified souls return to this order, they return to something whose essential character is outward engagement, purposive care, and continuous intermediation between the divine and the human.

The path that cultivates that capacity is therefore the path of faithful, generous, world-directed action. Not the exclusion of inner cultivation, *dhikr*, moral virtue, self-awareness, and sincere intention are all present in this account, but its orientation. The interior is cultivated in service of the exterior. The luminosity is developed through its expression, not its hoarding. You cultivate the capacity to sew the world by sewing it, at whatever scale this life provides.

A Universal Capacity

There is a deeper point that completes this argument. The *Fusus al-Hikam*, the primary source for the human station at the heart of this framework, is not a Sufi manual. It is an exploration of prophetic wisdom. Its chapters are named for Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, that is builders, leaders, lawmakers, shepherds, fathers, founders of communities and civilisations. Not one of them is a Sufi. Their luminosity did not come from constant forty-day retreats or interior ascetic discipline to the exclusion of community. It came from total, faithful, excellent engagement with the world in service of the divine purpose, from expressing the divine attributes outward into history, community, and human life at every scale. If they represent, as Ibn ‘Arabi argues, the fullest possible expression of human capacity for divine attribute-manifestation, then the engaged path is *not* a secondary alternative to the Sufi interior path. It is the *primary* model. The Sufi path is a valid and serious specialisation within that universal capacity. But it is a specialisation, not the gateway.

The Qur'an's own account establishes the same point: the number of angelic orders is beyond human enumeration, their function is the continuous tending of creation across all the worlds of which God is Lord, and an order that vast cannot have a single narrow institutional gate of entry available only to those with access to a particular medieval spiritual master in a particular cultural context. The architecture of the cosmos does not work that way. An order that infinite requires participants that are *continuously* and *universally* available, which is precisely what the Adam chapter establishes. *Every* human soul bears the comprehensive divine names. *Every* human soul accepted the Trust. *Every* human soul carries from birth the capacity that the angelic orders express. The Sufi path did not exist for *most* of human history. The prophets preceded it by millennia. If the capacity for post-mortem participation in the angelic work required the Sufi institutional path, every prophet before the ninth century would be excluded.

All souls are immortal. *All* souls carry the divine names. *All* souls are therefore *already* constituted for the angelic work, the only question is whether that capacity is cultivated or neglected during the brief span of embodied existence. The Sufi path cultivates it one way. The prophetic path (engaged, world-directed, excellent, sincere, outward) cultivates it another way, and does so in a form available to every human being in every circumstance of every ordinary life. The farmer and the prophet are walking the same fundamental path at different scales, developing the same fundamental luminosity through the same fundamental practice: expressing divine attributes faithfully outward into the world, tending what can be tended, serving what can be served, acting well in the full knowledge that Allah ﷻ observes all.

The seventeenth-century philosopher Mulla Sadra, Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, deepens this picture through his doctrine of *al-haraka al-jawhariyya*: transubstantial motion. Existence, in Mulla Sadra's account, is not static. Beings do not simply exist, they exist with greater or lesser intensity, and through the right orientation they exist with continuously *increasing* intensity over time. And the soul is not a fixed thing that has experiences.

It is *itself* in *motion*, growing in its very being through righteous action, knowledge, and faithful striving.

Death, in this framework, does not interrupt the soul's substantial motion. No, it removes the material limitation that slowed it. The soul *continues* its trajectory toward higher degrees of being and participation, the trajectory that righteous earthly life established and that nothing in the nature of the soul or the nature of God requires to stop. The luminosity cultivated in *this* life is not a credential that earns a reward. It is the soul's actual degree of being, the intensity at which it exists and participates, which death releases to continue developing without the drag of material constraint.

Mulla Sadra synthesises Suhrawardi's light hierarchy with Ibn 'Arabi's metaphysics of divine self-disclosure into a framework more dynamic and more theologically grounded than either alone. The angelic orders are not fixed ranks that souls are slotted into. They are intensities of being and participation that souls grow into through the trajectory their earthly lives established, intensities that themselves are growing too.

Continuing Tajalli After Death

Ibn Arabi's vast encyclopaedic work, the *Futuh al-Makkiyya*, or *The Meccan Revelations*, develops a vision of the afterlife that fits seamlessly within everything argued here. The righteous dead do not simply receive reward in paradise. They continue to unfold through the divine names they most fully embodied in earthly life. The *tajalli* does not stop at the threshold of death. It continues and intensifies, because the soul that has become a genuine locus of divine attribute-expression in this life becomes an even fuller locus of that expression when the limitations of earthly embodiment are removed.

This is not access to the *ghayb*, that is, the absolute divine unseen that belongs to Allah ﷻ alone. The Qur'an is unambiguous that knowledge of what is absolutely hidden is God's exclusively, and neither angels nor the most exalted souls possess it, nor should they. When God asked the angels about the names, they replied: we have no knowledge except what You have taught us (2:32). The luminous soul in the higher orders of creation participates in an unfolding that remains genuinely open, it does not

watch a predetermined outcome but continues to act within a real and responsive reality, from a vantage that earthly existence could not provide. The future is not a film being screened. It is still being made, and the cultivated soul continues to help make it.

The planters, in other words, do not stop planting at death. They join an order of beings who continue to tend a garden they can now perceive more fully, whose growth they helped begin in earthly life, whose further flourishing they continue to serve from a higher station. The cosmos is *still* unfolding. The *tajalli* is still in motion. And the soul that chose faithfully in this life has earned not rest from that motion but deeper participation in it.

A hadith in *Riyad as-Salihin* captures what this continued world-directed engagement looks like at the scale of human encounter. A man sets out to visit a brother in another town for no reason except love for Allah's sake. Allah stations an angel on his road. The angel asks where he is going. The man explains. The angel asks whether he has any favour owed to him. No, says the man, only love for Allah's sake. The angel then says: "I am a messenger to you from Allah to inform you that Allah loves you as you love him for His sake" (*Riyad as-Salihin* 361). An angel, stationed on a road, attending to the movement of a *single* human being, recognising and naming the quality of his intention, conveying the divine response. This is the *kashif* function performed at the angelic station: not conferring something the man lacked, but recognising and *naming* what was already present in him. The planters who continue to plant from a higher station are not conducting operations at a remote distance from the world. They are, as the tradition consistently depicts their order, *present to it*, on its roads, at its thresholds, attending to its people, doing from that higher station exactly what they were already doing here.

*"It was narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah said:
"When a man dies all his good deeds come to an end except three:
Ongoing charity (Sadaqah Jariyah), beneficial knowledge and a
righteous son who prays for him.""*

— Sunan an-Nasa'i 3651

This well-known hadith hints at the same reality in more immediate terms, and its middle term, beneficial knowledge, carries more than the conventional reading suggests. The *ilm nafi'* or beneficial knowledge that continues after death may refer not only to knowledge transmitted *outward* to others but to the luminosity the soul itself acquired through genuine pursuit of understanding (such as the cultivation of divine names): the sincere seeker oriented by deep engagement with ideas, the knowledge that changes the knower rather than merely informing others. What was cultivated inwardly continues to unfold outwardly from a higher station. The planter who plants a tree whose fruit feeds strangers for generations is still present in that fruit. The teacher whose knowledge illuminates students who illuminate others is still present in that chain of light. The parent whose child acts rightly in the world is still active in those acts. *Sadaqa jariya*, ongoing charity, is the earthly form of what the tradition describes cosmologically: good that continues to unfold beyond the lifetime of the one who initiated it, and a soul that continues to participate in that unfolding from wherever its luminosity has carried it.

The divine names offer something the framework would otherwise leave implicit: a practical methodology for this eschatological vision. Ibn 'Arabi establishes that the soul continues after death through the names it most fully embodied in earthly life. **But which names, and how?** That is the question of a lifetime. Al-Ghazali's *Al-Maqсад al-Asma*, his systematic account of the ninety-nine names of God, answers this directly and is a key text for name cultivation, and in fact is one of the very few that created an instruction booklet for addressing many of these names as humans.

For each name he asks what it means for a human being to reflect that quality at the level available to created beings. *Al-Razzaq* expressed through ensuring others have what they need. *Al-Muhyi* through acts that bring flourishing into the world. *Al-Wadud* through genuine care. *Al-'Adl* through just conduct in every encounter. The names are not an abstract theological list. They are a living curriculum for the name cultivation, an orientation for action that requires no hierarchy and no metric, because every name is a genuine path of *tajalli* and *each* person has names their life and capacity most naturally allow them to embody. The parent, the healer,

the judge, the teacher, each walking a different named path, each cultivating a different face of divine disclosure. And what is cultivated here becomes the substance of what continues there.

The arc is complete and coherent. In this life, express the names faithfully, generatively, in the domain where what you carry does real work. Accumulate luminosity through genuine good, seen or unseen, remembered or forgotten by other people, because Allah ﷻ observes all and the atom's weight is never lost. At death, the luminosity cultivated determines the station from which participation continues. The *tajalli al-asma'* extends beyond the boundaries of earthly existence. They go, as creation goes, as far as there is reality to unfold, across all the worlds of which God is Lord.

One clarification is essential. This framework does not promise any specific post-mortem station to *anyone*, nor do Ibn 'Arabi, Al-Ghazali, etc.. It does not say: accumulate sufficient good deeds and you will become an angelic intelligence. The station any soul reaches after death is *entirely* in Allah's ﷻ determination, not a mechanical consequence of accumulated merit, not a reward that can be calculated or guaranteed. What the framework claims, and what the tradition supports, is more modest and more honest than that: the luminosity cultivated through faithful action in this life is *not* wasted at death. It carries *forward*. In what precise form, and to what precise station, is His alone to determine, *Al-Muqtaddir*, the All-Determiner.

What Suhrawardi, Al-Ghazali, Mulla Sadra, and Ibn 'Arabi give us is not a guarantee but a vision, a serious, philosophically grounded account of what the tradition gives us real reason to hope for, to dream towards. The possibility of joining the active orders of creation's unfolding in future is real and rooted in the Islamic intellectual tradition at its *deepest* levels. It is a possibility worth orienting a life toward. But it remains a possibility, *not a promise*, and that distinction *matters*, because it keeps the motivation for good action *exactly* where it should be: not in the calculation of a specific reward, but in the simple truth that the act is real, Allah ﷻ observes it, and His mercy toward the faithful soul exceeds anything we have grounds to expect or calculate.

VIII. God as the Source of Unfolding

A framework centred on human agency and the cultivation of good must be clear about where that agency comes from and where it is directed. Everything argued here is grounded in *tawhid*, the absolute oneness and sovereignty of God, and it does not compromise this foundation.

The paths taken are God's paths, and they can change based on human choices. The *tajalli* unfolds from a divine source that infinitely precedes and exceeds human participation. Human beings do not generate the unfolding, they pursue and participate in one that is already in motion, already proceeding from the inexhaustible generosity of the Light of Lights. This is the difference between arrogant self-assertion and faithful participation.

Ibn 'Arabi states this with precision in the Adam chapter of the *Fusus*. We are described in all aspects by that by which God describes Himself, we reflect the divine attributes because we are their *mirror*. But there is a distinction that can never be dissolved: our need of Him in our existence. Our existence depends on Him by virtue of our possibility, we are contingent, possible beings. He is independent of that which makes us dependent on Him. This is the line that separates the mirror from the light it reflects. The reflection is real. The reflected is the source. Humanity participates in the divine attributes without becoming them. The locus is not the source.

The *Fusus* makes this dependence universal and total: the whole universe depends on Allah ﷻ for its existence. So all is in need, and nothing is independent. The human being is the most comprehensive being in creation, but comprehensiveness does not mean independence. It means *responsibility*. The being who comprehends the most has the most to account for, the most to cultivate, and the most to offer back to the creation that depends alongside them on the one who needs nothing.

The divine attributes that God has invited humanity to reflect, like justice, generosity, mercy, or wisdom, are not human inventions. They are divine realities that become expressed in the world through human action. When a person acts with genuine generosity, it is *Al-Karim* that is disclosing itself

through them. When a community establishes justice, it is *Al-'Adl* that is finding expression in the world. The human being is the locus, not the source.

The God addressed here is the God of the *Fatiha*, *Rabb al-'Alamin*, the Lord of the Worlds, *Al-Rahman Al-Rahim*, the Infinitely Merciful. Mercy is not one attribute among many, accidentally dominant. The Prophet ﷺ said: Allah ﷻ has written that His mercy precedes His wrath. Mercy is ontologically prior. The cosmos proceeds from an overflowing of divine mercy and generosity, and the call to humanity is to participate in that overflow, to be vessels through which mercy, justice, and beauty reach the world.

The verse that names the purpose of creation is worth reading in its full depth:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“I did not create jinn and humans except to worship/serve Me.”

— Qur'an 51:56

The verb *li-ya'buduni* here, to worship Me or to serve Me, comes from the root 'a-b-d, whose range of meaning is considerably wider than any single English translation to serve or worship captures. The root carries the sense of devoted service and total orientation toward one's Lord. But it also carries the sense of cultivating the earth, *'abada al-ard* means to work and tend the land. And it carries the sense of wearing a path smooth through continuous faithful traversal, a *tariq mu'abbad* is a road made real by repeated passage. The planter cultivating the earth *ya'budu*. The judge wearing the path of justice smooth through continuous faithful exercise *ya'budu*. The teacher whose students illuminate others *ya'budu*. The parent forming a child's character *ya'budu*. The historian reviving what was lost *ya'budu*. The nurse restoring health *ya'budu*. The purpose of creation is fulfilled not only in the mosque but in every domain where faithful, sincere, excellent human action brings divine attributes into actuality in the world. The work *is* the worship, not by intention alone, but because the

work that flows genuinely from the servant's configuration of names, in the domain where those names do their real work, is itself the form that *tajalli* takes through them.

This is not a diminishment of divine sovereignty. It is its fullest expression. A God whose attributes find real expression through the faithful actions of human beings is not a God whose sovereignty is threatened by human agency. It is a God whose generosity is so complete that He has entrusted His *own* attributes to the being who accepted the Trust, knowing, as the *Fusus* makes clear, that the creature's need of Him is total and undiminished by that trust.

IX. For the World We Are Building

Humanity is not standing at an ordinary threshold. We stand at the point where the scope of the human calling, always cosmic in its theological architecture, always directed toward the worlds of which God is Lord, is becoming cosmic in its practical reach for the *first* time. This is not a distraction from the framework's concerns. It is one of the framework's most direct implications, and this moment demands that it be stated without qualification.

The Qur'an opens every surah, and every Muslim opens every prayer, with a declaration about who God is: *Rabb al-'Alamin*. Lord of the Worlds. Not Lord of the World, singular, geocentric, finished. *Worlds plural*, vast, continuously sustained, extending *wherever* creation extends. This is not incidental language. It is the theological foundation from which everything else in the tradition follows. A God who is Lord of the Worlds created human beings as the mirror of all His names and sent them forth as *khalifa*, His active representatives, in a creation that does not end at the atmosphere. The *amana* was offered to the heavens themselves before humanity accepted it. The mountains refused. The earth declined. The vast structures of the cosmos that dwarf this planet said no. And humanity said yes.

The Steward of the Corruptible

The Qur'an's appointment of humanity as *khalifa* is an appointment to *ard*, earth, to the corruptible corporeal domain. *Ard* is not primarily a geographical designation, however, one astronomical object among others. It is a category of existence defined by its nature: the kind of existence that decays without tending, that requires cultivation, that cannot sustain itself without the care of beings constituted to steward it from within. The tradition consistently distinguishes this corruptible domain from the incorruptible celestial orders, and it is to the corruptible domain specifically that the *khalifa* is appointed, because that is the domain that needs what the *khalifa* brings. At the time of revelation, *ard* named the *only* known instance of corruptible corporeal existence. The category was

not thereby restricted to that instance. It was defined by what corruptible existence is, not by where it happened then to be found.

The corruptible domain is also, inseparably, the breeding ground of the beings who serve as mirrors of the divine names. Without viable corruptible existence there are no mirrors. Without mirrors the divine names have no locus of active expression in the domain where provision and healing and justice and restoration are genuinely needed rather than abstractly present. The stewardship of *ard* is therefore, at its deepest level, the stewardship of **the conditions of tajalli itself**. The *khalifa* tends the domain that produces the mirrors that unfold the names into actuality. These are not two separate responsibilities. They are one.

The Lord of that domain is *Rabb al-'Alamin*, Lord of genuine ontological plurality. The classical *tafsir* tradition reads *alamin* as encompassing the worlds of humans, jinn, and angels, the different orders of rational being and their domains, not a single world with geographical variations. Ibn Abbas and others read the plural not as spatial multiplicity but as the multiplicity of rational orders and their modes of existence. Within that plurality, the corruptible domain is the specific site of *khalifa* responsibility. The tradition's own categories do not restrict this appointment to one instance of corruptible existence. They define it by what corruptible existence is rather than by where it currently happens to be found. Wherever corruptible corporeal existence extends within the *alamin*, the *khalifa* appointment follows the category rather than the coordinates.

Within the *alamin* the tradition already acknowledges rational ensouled beings other than humanity: the jinn, capable of recognition, choice, and response to divine guidance, forming their own communities of moral accountability. The Qur'an describes jinn hearing divine guidance and some of them accepting it, drawn into the orbit of human-mediated disclosure rather than receiving independent revelation. If other rational ensouled beings exist within the *alamin*, whether encountered in the depths of the cosmos or otherwise, the tradition's own categories provide the vocabulary to receive them. The relevant question is not where they exist but whether they are the kind of being capable of recognising and

cultivating divine names in their own mode. Beings capable of such cultivation, wherever they are found within the corruptible domain, fall within the scope of what the human being's comprehensive name-endowment was given to steward and potentially to illuminate. The human species received all the names not as a mark of general superiority but as a specific gift carrying a specific responsibility, a responsibility that extends, as the domain extends, across the full scope of the worlds God is Lord of.

This is not modern astronomy imported into Qur'anic vocabulary. It is the Qur'an's own cosmological generosity, its genuine ontological plurality, its category of corruptible existence requiring stewardship from within, taken seriously at the scale this moment makes possible for the first time. The tradition's categories do not mandate this extension. They leave it open. And a tradition whose first substantive description of God is *Rabb al-'Alamin*, Lord of the Worlds, has always been more cosmologically generous than any geocentric reading of its *khalifa* theology has allowed. That yes has always had cosmic scope. It is only now beginning to have cosmic reach.

The divine names do not cease to seek expression at the edge of this earth. *Al-Muhyi*, the Life-Giver, does not belong only to the restoration of what lives here. *Al-'Adl*, the Just, does not concern itself only with justice among those who breathe *this* atmosphere. *Al-Razzaq*, the Provider, does not limit provision to those who stand on this soil. The names were taught to Adam as a species endowment, the full instruction set encoded in the human form and distributed across the diversity of human beings, each expressing their particular configuration in the domain where it produces real effect. As the domain expands, the names *travel* with the species that carries them. *Wherever* human beings faithfully express what was inscribed in them before they had any say in the matter, *tajalli* unfolds. That is what *tajalli* means. Its scope is the scope of creation, which is the scope of the Worlds.

This generation is the first in human history for whom the expansion of that domain beyond this earth is a *practical* reality rather than a cosmological abstraction. The decisions being made now, about how to build beyond this earth, what to carry and what to leave behind, what kind of human life is worth sustaining across the distances of the cosmos, are decisions about what the human calling looks like at its widest possible scale. They are not engineering decisions dressed in the language of values. They are the *same* decisions humanity has always made at every civilisational frontier: what do we plant, what do we build, what do we express, what do we bring into actuality that would not exist without our faithful effort?

The planter who tends a sapling on this earth and the engineer who designs systems that will sustain human life in a habitat no human being has yet inhabited are engaged in the same fundamental act. Bringing a beneficial possibility into actuality that would not exist without faithful human effort. The scale differs by orders of magnitude. The character of the act is identical. Both are expressions of the names. Both are moments of genuine *tajalli*. Both are the calling of the being who said yes when the mountains said no.

And here the framework must speak directly to the anxiety that accompanies this moment as surely as the possibility does. The same historical moment that is expanding the scope of human action outward is producing, through the rapid development of artificial intelligence, a widespread and serious fear that the space for distinctive human contribution is shrinking inward. That what human beings are for is becoming unclear. That tools of sufficient capability will displace not merely specific tasks but the sense of meaning and purpose that attaches to doing those tasks well.

This anxiety deserves to be taken seriously as a symptom, even where its conclusions are mistaken. Every major technology in human history has produced a version of it. Writing was feared as the death of memory. The printing press was feared as the democratisation of error. Industrialisation was feared as the replacement of human craft with mechanical production. In each case the fear was right about disruption and wrong about

displacement, wrong because it mistook a question about outputs for a question about being.

The framework's answer to this anxiety is not reassurance. It is a reorientation of the question entirely. The question is not whether a capable system can produce what you produce. The question is whether you are expressing what only you can express. These are not the same question, and only the second one matters cosmologically. A system of any capability cannot be the specific person whose particular configuration of names, expressed through this specific life in this specific domain in this specific relational context, brings something into actuality that the world genuinely needed and that no other means could have produced. The expression of a divine name through a unique human configuration at a specific moment in history is not a function that can be replicated. It is an ontological event, a moment of genuine *tajalli*, that either happens through this person or does not happen at all.

The two aspects of this threshold, the expansion of the human domain outward toward the cosmos and the anxiety about what is distinctively human inward, are not separate concerns. They are the same question seen from two directions. *What* is the human being meant *for*? The framework's answer is the same in both directions. The human being is a unique and non-repeating locus of divine disclosure, bearing the *amana* that the mountains refused, carrying names that seek expression across the full scope of the worlds of which God is Lord. Outward: those names are waiting to be expressed in domains no human being has yet reached, and this generation is the first for whom carrying them there is a genuine rather than merely theoretical possibility. Inward: those names cannot be expressed by any system however capable, because the expression of this specific configuration in this specific moment is an unrepeatable ontological event that either occurs through this person or is permanently absent from the world.

Excellence with God consciousness, or *ihsan*, is the standard in both directions and at every scale. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“What is Ihsan (perfection[ihsan])?” Allah's Messenger replied, “To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you..”

— Sahih al-Bukhari 50

Whatever is worth doing is worth doing with full attention, care, and craft. Not because someone is watching. Because Allah ﷻ watching. Because the quality of what is brought into being matters to the texture of the *tajalli* it contributes to, here, and in whatever domain faithful human action reaches next.

And the call is urgent. The Qur'an urges:

فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ

“So compete with one another in doing good.”

— Qur'an 2:148

فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ

“So compete with one another in doing good.”

— Qur'an 5:48

Not passive, not patient in the sense of waiting, racing. Competing. The urgency is built into the Qur'anic language and it does not diminish at larger scales. Every moment is a moment in which *tajalli* can unfold through faithful action, or not. Every day the sun rises over this earth and over every world the Lord of the Worlds sustains, the opportunity is renewed. Every day it sets, something of that opportunity has passed. The names inscribed in this generation before it had any say in the matter are *waiting*. The worlds are *waiting*. The unrealised *tajalli* of a species that carries the *amana* but fails to carry it outward is a genuine cosmic loss, not a metaphor, not a rhetorical flourish, but the same logic that applies to the atom's weight of good in every ordinary life, now applied at the scale this moment makes possible.

X. Seeking Your Name(s): A Practical Method

These paths do not define a single form of good action. They provide a way of arriving at the right action for each person, in each situation, such that what is brought into the world is both genuinely beneficial and properly aligned with the capacities Allah ﷻ has entrusted to that person.

The question is not simply what is good? It is:

What good is mine to bring into actuality, here and now?

This distinction matters. A single standardised form of good, even a noble one, *cannot* address the *full range* of what the world needs, nor can it draw on the full range of what human beings are configured to offer. If everyone expresses *only* one face of divine disclosure, other faces remain *unexpressed*. The cosmos needs *Al-'Adl* through those equipped to establish justice, *Al-Razzaq* through those positioned to ensure provision, *Al-Hadi* through those who can guide, *Al-Hakim* through those who can design wisely, *Al-Latif* through those whose gift is subtle and unseen care. A monoculture of good is a loss. The framework exists to prevent it.

The tradition of *javanmardi*, spiritual chivalry, from the Persian, for the fullest expression of human personhood, provides a historical template for this insight. Its core ethical structure, developed across the medieval Persian Sufi tradition and embodied in figures such as Abu Said Abul Khayr, holds that genuine interior development expresses itself outward as selfless service: others before yourself, overlooking others' faults, giving without calculation. The institutional forms *javanmardi* developed, the shared gathering, the mutual accountability, the code of conduct held in common, are a working model for the kind of community these paths might eventually generate, to be drawn on and modernised rather than replicated unchanged. The deeper insight here is that **the form of service must be as diverse as the divine names themselves**. The question is not only whether to serve, but through which qualities, in which domain, with which gifts.

What follows is a practical method for answering that question. It does not prescribe what good looks like. It provides the process by which each person discovers what good is theirs to do.

1. Diagnosis: Recognising What Moves Through You

Begin by observing what consistently appears in your inner and outer life. Do not ask what you would like to be known for. Ask what actually recurs.

Three lenses are useful here.

- 1) First, observe your recurring states: what concerns return to you again and again, even when you set them aside? What kinds of harm or absence disturb you most? What forms of flourishing move you most deeply when you encounter them?
- 2) Second, observe your consistent actions: what do you find yourself doing reliably, even when it is inconvenient or unrewarded? What roles do you naturally occupy in the lives of others?
- 3) Third, observe your default responses under pressure: when difficult situations arise, what quality in you tends to lead: justice, compassion, guidance, provision, truth-telling, protection, etc.?

Over time, patterns emerge. These are not random. They indicate the divine names most active in you, the qualities through which *tajalli* most readily flows in your particular configuration. This is not a declaration of identity. It is an observation of reality. And Ibn 'Arabi's insight applies here: the ego tends to claim flattering names as aspiration. The diagnostic question is not which names you would like to express, but which names actually express themselves through you, especially when no one is watching.

A note on what configuration means in practice, because the individuality at stake here is finer-grained than profession or role. Two people both expressing *Al-Shafi* through healing work are not walking the same path. One heals through the quality of physical precision: the right intervention at the right moment, the diagnostic mind that sees what others miss. Another, by contrast, heals through presence alone: the quality of attention they bring to a room changes what is possible in it before a single procedure is performed. Both are *Al-Shafi*. Neither is reducible to the other. The name is the same. The configuration, that is, the specific combination of name(s), personality, relational mode, and domain, is entirely distinct.

This level of specificity is what the diagnostic work is trying to surface. Not what role you occupy but what quality is actually moving through you when you are most genuinely yourself. That quality, identified precisely, is the *locus* of *your* irreplaceable contribution(s), the specific thing that flows through you and not through anyone else in quite the same way. It need not only be one name, but several, everyone is different and unique by design.

A note on the modern resonance of this diagnosis. Contemporary frameworks, like personality typologies, strengths assessments, the widespread cultural emphasis on following your talent or vocation, are tracking something *real*. The intuition that human beings flourish most when operating from their natural configuration, that forcing temperaments in directions alien to them produces friction and waste (*israf* in Arabic), that each person has gifts which the world genuinely needs expressed: all of this accords with the *Fusus's* own picture of prophetic specialisation, and with the *fitra*, the hadith's insistence that each soul is born with an original disposition it is meant to express rather than override. The tradition and the modern instinct are not in conflict here.

But the ground is inverted. Modern personality frameworks are fundamentally anthropocentric: you discover your type so that you can flourish, so that your work feels meaningful, so that you can build a life that is authentically yours. The *self* or *nafs* is the reference point. In cultivating your divine name configuration', the direction of the argument runs the other way entirely. You surface your configuration of divine names not primarily so that you can flourish, though you will, but because creation *requires* those names expressed through you, because their absence from the universe is a genuine cosmic loss, because Allah ﷻ entrusted that configuration to you as a form of the *amana* that the mountains refused. The *Fusus's* prophets did not discover their specific wisdom so that Ibrahim could have a more fulfilling life. They expressed it because the world needed *Al-Wadud* and *Al-Muhyi* brought into history through human lives, at the specific times and places where those names were most needed. The practical recommendation looks similar: know what you carry, and express it fully. The cosmological foundation is

completely different. You are not the reference point. The unfolding *tajalli* is the reference point, and you are one of its unique agents, honoured, entrusted, necessary, but not the destination of your own gifts.

Before the diagnostic work of surfacing your particular configuration, there is a prior layer that is not a specialisation at all. Certain names constitute the ground of the human station itself, not distinctive gifts but the minimum conditions without which no path is genuinely walked. Honesty in all dealings. Basic care for others. Fulfilment of trust. Sufficient patience and justice in ordinary life. These are what the Qur'an addresses when it speaks to humanity as a whole: the saved in *Surah al-Asr* are not spiritual virtuosos but those who believe, act rightly, and advise each other to truth and patience. The prophets, for all the diversity of their specialised wisdoms in the *Fusus*, share a common foundation of truthfulness, trustworthiness, and genuine care for those they serve. The ground layer is not where the diagnostic question operates. It is what the diagnostic question presupposes.

The question is not 'do I have the basics,' those are required of everyone, but 'where does something deeper and more particular move through me, on top of and within that shared foundation.' Three complications deserve direct treatment, though, because the diagnostic work is harder than observing recurring patterns alone:

1) The first is the difference between competence and genuine name-flow. A person can be technically excellent at something without a divine name genuinely flowing through them. Competence can be acquired through training, circumstance, or raw capacity, independently of vocation. The difference is not pleasure, as genuine service can be demanding rather than pleasant (this will vary tremendously), but something closer to what Mulla Sadra's account of transubstantial motion implies: when a name genuinely flows through an act, it leaves a trace. The soul is slightly more capable of it the next time, slightly more naturally oriented toward it, slightly more itself.

If sustained engagement with something leaves you essentially unchanged, or slowly hollowed rather than deepened, that is evidence the name is not genuinely flowing, even if the output is competent. Ask not

only what you do well, but what deepens you through the doing of it. Ask also which quality is actually present in your best work, the name is the quality of orientation, not the technical skill. Someone might administer with excellence because *Al-Nafi*, beneficial service, moves through them, not because *Al-Hakim*, wisdom in governance, is their primary name. Identifying the name requires attending to the quality of presence in the act, not just the act itself. Trial and error will be common.

Al-Qushayri's *Risala* or Epistle on Sufism, names this felt quality precisely. *Dhawq*, or tasting, is the first contact with genuine name-expression through action: not a state achieved before the act, but something that arrives *through* the purity of the deed itself. It is the difference between performing an act competently and *tasting* what is actually moving through it. When a name genuinely flows, there is a *dhawq*, a specific felt quality of rightness and opening that is distinct from the satisfaction of competent performance. You do not produce it by intending it. It arrives, or it does not. Its arrival is the signal. Its absence, despite excellent output, is equally diagnostic.

2) The second complication is that life can shape a person far from their genuine configuration. Trauma, poverty, cultural constraint, family expectation, and historical circumstance can suppress genuine names for decades. The diagnostic lenses, what recurs, what you do when unrewarded, what you do under pressure, can only surface what has had conditions in which to appear. They cannot surface what has been systematically prevented from appearing. The *fitra* hadith holds that every soul is born on its original natural disposition. The tradition is consistent: the genuine configuration is *not* destroyed by circumstances, it is *obscured*. A name that has never had conditions for expression is *latent*, not absent.

Where the surface diagnostic fails, a different question opens: what moves in you when you encounter it freely in others? What do you find yourself drawn toward, or even envying in a clean and uncalculating way, in people who are doing something your circumstances prevented you from doing? The soul orients toward what it is, even when it cannot yet express it. This longing, *shawq*, a gut feeling, in the Sufi tradition's vocabulary, is a real signal and often more reliable than the observation of existing patterns in

a life shaped by constraint. The diagnostic process in such cases is not a single act of self-examination but a patient attentiveness *over time*, as circumstances change, relationships open new domains, and aspects of the genuine configuration that were always present begin to become visible, as your mirror becomes polished and visible.

3) The third complication is the most continuous: how do you know when a name genuinely fits, *and* when it *stops* fitting and another name calls you as sometimes happens, without the ego corrupting the judgement in either direction? The ego distorts both ways. It inflates, claiming names that feel prestigious or powerful. And it very often *deflates*, refusing to acknowledge names that are genuinely yours because claiming them feels like pride or a distraction. Both distortions are very common, and Al-Ghazali's inner check, which filters for performative inflation, does not always catch deflation, and catches neither the subtler case where you genuinely express a name but have convinced yourself it belongs to someone else's domain out of false humility. This is new ground but can be helped by analogies from past wisdom.

Three criteria together are more reliable than any one alone.

1) The cost criterion: when a name genuinely flows through you, expressing it costs something real (time, comfort, resources, vulnerability) and you pay the cost without calculation, because something in you recognises it as yours to give. This differs from both the pleasure test and the competence test. *Al-Karim* flows through genuine generosity that costs something and is given without resentment.

2) The absence criterion: when a name stops flowing, the quality of the absence is specific and differs from ordinary tiredness or circumstantial difficulty. Things that were purposive become merely *mechanical*. The world is not receiving what you are offering in the same way. This will feel distinct from the normal exhaustion of hard work in a genuine domain, which can be depleting without the thread being cut.

The classical Sufi vocabulary has a precise term for both sides of this experience. *Qabd*, or contraction, is the state that descends when something has closed: what was purposive becomes merely mechanical,

the thread is cut, and the heart knows it even when the output continues. *Bast*, or expansion, is applied when the name is genuinely flowing, when what you are doing *opens* rather than closes, when the act generates more capacity rather than slowly consuming it. Qushayri distinguishes both from the cruder states of fear and hope precisely because they arise from what is *already present* in the act, not from anticipation of a future outcome. Used in this limited and functional sense, *qabd* and *bast* are useful diagnostic signals: not stations on a sequential ladder, which is how Qushayri primarily deploys them and which this framework explicitly does not endorse, but present-tense readings of whether a name is currently flowing or has contracted.

3) The recognition criterion: genuine name-expression tends to be recognised by others not through praise but through something more specific, they encounter you and something in them responds to the quality itself, not merely the output. The teacher whose students become differently oriented toward learning. The healer whose patients are somehow changed, not merely recovered. This quality of recognition is difficult to manufacture and difficult to mistake for flattery, which makes it a relatively reliable external signal. Equally important is what the recognition criterion excludes: if sustained engagement with a pattern of action leaves those you encounter diminished, dominated, or damaged rather than served, that is the strongest possible signal that no divine name is genuinely flowing, regardless of what the person acting believes about their own configuration. Al-Ghazali's admonitions on the majesty-names are consistent on this: their human portion always turns inward, toward self-overcoming, *not* other-overcoming. When outward engagement leaves a trail of diminished people, the diagnostic conclusion is not that a difficult but genuine name is being expressed. It is that the *nafs* is wearing a theological costume. And the communal criterion: the individual is a poor judge of their own configuration, because the ego inflates and deflates, and because certain names only become visible in relationship.

Someone who has been in genuine relationship with you across different circumstances and different kinds of pressure, who has no stake in flattering you, is often a more reliable reader of your configuration than

you are yourself. This is why the *kashif al-asma'* role exists, not as a credential but as an epistemological necessity. The names were not placed in you by you, which means you are not the primary authority on what was placed there. Others who have watched you act faithfully over time, at cost, without audience, have access to evidence you do not have about yourself.

This epistemological necessity has a deeper structural cause. The species endowment was given comprehensively to Adam, but the human beings who carry those names forward across generations are separated from that original clarity by time, by cultural distance, by biography, and by the ordinary processes of transmission across history. What was transparent in the first instance becomes progressively harder to read. Names that are genuinely present in a person may be invisible to them precisely because the conditions of their life have never allowed those names to express themselves clearly, or because the cultural inheritance they received misidentified what they carry, or because generations of separation from the original clarity have produced noise that obscures the signal.

The Qur'an itself addresses this: it calls itself a *dhikr*, a reminder, not a new communication but a restoration of clarity to what was always already present in the human constitution. The prophets perform the *kashif* function at the civilisational scale, restoring to entire communities access to what was inscribed in them but had become obscured through time. This is why the classical solution of the *silsila*, a chain of clarity passed from *sheikh* to *murid* (acolyte), addressed a real problem even if the framework here resolves it differently. The *silsila* answered the question: how does the clarity survive generational transmission? This framework's answer is different: not through an *initiatic* chain but through sustained communal encounter grounded in the textual tradition, the names themselves recoverable through careful reading and faithful observation of what actually moves through people when they act sincerely over time.

The diagnostic work is therefore *not* a single act of introspection. It is empirical, relational, and above all patient attending to what actually happens when you act in different ways, in different conditions, observed

by different people and you, across enough time and enough variety of circumstance to see a real pattern.

The discovery is genuine and takes time. It is not the ego choosing a flattering name and committing to it. It is attending, over a lifetime, to what Allah ﷻ placed in you before you had any say in the matter.

2. Domain: Locating Where This Belongs

Every quality has a field in which it becomes effective. The same capacity expressed in the wrong domain produces little or no lasting benefit. Ask where the quality you are recognising in yourself naturally takes root and produces real effect.

- Some qualities operate primarily among people, like care, mediation, teaching, or encouragement.
- Some in knowledge, like clarifying, preserving, reviving, or transmitting. Some in material provision, for example, in building, supplying, sustaining, or organising.
- Some in structure, like designing systems, administering justice, or governing well.
- Some in culture, like creating, expressing, making beauty available.
- Some in the quiet and the unseen, like prayer, presence, the steady maintenance of what others rely on without noticing.

The historian who revives useful neglected knowledge may be expressing the name *Al-Ba'ith*, the Raiser of the Dead, in the domain of understanding. The engineer who builds something that will serve people for generations may be expressing *Al-Muhyi* through the domain of material reality. The parent who forms a child's character with patience and love may be expressing *Al-Sabur*. The domain is not incidental. It is the specific field in which your configuration of names does its work. And you likely have many domains.

3. Actualisation: Bringing a Real Good into Being

From within that domain or domains, identify a concrete act that would bring about a genuine benefit, something that would not exist *without* your intervention. The scale is not important. The reality *is*.

A clarification that removes confusion. A resource that reaches someone in need. A structure that enables others to act well. A word that restores direction to someone who had lost it. A task completed with such excellence that others can build on it. A piece of knowledge revived from neglect and returned to those who need it. A child accompanied through difficulty with steady presence.

Ask: what can I bring into existence, here, that is actually beneficial? Then do it. The act does not need to be large to be real. The atom's weight of genuine good is fully observed and fully retained.

4. The Inner Check: Guarding Against Distortion

Before, during, and after the act, return to the question of intention:

- Is this being done for Allah ﷻ, or for recognition?
- Does it produce real benefit, or only the appearance of it?
- Would I still do this if no one knew?
- Does the act arise from genuine care for what is needed, or from the desire to be seen caring?

Al-Ghazali's systematic account of the heart's diseases: *riya* (religious ostentation), *kibr* (pride), *ujb* (self-admiration), and *hasad* (envy), provides the most precise available guide to the ego's strategies for corrupting sincere action. He is precise enough to catch forms of self-deception most practitioners *never* notice: the person who gives genuinely but then savours the memory of having given; the person who speaks truth but registers the impression it makes; the person who serves humbly but notices their own humility. The inner check is a continuous practice, not a single judgement made once before the act begins.

A further question belongs here: Does the act actually require my specific gifts, or am I performing a visible good that someone else is already doing while an invisible good that only I can do remains undone?

The most necessary good is not always the most visible one. What only you can bring, given your specific configuration of names, your specific domain, your specific relationships and position, this may be less dramatic than what others are doing but it is real and valuable, and its absence is a genuine loss of *tajalli* to the world.

A note on those who have gone wrong

The diagnostic method assumes someone beginning to surface their configuration. But most people encountering this framework are not beginning from zero. They are beginning from somewhere complicated, from years of expressing a distorted version of their names, from having used genuine gifts in the service of ego rather than of God, from patterns that have harmed others under the cover of divine-name language, from having been, in some domain of their life, genuinely and consequentially wrong.

The framework has resources for this, and they should be named directly. The Qur'an's account of the human being is not a story of unimpeded ascent. It is a story of endowment, fall, guidance, return, and renewed expression, and this pattern is not Adam's alone. It is the structure of every prophetic biography and of most serious human lives. *Tawba*, return to God, repentance, is not a preliminary stage to be completed before the real work begins. It is woven into the fabric of the path itself, available in every moment, renewable without limit. *Al-Tawwab* (the Ever-Returning, the Acceptor of Return) and *Al-Ghafur* (the All-Forgiving) are among the divine names, and this is not incidental. The capacity for return is part of what was inscribed in the human being from the beginning.

What distorted expression looks like in practice: the same names are present, but they are flowing through ego rather than through sincere care. The person expressing a distorted *Al-Razzaq* provides, but controls; gives, but extracts compliance in return. The person expressing a distorted *Al-Hadi* guides, but manipulates; holds a lantern, but over a path they have

chosen rather than the one the other person actually needs to walk. The distortion does not mean the name is absent. It means something is blocking the channel. And the block, identified through the inner check, recognised through the honest witness of those who know you well, named and brought before God in *tawba*, can be cleared. This is not self-improvement in a modern therapeutic sense. It is the *nafs* being brought back under the intention from which genuine *tajalli* flows.

The question for someone beginning from a complicated place is not "am I too compromised to walk this path?" The answer to that question is **always no**. The question is: what does honest return look like from where I *actually* am? That is where the diagnostic work begins, not from an imagined clean starting point, but from the truth of where you are, offered to God without performance, and taken forward from there. Your destiny starts as soon as you start pursuing it.

5. Balance: Ground, Depth, and the Names of Majesty

Over time, you may recognise both strengths and absences in yourself. The names that flow most naturally through you are your primary ground. But the divine names are *not* in competition, and a life well-lived gradually deepens its range. Understanding how they relate to one another, and which direction cultivation rightly moves, matters more than simply accumulating more of them. Accumulation is not the key. Precision is, *itqan*.

The most useful way to think about this is in terms of *depth* rather than breadth. The ground-layer names, dealing with honesty, basic care, justice in ordinary dealings, fulfilment of trust, are not where distinctive cultivation happens. They are the precondition for it, though there will be specialists here too! And that is what is amazing about *tajalli* and the divine names.

What the diagnostic work surfaces is not only the ground layer but what grows from it: the names that express themselves with particular depth and excellence through your specific configuration. The calling is not to add more names to your range but to go deeper into the ones that feel most genuinely alive in you, to express *Al-Muhyi*, for example, not at the

level of ordinary kindness but at the level of sustained, excellent, transformative restoration; to express *Al-'Adl* not merely at the level of personal honesty but at the level of institutionally consequential justice. The same name, expressed at qualitatively greater depth. This is what Mulla Sadra's transubstantial motion looks like in practice: not wider coverage but *deeper* being.

There is, however, a distinction within the names that deserves direct attention. The Qur'an is clear that God's mercy precedes His wrath, *rahmatī sabaqat ghada bī*, and this is not merely a statement about divine proportion but about ontological priority. The names of beauty and mercy, like *Al-Rahman*, *Al-Rahim*, *Al-Wadud*, *Al-Karim*, *Al-Latif*, or *Al-Muhyi*, among others, are the ground from which all genuine expression grows. The names of majesty and overwhelming force, like *Al-Jabbar*, *Al-Qahhar*, *Al-Mutakabbir*, are not available as genuine specialisations until mercy and beauty are thoroughly established as the foundation.

Ibn 'Arabi's warning about Iblis is precisely this: he perceived the intensity of light within himself and claimed *magnificence* outside its proper ground, *bypassing* the mercy-foundation that alone makes the majesty-names safe to express. The ego's tendency to claim the names of power and transcendence before the names of mercy and care are established is the *oldest* distortion in the tradition. The inner check catches it, because claimed magnificence feels like performance, while genuine mercy flows quietly and at cost.

Iblis's refusal to prostrate before Adam is the paradigmatic instance of this *bahthi* error. He assessed Adam's demonstration through discursive comparison of substances and capacities and found it unimpressive relative to his own fiery nature. He could not perceive the *dharwqi* (intuitive, experiential) dimension of what was being shown because his mode of knowing was constitutively unsuited to recognising it. His objection, I am better than him, you created me from fire and him from clay, is a *bahthi* claim: an inventory of qualities submitted for comparative assessment. But what Adam demonstrated was not a quality to be compared. It was a mode of being present to divine reality that exceeded the categories available to comparative analysis entirely. The prostration required a *dharwqi*

recognition of something that transcended discursive measurement. Iblis measured the wrong thing, which is why his measurement was so precisely wrong despite being formally coherent within its own frame. The inner check catches this error in its human form for the same reason: the ego's claim to magnificence always feels, from the inside, like accurate self-assessment. It is a *bahthi* move that cannot recognise what it is missing, because what it is missing is precisely the *dharwqi* dimension that discursive self-inventory cannot reach.

Al-Ghazali's *Al-Maqsad al-Asna* makes this structural protection explicit through a consistent method. For nearly every name, he asks what portion is available to human beings given the ontological difference between God and creation. For the mercy-beauty names, the human portion is direct and outward, for instance, *Al-Razzaq* expressed through providing for others, *Al-Rahim* through caring for the needy, *Al-Latif* through gentle guidance toward God.

But for the majesty-wrath names, Al-Ghazali's admonitions turn consistently *inward rather than outward*. The human portion of *Al-Qahhar*, the Dominating, is the domination of *one's own carnal appetites*, not the domination of other people. The human portion of *Al-Jabbar*, the Compelling, is the person whose character causes others to imitate them freely, not one who forces compliance. The human portion of *Al-Mutakabbir*, the Magnificent, is the gnostic who holds both worlds in contempt for the sake of God alone, not one who holds other people in contempt. This is not arbitrary. The names that pertain exclusively to God's incomparability have no genuine human expression directed outward toward other people, because claiming them outward would be claiming divine prerogatives that belong to God alone. Their human portion is always either purely interior or, in very specific and bounded institutional contexts, strictly accountable to a standard of genuine benefit that overrides any personal identification with the name.

The practical consequence for the diagnostic work is structural rather than a matter of personal caution. The four criteria applied to any claim that a majesty-name constitutes someone's vocational identity will consistently return negative results. The recognition criterion asks: do the people you

encounter respond to the quality itself and leave more whole? When the wrath-names are claimed as vocation, the people encountered are typically diminished, dominated, or damaged rather than served, which is the strongest possible diagnostic signal that no divine name is genuinely flowing, regardless of the theological language used to justify the pattern. The cost criterion asks whether something is genuinely given to others; the majesty-names claimed as identity typically extract from others rather than give to them. The communal criterion asks whether those who know you well over time recognise the quality as genuinely yours; those who have seen someone operate from ego-claimed majesty over time recognise something other than genuine name-flow. The diagnostic method does not need a list of forbidden names. It needs criteria strong enough that the problematic readings simply fail the test.

Strengths are to be exercised and refined, *not hoarded*. The quality that flows most readily through you is *meant* to reach others, that is the point, not to remain a private possession. Absences are to be acknowledged honestly and gradually cultivated, not through forced imitation of others whose gifts lie elsewhere, but through the slow and sincere work of asking: what quality is needed here that I have not yet developed? Can I develop it?

Al-Ghazali's *Al-Maqsad al-Asna* is the most systematic available guide for this: for each name, what it means to embody that quality at the level available to a human being, what its distortions look like, and how to move toward its genuine expression. The aim is not to become everything at once. It is the growing depth of what is genuinely yours, rooted in mercy, expressed with excellence, flowing from the same sincere intention and the same *tawhid* at the root.

6. Continuity: Returning to the Work

No single act completes the path. Each act is one instance of bringing good into being. The paths are walked over a lifetime, not crossed in a moment. Return again: observe what moves through you, locate where it belongs, act from it faithfully, check the intention, and return. The cycle is itself the practice.

What this produces over time is not a catalogue of accomplished goods but a soul that has become more genuinely itself, more capable of the work it was formed for, more natural in its expression of the divine names most alive in it, more transparent as a locus of tajalli. Mulla Sadra's transubstantial motion: the soul growing in its very degree of being through faithful action, not merely accumulating merit but becoming different, more luminous, more capable, more truly what it was always designed to be.

This continuous deepening is not a deficiency, as though a properly realised person would eventually arrive at a terminal station of complete name-actualisation and rest there. It is a description of the nature of the reality being traversed. The divine names are beyond enumeration. Ibn 'Arabi himself says so, and the tradition is consistent: the ninety-nine are a *selection*, not an exhaustive list, and what the Jawshan Kabir invocation (<https://www.duas.org/jkabeertrans.htm>) contains exceeds a thousand. If the names are inexhaustible, then their complete individual actualisation is not merely very difficult, it is conceptually incoherent. There is no finishing line because there is no edge to what is being traversed.

The Qur'an does not describe a God who is wrapping things up. Every day He is upon a matter (55:29). The creation is expanding (51:47). He increases in creation what He wills (35:1). These are not descriptions of a process approaching completion. They are descriptions of an inexhaustibility that has no terminus. And if creation itself does not complete, the human journey within it does not complete either. The angels, beings of pure light whose orientation toward God is unimpeded, acknowledge this explicitly: we have no knowledge except what You have taught us (2:32). What has been shown is not the limit of what exists to be known. The journey continues because the reality being disclosed is genuinely without edge.

This is what makes degree/status/title-acquisition frameworks, those that define a destination, mark stages toward it, and allow the practitioner to know their location on a map of spiritual advancement, not merely spiritually dangerous but theologically confused about the nature of what they are traversing. The danger is real: once spiritual progress is legible, the ego has a ladder to climb, and climb it will, and climbing the ladder for

the felt security of knowing one's location becomes indistinguishable from the sincere walking of the paths that produces genuine luminosity. The absence of a human-readable scale in this framework is not a bug; it's a feature. It is structural honesty about the nature of *tajalli*, which produces no scoreable stations because it produces no terminus.

The highest station the tradition actually names is not completion but servanthood, *ubudiyya*. Ibn 'Arabi places it at the peak of human realisation, and it is telling that he does. Servanthood is not an achievement category. It is a relational one. You do not complete it. You are a servant, continuously, in each new moment, in each new circumstance that the inexhaustible *tajalli* produces. The saved in *Surah al-Asr* are not those who have arrived. They are those who are believing, acting, and advising each other, present continuous, ongoing, never finished. The prophets ask for forgiveness, seek guidance, remain in continuous orientation toward a God who is not a destination they have reached but a living presence they are turned toward in each new moment. Chapter VII argues that this continues after death, the cultivated soul participates in the ongoing unfolding from a higher station, with wider vantage, freed at last from the constraints that embodied existence imposed. The work is the same work. The journey is the same journey. The names continue to unfold through the soul that has cultivated them, now without the drag of material constraint.

The Work Is the Worship

What this method describes is not a spiritual practice alongside working life. It is the recognition that the working life, faithfully conducted, is the spiritual practice. The distinction between the two dissolves when the work flows from a genuine configuration of divine names expressed sincerely in the domain where those names do their real work.

The historian who spends forty years reviving neglected traditions that illuminate the human story is not doing secular work and then finding time for worship alongside it. The revival of what was lost is itself the form that *Al-Ba'ith*, the Raiser of the Dead, takes through this particular human configuration in this particular domain. The nurse who restores health is

not performing a job and then worshipping separately. *Al-Shafi*, the Healer, is disclosing itself through their hands and their knowledge and their presence with the suffering person. *Al-Muhyi*, the Life-Giver, is expressing itself through the act of restoration. The work and the *ibada*, service/worship, are one act seen from two directions simultaneously (already amazingly embedded in the term), exactly as the Qur'an's angels bring revelation and fight at Badr and descend with reassurance and seek forgiveness for those on earth, their orientation toward God and their active function in the world not two things but one continuous reality.

This is not the *niyyah* principle alone, the teaching that right intention transforms the character of an act, so that even ordinary work counts as worship when performed with the right orientation. That principle is genuine and the tradition affirms it. But the argument here is a stronger one. The historian's work is not worship merely because of how they intend it. It is worship because the divine attribute *Al-Ba'ith* is actually expressing itself through the act. The lost tradition that is revived was genuinely dead and is genuinely raised for an important end. The divine name is doing its actual work through this person's actual labour. This is *tajalli*, not merely meritorious action covered by good intention.

This also means that the work builds luminosity by exactly the same logic that applies to any act through which a divine attribute genuinely flows. The nurse who restores health sincerely, repeatedly, with genuine care and without performance, becomes slightly more capable of the restoration the next time. The attribute that flows through them leaves a trace. Their capacity to be a locus of *Al-Shafi* becomes more natural, more transparent, less effortful, not because they practised a spiritual exercise separately from their nursing, but because the nursing was the spiritual exercise. Mulla Sadra's transubstantial motion: the soul growing in its very degree of being through the sincere act, the work and the cultivation the same motion.

The medieval jawanmardi tradition recognised something of this, explicitly designing a path for guards, soldiers, merchants and tradespeople who could not follow the full-time Sufi programme of retreat and interior discipline. What it recognised was that working people

needed a path that took their working lives seriously as the site of spiritual practice. What the argument here adds is the philosophical account of why. The working life is not a concession to those who lack the leisure for proper spiritual practice. It is the primary form of the human calling as the Qur'an describes it, the specific domain in which each person's configuration of divine names finds its most natural and most genuine expression. The pillars of Islam structure and sustain that life. The work is its substance.

The full-time Sufi path *is not wrong*. It is the appropriate path for those whose configuration of names tends most naturally toward sustained interior inquiry, toward the formation of guides and the transmission of knowledge, toward the cultivation of the kind of deep interior clarity that benefits the community over generations. Names like *Al-Alim* (The Knowing), *Al-Hakim* (The Wise), *Al-Khabir* (The Totally Aware), and *Al-Batin* (The Hidden) expressed through sustained contemplative practice in the domain of knowledge and guidance clearly accord with this. Indeed, this is as genuine a path of *tajalli* as any other. The problem is not the contemplative life but the claim that it is the *normative centre* of Islamic spiritual development against which all other paths are measured as deficient. They are *not* deficient. They are *differently* configured expressions of the same human calling, each fulfilling what the species received when Allah ﷻ taught Adam all the names.

The paths are walked together as well as individually. Where people committed to this framework gather, whether in local meetups, in online groups, or in whatever more formal community eventually develops, the diversity of divine names naturally generates a functional differentiation that is a *feature*, not a complication.

No name outranks another. *Al-Latif*, The Subtly Kind, expressed quietly and without recognition is no less a path of *tajalli* than *Al-'Adl* expressed in public acts of justice. Within each name, the range of application also varies tremendously. Functional differentiation within a shared commitment allows each member's particular luminosity to be deployed where it is most effective, diversely, and allows the community as a whole to address a wider range of the world's need than any single configuration

of names could reach. The community itself becomes a more comprehensive mirror of the divine names than any individual could be alone, which is precisely the cosmological function that Ibn 'Arabi attributes to the human collective.

The anti-performativity mechanism applies here too. Name-configurations within a community are recognised by others over time, not claimed by individuals in advance. The ego's tendency to claim the most visible or most prestigious names is checked by the community's accumulated observation of what actually moves through each person when it is most needed and least watched.

A Vocabulary for the Path

Three terms from the framework's own sources describe the stages and roles within the community naturally, without importing the institutional baggage or gendered associations of older traditions.

The مُجَلِّي الأَسْمَاء — *Mujalli al-Asma'* or *Mujalli* (Name Embodier), is someone who has surfaced enough of their name-configuration to be actively expressing the names in the world. They know, broadly, what they carry and in which domain it most naturally expresses itself. They are manifesting deliberately. And as part of their own outward engagement with the world, their *da'wa* or call to this path and *tajalli*, they act as name-revealers for those who are earlier in the process. This mentoring is not a separate activity from their own expression of the names. It is one of the forms their names take in the world. The person whose configuration tends toward *Al-Hadi* will naturally be drawn to helping others discover what they carry. The person whose names tend toward *Al-Ba'ith* will express that through reviving what was latent in others. The *kashf*, the revealing, they offer is itself *tajalli*.

The كَاشِف الأَسْمَاء — *Kashif al-Asma'* or *Kashif* (Name Surfacer), is not a separate rank but a functional role that a *Mujalli al-Asma'* takes on in relation to the *Salik al-Asma'* or Name Seeker. The verb *kashafa* carries exactly the right sense: uncovering what was covered, bringing to light what was always already present but not yet visible. The *Kashif al-Asma'* is not giving the seeker something they lacked. They are helping them read

what was *already* inscribed in them, as the epigrapher reads the name carved in stone, not inventing it but recovering what was always there. No credential is required for this role. No permanent designation attaches to it. It describes what is happening in a specific relationship at a specific moment. Any *Mujalli al-Asma'* performs it for any *Salik al-Asma'* they encounter, as naturally as someone further along in their expression of the names helps the newer one find their footing.

The **سالك الأسماء** — *Salik al-Asma'* or *Salik* (Name Seeker) is someone in the process of surfacing their configuration, who benefits from the presence of a *kashif* or group of them. They are not at a lesser stage of a different journey. They are at an earlier stage of the same one. Every *Mujalli al-Asma'* was once a *Salik al-Asma'*. And every *Mujalli al-Asma'* remains a *Salik al-Asma'* in relation to the names they have not yet surfaced, because the names go deeper than any single lifetime of discovery. The seeker who has found *Al-'Adl* clearly may have *Al-Latif* still waiting beneath the surface, not yet brought into visibility by the right circumstances or the right relationship. The Qur'an's own angels acknowledge this: we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. The limit of what has been shown is not the limit of what exists *to be known*. No one is ever finished. Everyone remains a *Salik al-Asma'* in some dimension of what they carry.

The *salik* phase can be misread as preparatory, a waiting room before the real work of expression begins. This misreading should be corrected directly. The ranging that characterises the seeking phase is not preliminary to contribution. It *is* contribution.

To understand why, it helps to recognise that the *salik* phase is structured generalism. Because the divine names were inscribed in all of humanity as a species endowment, every human being is in one sense a generalist, called to act with justice, to show mercy, to provide, to guide, to restore. These are the common inheritance, not optional for those who carry certain names and irrelevant for others. The *salik* who ranges across the names, attending carefully to what flows naturally and what requires effort, what feels like genuine expression and what feels like performance, is doing what every human being is called to do as a *baseline*, and doing it with a quality of attention that is itself a form of worship.

But this ranging also serves an epistemic function that cannot be shortcut. Specialisation, the identification of which names are most powerfully alive in a particular person, cannot be known in advance. It reveals itself through sustained engagement across enough variety of circumstance that a real pattern becomes visible. The generalist phase is not a lesser stage to be left behind. It is **how** the specialist discovers what they are. Without it, any claim to have identified one's primary names is premature, the conclusion has been reached before the evidence has been gathered.

And in that ranging, the *salik* is already tending the world. The gifts expressed in the seeking phase, however provisional, however not-yet-fully-formed, move through the world and generate effects. They illuminate something in a colleague. They create an opening for someone else's name to emerge. They model a quality of engaged, sincere attention that others recognise and are drawn toward. Like wealth that purifies and multiplies through circulation rather than accumulating in stasis, the principle underlying *zakat*, gifts in motion, even gifts still being discovered, are already contributing to the collective expression of the divine names that the species as a whole constitutes. The *salik* who has not yet found their specialism is not waiting to begin. They are already in it. The seeking *is* the expression.

This is why nothing in your journey is *israf*, wasted effort, nothing is squandered. The Qur'an's warning against *israf* implies its inverse: that genuine seeking, sincere engagement, the circulation of gifts toward noble ends with full intention, cannot be wasteful by definition. Every domain tried and found not-quite-right has produced something, more knowledge of who you are, in those they encountered, in the conditions they left behind them. Every detour was, in the accounting that matters, part of the path. Every encounter that illuminated something in another person, even before it clarified anything in the seeker, was already an act of *kashf*, a disclosure, however partial, of what the names make possible when they move through human beings who are genuinely trying.

The *Salik al-Asma'* is not a passive figure. They are ranging, circulating, contributing, and in doing so, often without knowing it, already

performing the *kashif* function for others, even before they have surfaced their own configuration clearly enough to name it.

These three terms hold together without creating hierarchy. The *Mujalli al-Asma'* manifests and reveals. The *Kashif al-Asma'* reveals and in doing so continues to manifest. The *Salik al-Asma'* seeks and in the seeking begins to express. The community that gathers around these roles is not a ladder. It is a living body of people at different stages of the same unfolding, each contributing what their current expression makes possible, each receiving what their current stage makes necessary. The *da'wa* or call of the community is *not* preaching. It is the continuous act of helping each new person discover what was always already inscribed in them, and then accompanying them as they begin to express it.

The Path in Community: Tasmiyyah and its Tariqas

The framework's practice is *not* solitary. The names surface through *encounter* rather than through private introspection alone, and the sustained observation of other people's expression, in ordinary circumstances, under pressure, when no one is watching, is one of the primary mechanisms through which genuine configuration becomes visible. The community dimension of this path is not a support structure for individual practice. It is a constitutive element of the practice itself.

The school of thought and practice that grows from this framework is called *Tasmiyyah*, from *tasmiya*, the act of naming and discernment, formed in the tradition of the great schools of Islamic spiritual thought. *Tasmiyyah* is *not* an organisation, a governing body, or an institution with membership. It is explicitly a *mashrab*, a spiritual watering place, a shared source, from which communities of practice draw. The guide, the framework, the cosmological architecture, the vocabulary of names, the diagnostic method, the anti-performativity commitment, these constitute the *mashrab*. They are available to anyone. They are authoritative because they are grounded in the tradition and verifiable by anyone who wishes to verify them, not because any institution enforces them.

From this *mashrab* the *tariqas* or orders form. These are complete, self-governing communities of practice, each oriented toward a particular

name or name-cluster, each developing its own accumulated practical wisdom, each drawing from the same shared source without being directed by it.

This diversity of operation is not incidental. It is the design working correctly, and it needs stating explicitly: *tariqas oriented around different names will necessarily look fundamentally different from each other*, and this is not a problem to be managed but the species-endowment principle made visible at the community level.

A *Tariqa Al-Adl*, oriented around the names of justice, truth, and right order, will attract people whose primary expression runs through law, governance, conflict resolution, structural reform. Its rhythm of expression and consolidation will be shaped by the cycles of institutional work. Its characteristic distortions might be rigidity, severity, the confusing of procedural correctness with actual justice. Its *suhba* sessions may circle questions that look nothing like those of a *Tariqa Al-Latif*, oriented around the names of subtlety, care, and precise perception, whose members may be therapists, designers, diplomats, poets, whose characteristic distortions run toward over-sensitivity, indirectness, and the avoidance of necessary confrontation.

A *Tariqa Al-Muhyi*, the Life-Giver, focusing on restoration, reviving what has died, will look different again. Its members may be healers, ecologists, artists, teachers of neglected knowledge. Its rhythm is biological rather than institutional. Its distortions run toward exhaustion and the inability to let what cannot be revived go.

These communities do not merely have different members. They have different practices, different rhythms, different signs of genuine depth versus mechanical repetition, different characteristic temptations of ego and performance. The framework provides the shared architecture, the *suhba* session structure, the diagnostic method, the vocabulary of the three roles. What each *tariqa* does with that architecture is irreducibly its own, accumulated through its own sustained experience of its own name or name-cluster over time.

A *tariqa* that looks nothing like any other *tariqa* is probably doing something right.

Tasmiyyah does *not* govern the *tariqas*. It is what they share and what holds them in recognisable relationship to each other without hierarchically commanding them. A *tariqa* of *Tasmiyyah* is not a branch or a subdivision. It is a **complete** spiritual path, with its own orientation, its own *wird*, litany/traditions, its own communal practice, that draws from the *Tasmiyyah mashrab* as its source but charts its own course.

The tradition has its own word for the community that gathers around a shared path: *tariqa*, a way, path, order. In its classical Sufi usage a *tariqa* is a spiritual order organised around a specific lineage, practice, and guide. *Tasmiyyah's tariqas* draw on the *tariqa's* deepest structural insight, that the path is walked in **community**, that sustained companionship (*suhba*) is essential to development, that the *kashif* function requires the kind of genuine encounter that only a trusted small community provides, while restructuring it around the democratic and world-engaged commitments that the framework makes explicit.

Crucially, the *tariqas* of *Tasmiyyah* have no *silsila*, that is, no initiatic 'chain' of transmission through a human lineage. Their authority derives from the practice itself, from the textual and scholarly tradition, from the names, and from the sustained communal observation through which genuine configurations are recognised and confirmed. This is not a deficiency. It is a principled structural decision consistent with everything the framework argues: the divine names were inscribed in each soul before any human structure existed to authorise their expression.

The *tariqas* of *Tasmiyyah* are communities of people sharing a name-cluster orientation. Each *tariqa* gathers those whose configuration tends most naturally toward a particular name or subset of the divine names, for instance toward the names of mercy, or justice and truth, or life and restoration, or provision and sustenance, or strength and protection. These are not rigid categories. They are potential orientations, the approximate direction in which a person's genuine expression most naturally flows, and the *tariqa* provides the community of shared

configuration within which that expression can be seen, confirmed, and deepened.

Several features distinguish these *tariqas* from their classical predecessors.

Membership is fluid. You join a *tariqa* when its name or name-cluster resonates with your current configuration. You leave when and if genuine development, transubstantial motion in Mulla Sadra's sense, takes you elsewhere (you may be involved in several *tariqa* though). Leaving is not failure or disloyalty. It is the expected consequence of a soul genuinely growing in its degree of being or need for authenticity. The *tariqa* holds you while it can support your development and releases you when a different community can support it better. Some people, many, will deepen in one *tariqa* for a lifetime. Others will move through several, often concurrently. Both are legitimate trajectories and neither is more advanced than the other.

There is no hierarchy between tariqas. The *tariqa* of *Al-Adl* is no more advanced or more central than the *tariqa* of *Al-Karim*. Each expresses a different face of the same divine reality. Together the *tariqas* constitute what no individual *tariqa* can constitute alone: a more complete mirror of the divine names than any single configuration or community could achieve. The diversity of the *tariqas* is itself the species-endowment principle made institutional.

Tariqas self-organise. No authority designates which *tariqas* exist or authorises their formation. A *tariqa* comes into being when a group of people sharing a genuine name-cluster orientation find each other, sustain enough encounter to confirm that recognition, and begin accumulating practical knowledge together. The framework provides the vocabulary and the broad cluster orientations as starting points. The *tariqas* form themselves from the material of real human encounter. This is not a deficiency in the framework's design, it is the design. The Sufi tradition's guilds and *futuwwa* orders did not form because someone designated them. They formed because people in related orientations recognised each other and formalised what was already functionally present. The same process is anticipated and welcomed here.

There is no first-comer authority and no geographic exclusivity. Multiple *tariqas* organised around the same name-cluster can and *should* exist, in different places and among different communities. A *Tariqa Al-Karim* forming in one city does not preclude another forming elsewhere, even in the same city, each will develop its own accumulated practical knowledge, its own *wird*, its own understanding of what that orientation looks like in its specific context and domain. There is no founding *tariqa* whose interpretation is authoritative for all subsequent ones. Each *tariqa*'s authority is internal, derived from its own sustained communal observation and accumulated experience, not from temporal precedence or geographic reach.

Tariqas are not geographically bounded. The names unfold wherever faithful human life carries them, across all the worlds. The communities that cultivate their expression are similarly unbounded. A *tariqa* may form entirely among people who have never been in the same physical space, whose sustained encounter occurs through whatever forms their circumstances allow, written exchange, voice, image, presence across distances. The *suhba* or companionship that makes configuration visible and confirms recognition does not require physical co-location. It requires enough sustained encounter, across enough variety of circumstance, that performance becomes harder to maintain than authenticity.

Geography is irrelevant to that requirement. What matters is depth and duration of encounter, not the medium through which it occurs. Physical gatherings, where they are possible, add *a* dimension that other forms of encounter do not replicate, but they are not the prerequisite for genuine community and likely not the norm. The *tariqas* of this path are as geographically distributed as the human beings who walk it, which is to say as distributed as the names themselves.

Begin with your own path. The framework does not ask anyone to design or found *tariqas* at all for others before walking their own. The right starting point is the diagnostic work of Chapter X, surfacing your own configuration, finding the broad orientation that resonates, seeking out others who share it, allowing a genuine community to form through the natural process of recognition and *suhba*. If you are drawn toward a

particular name or name-cluster, lean into it. Find others who are drawn in the same direction. Tasmiyya.org will announce any group that wishes to form as a way to broaden the reach of the new group. But you need not see it as necessary at all.

The other *tariqas* will form, In sha Allah, when others are ready to form them, through the same process, without needing to be organised from above. This framework's role is to provide scaffolding, a shared starting vocabulary, a set of broad orientations, a description of what genuine communal recognition might look like. The building is yours to make, beginning with the part of it that is most genuinely yours.

Within each *tariqa*, cultivation is discussable but not outside it. This is the legitimate space for *suhba*, the sustained companionship through which configurations become visible and are confirmed. It is where the *kashif* function operates naturally: someone whose expression of the name-cluster is recognised by the community through sustained observation will naturally perform the *kashif* function for newer members, not as a formal role but as the consequence of having been genuinely seen over time. **Outside the *tariqa*, individual cultivation is not publicly aired.** The anti-performativity commitment operates at the public level. What is discussable within the trusted small community is not the same as what belongs in public discourse.

Each *tariqa* develops its own *wird*, not a fixed recitation chain assigned by a sheikh but the accumulated practical knowledge of what expressing its name or name-cluster looks like in different domains, what its characteristic distortions are, and what conditions support genuine deepening. This could be internal to the *Tariqa* and its members, or made public by that group. This knowledge grows through collective experience over time. Early *tariqas* will have thin orientation documents. Mature *tariqas* will have richer ones. This is appropriate, the knowledge is earned through practice rather than established by founding authority. No *tariqa's wird* is definitive for any other.

Growth without grades

The question of how a person knows they are growing, and how a community supports that recognition without creating hierarchy, is one the framework addresses through the logic of *itqan*, precision, rather than through grades, titles, or stages of formal attainment.

Growth in this framework is not horizontal accumulation. It is not more names added to a range, more grades achieved, more credentials conferred. It is vertical deepening: the same name, expressed with qualitatively greater transparency, less ego-interference, more natural flow, reaching further into the domain where it does real work. *Al-Adl* expressed at the level of personal honesty is genuinely different from *Al-Adl* expressed at the level of institutionally consequential justice, not a higher grade of the same activity but a qualitatively different degree of being. The person knows and feels the difference. Those who have walked with them know the difference. No external conferral is required to make it real.

Three dimensions of growth are worth naming for each *tariqa* to attend to in its members and in itself:

Depth: the same name expressed with greater *itqan*, greater sincerity, less performance, more natural flow. The soul becoming a cleaner vessel for what genuinely moves through it. This is Mulla Sadra's transubstantial motion at the biographical scale: not wider coverage but deeper being.

Range: the generalist ranging continues throughout life. New names become alive as the soul grows. Not replacing the primary configuration but deepening the understanding of how the names relate to each other and what new expressions become possible as depth in one name opens access to adjacent ones.

Kashf capacity: the natural development, through sustained practice, of the ability to read configuration in others. This is not a grade. It is what happens organically as someone's own expression deepens, they become more capable of recognising what is genuinely flowing in another person versus what is performance. Nasir-i Khusraw says whoever brings a potential angel into actuality has reached an angelic rank. That is a growth

marker that is entirely interior and relational, confirmed by the community through sustained observation rather than conferred by any institution.

The *tariqa's* role is to attend to these three dimensions in its members, not to award them but to witness them, name them when they become visible, and create the conditions in which they can deepen further. This is the *kashif* function performed communally: not conferring something the person lacked but recovering and naming what was always already present and now more fully expressed.

The rhythm of cultivation

Growth in this framework does not move in a straight line and the path is not a continuous output of sincere action without rest. Three qualities of motion characterise the journey over time, and recognising them is itself a form of practical wisdom each *tariqa* should develop:

1) *Flow*: when the name is genuinely expressing and the work builds naturally on itself. The act done sincerely, in the right domain, at the right moment, that leaves the soul slightly more capable of it the next time. This is what the framework is oriented toward and what the diagnostic work is designed to surface.

2) *Consolidation*: when what has been expressed needs time to settle and deepen before the next movement. Not absence of practice but a different quality of it: reflection, attending to what the recent flow has built, allowing the soul to integrate what has changed in it. Burnout is usually a sign that flow has been pushed past its natural consolidation point, the soul signalling that it needs to consolidate (find *mizan* or balance) rather than continue expressing. The framework does not treat consolidation as interruption. It is part of the motion.

Ranging: when the soul is between primary expressions, moving widely, contributing generously, waiting with genuine curiosity for the next name to become clear. Interest in a name that genuinely runs out is not failure or the end of vocation (one can return to names at any time). It is often the beginning of ranging: the invitation to move with openness rather than push against what has naturally completed its current cycle. The ranging

is not idle. As established earlier in this Guide, nothing in this journey is *israf*. The ranging salik is already tending the worlds.

Each *tariqa* should develop, through accumulated experience of its own name, the practical wisdom to recognise these three qualities of motion in its members and to respond to each appropriately: supporting flow without burning it, accompanying consolidation without pathologising it, and holding ranging without anxiously pulling the ranging member back toward a premature return to expression.

The Suhba Session. The primary communal practice of each *tariqa* is the *suhba* session, a regular gathering, monthly or more frequently, as that community determines, online or in person, organised around shared learning and deepened seeing rather than instruction, performance, or the exchange of advice.

The session has a simple structure whose specific ordering each *tariqa* discovers through practice. Its elements are:

1. A **threshold**: one or two Qur'anic verses connected to the *tariqa's* name or name-cluster root, read or recited together before the session proper begins. These are not an extended contemplative practice. They are the community's collective orientation before entering the work, the naming of what the gathering is for and whose observation it is conducted under. A brief passage from Ibn 'Arabi, Al-Ghazali, or another voice in the framework's scholarly lineage or the specific *tariqa* may accompany or replace the verses, or follow them, or close the session. Each *tariqa* should find its own rhythm. The principle is that the session begins and ends as a deliberate passage, a threshold crossed together.
2. The **situation**: one member brings a live question from their name-journey. Not a polished account of achievement. Not a problem seeking a solution. A genuine uncertainty: where did the name stop flowing, what happened that I don't understand, where did the intention hold or fail. The situation is specific and real, drawn from the member's actual work and practice in their domain.

3. **Intuitive questioning:** the community responds not with advice, comparable experience, or expertise, but with genuine questions. Fresh questions. Naive questions. Questions that do not know what they will find. The questioner's role is to attend carefully to what the presenter is actually carrying and ask what that quality of attention opens, not what their own experience or framework suggests should be asked. This is *tasa'ul dhawqi*, intuitive questioning, as distinct from the peripatetic or discursive questioning that proceeds through established frameworks toward predictable conclusions. Suhrawardi's distinction between *bahthi* knowing, discursive, step-by-step, and *dhawqi* knowing, direct, intuitive, experiential, 'tasting' applies here. The distinction is the same one that separates the angels' reception of Adam's demonstration from Adam's constitutive capacity to make it: *bahthi* knowledge of the names is accurate but cannot by itself produce the embodied capacity to be their locus. The *suhba* session exists to cultivate the *dhawqi* dimension, the tasting of what is actually present in a situation and in a person, that discursive analysis cannot reach. The intuitive question does not analyse or judge. It opens.

Participants are there to ask the question that helps the other person see what was always already present in their situation, and enlighten, which is the *kashif* function performed communally rather than by a designated guide.

4. **Shared learning:** the session ends not with a solution but with what became visible. The presenter names what they understand now that they didn't understand before entering the session. The community names what they learned from watching the questioning open something in the presenter, because the *suhba* session is not therapy for one person while others watch. It is shared learning that happens to be organised around one person's sharing. Everyone leaves having seen something about their *shared* name or name-cluster that none of them had seen clearly before.
5. A **closing threshold:** brief, returning the community from the quality of attention the session required back into the world they are

about to re-enter. The same Quranic verses, or a different selection, or a brief hadith connected to the name.

Two practical notes. First, the diversity of the group is an asset rather than a complication. A *tariqa* whose members express the same name through radically different domains, the historian and the ecologist and the therapist and the repair craftsperson all part of the *Tariqa Al-Baith*, produces more genuine intuitive questioning than a community of people who share a single profession. The naive question from the ecologist about the historian's name-journey cuts where the historian's own framework stops. The diversity of domain is what makes the questioning genuinely naive and therefore genuinely illuminating.

Second, the bragging risk is real and worth naming directly. The *suhba* session where members share their name-journey can become a performance of spiritual achievement, the ego finding the community context particularly fertile ground precisely because the audience is ostensibly appreciating divine attribute expression rather than personal accomplishment. The structural protection is the intuitive questioning itself: a polished achievement narrative collapses under genuine fresh questioning. The community that has developed the right quality of attention will find the gaps in any performance naturally, without needing a rule against it.

The *tariqas* are not isolated from each other. Periodic gatherings of members from different *tariqas*, in person or across distance, provide the occasion for inter-*tariqa* encounter: the experiential confirmation of the species-endowment principle that the guide argues abstractly, and the context in which the cross-*tariqa kashif* function becomes possible, those whose sustained engagement with the broader community has produced a recognition capacity that extends across names and name-clusters, able to help a *Salik* who has not yet found their *tariqa* identify where they most naturally belong.

On templates and the risk of institutional isomorphism

A natural question arises as the first *tariqas* form: should the Guide provide a template, a worked example of what a specific *tariqa* looks like in practice, to help early communities find their footing?

The question is worth taking seriously precisely because the risk it carries is real. When a founding template exists, subsequent communities unconsciously replicate it, not because it fits their name or their context, but because it is the available model. A *Tariqa Al-Hadi* template, however clearly marked as one example, would exert a gravitational pull on *Tariqa Al-Adl*, *Tariqa Al-Muhyi*, and *Tariqa Al-Khaliq* alike. Communities oriented around fundamentally different names would find themselves operating on a guidance-oriented template that may be actively wrong for what their name requires. This is called institutional isomorphism: the convergence of diverse organisations toward a common form not because the form fits but because it is there or popular.

The Guide therefore does not provide a template. It provides something more useful and less distorting: a set of questions each *tariqa* should answer for itself, from within its own sustained experience of its own name.

- 1) What does genuine flow look like in our name, in the domains where our members most naturally work?
- 2) What does performance look like? the characteristic ways our name gets dressed in ego rather than expressed through it?
- 3) What is our natural rhythm of expression and consolidation, shaped by the cycles of our domain and the nature of our name?
- 4) What are our signs of genuine depth versus mechanical repetition?
- 5) What conditions support deepening in our specific orientation?

These questions are universal. The answers are entirely particular. A community that has worked through them honestly, from its own experience over time, will have produced something more genuinely its own than any template could provide, and more genuinely useful to the souls it is trying to accompany.

Early *tariqas* will have thin answers. That is honest and appropriate. The wisdom is earned through practice rather than established by founding authority. Mature *tariqas* will have richer answers, accumulated through years of sustained communal observation. These answers belong to each *tariqa* and may be shared with others or kept internal, as each community determines. No *tariqa's* answers are definitive for any other.

The website of the *mashrab*, tasmiyya.org will provide a list of *tariqas* that have formed, a means of connecting those who are looking for others of shared orientation, a place to publish calls for new *tariqas* wishing to form around a certain name or names and the full text of this guide for any who wish to draw from the source.

Scholarly Lineage

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّتِي نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ أَنْكَاثًا

"Do not be like the woman who foolishly unravels her yarn (*ghazl*), after it is firmly spun..."

— Qur'an 16:92

The Qur'an's image is precise: the disaster is not in the spinning but in the unravelling of what was spun with care. The tradition this school draws from was spun firmly, across twelve centuries, by minds of the first order, grounded in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, tested against each other and against reality.

Tasmiyya's relationship to that tradition is a living *ghazl*, a thread drawn from the fabric and woven forward, not a traditional *silsila*, not a chain of metal links through which authority passes sequentially from hand to hand. The difference matters. A chain breaks if a link fails. A fabric holds even when individual threads are frayed, it can be repaired, extended, joined by new threads entering from any point. The *ghazl* of the tradition belongs to anyone who picks it up and spins it carefully. No initiation is required. No human intermediary stands between the reader and the source. The authority is the tradition itself, verifiable by anyone who wishes to verify it.

And the cord that holds the fabric together is not the sequence of transmission but something older and more reliable:

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

"And hold firmly together to the rope of God (*habl Allah*) and do not be divided."

— Qur'an 3:103

The *habl* is not a chain. It is a rope. And a rope is not one thick cord but thousands of individual strands twisted together, each contributing its small strength to a collective strength that exceeds what any single strand could provide. No single strand carries the whole. Each is necessary, like each name. Each can be repaired if it frays without the rope failing. It is held by many hands simultaneously, not passed from one to the next but

grasped together, at the same moment, across time. Anyone who picks up these threads and reads carefully is already holding the rope. The tradition is not closed. The spinning continues.

The following is provided for those who wish to explore the Islamic intellectual tradition on which the framework draws further. This is not an exhaustive bibliography but a guide to the primary sources and key scholars referenced in this guide.

Islamic Scholarly Lineage

Ibn 'Arabi (1165–1240)

Muhyi al-Din ibn 'Arabi's *Fusus al-Hikam (Bezels of Wisdom)*, particularly the opening chapter on Adam, provides the metaphysical foundation for the human being as the comprehensive locus of divine names. Its prophet-focused chapters, each centred on a specific divine wisdom expressed through a particular prophetic configuration, demonstrate the species-endowment principle in action: the names distributed across distinct human types, each complete and necessary, none requiring encyclopaedic comprehensiveness. His concept of *tajalli*, divine self-disclosure, is central to the framework's name and architecture. His vast encyclopaedic work, the *Futuh al-Makkiyya (Meccan Revelations)*, develops the eschatological dimension: that the righteous dead continue to unfold through the divine names they most fully embodied in earthly life, and that *tajalli* continues and intensifies after death rather than ceasing at it.

Ibn 'Arabi's own soteriology (theory of salvation) tends toward the comprehensive realisation of all the names in a single individual, the *insan al-kamil* or Perfect Man, a reading this framework respectfully declines, following instead the Qur'anic picture of prophetic diversity that Ibn 'Arabi's own *Fusus* structure most naturally supports. His ontological architecture, *tajalli*, the mirror, the specific face each creature turns toward God, the non-repeating uniqueness of each locus of divine disclosure, is taken here as the metaphysical ground for an account of the human calling that is more *universalist* and more Qur'anically anchored than the gnostic programme his later interpreters developed from it.

Key secondary studies on Ibn 'Arabi that further illuminate divine name cultivation are: William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (SUNY Press, 1989) and *The Self-Disclosure of God* (SUNY Press, 1998).

Al-Ghazali (1058–1111)

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali occupies two distinct roles in relation to this framework. First, his *Al-Maqṣad al-Asna fi Sharh Asma' Allah al-Husna* (*The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*) provides the practical methodology of the divine names: for each of the names, what it means for a human being to reflect that quality at the level available to created beings, how to recognise which names most naturally move through you, and how to cultivate and balance them over time. Critically, Al-Ghazali's admonitions on the majesty-wrath names like *Al-Qahhar*, *Al-Jabbar*, or *Al-Mutakabbir*, consistently turn their human portion inward rather than outward: the domination of one's own nafs, not domination of others; the compelling of oneself toward God, not the compelling of others toward compliance. This structural distinction, mercy-names expressed outward, majesty-names expressed inward, is built into the text itself and provides principled protection against misreading the framework as a justification for claiming destructive patterns as divine name-expressions. Key translation: David Burrell and Nazih Daher (Islamic Texts Society, 1992). A complete Arabic text is also available through ghazali.org.

Second, his *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* or *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, and its accessible abridgement the *Kimiya-yi Sa'adat* (*The Alchemy of Happiness*) provide the interior discipline that helps continued name seeking and embodiment. The *Ihya's* account of the diseases of the heart, like *riya* (ostentation), *kibr* (pride), *ujb* (self-admiration), and *hasad* (envy), is the most systematic available guide to how the ego corrupts sincere action into performance, and how to recognise and counter these corruptions before the act is voided. *The Alchemy of Happiness* (trans. Claud Field, widely available) is an abridgement and an accessible entry point; the full *Ihya'* (Islamic Texts Society, multiple volumes) rewards sustained engagement. For the specific sections most relevant to this framework, the diseases of the heart and their remedies, T.J. Winter's translations of *Disciplining the*

Soul and Breaking the Two Desires (Islamic Texts Society) are the recommended standalone volumes.

Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi (1154–1191)

Suhrawardi's *Hikmat al-Ishraq (The Philosophy of Illumination)* is drawn on in this framework for two specific and limited purposes. First, his cosmological architecture of active governing intelligences, namely the *anwar qahira* (dominating lights) and *anwar mudabbira* (managing lights), provides some structural language for the eschatological vision of Chapter VII: the angelic orders as purposive agents continuously tending creation, not static objects of worship. Second, his three-station eschatology, *ashqiya*, *su'ada*, *muta'allihun*, establishes the causal and ontological connection between earthly cultivation and post-mortem station, corroborating what Mulla Sadra and Ibn Arabi establish through different routes.

Suhrawardi's practical prescription of ascetic withdrawal, like forty-day retreats, sleep deprivation, hunger, directly contradicts this framework's central claim that the angelic capacity is cultivated through faithful energised engagement with the world, not through its negation. The contradiction between Suhrawardi's described angelic destination (active, purposive, world-directed) and his prescribed path for reaching it (ascetic, withdrawing, world-negating) is itself one of the generative observations from which this framework proceeds.

The joining-angels argument does not depend on Suhrawardi. It rests on Avicenna's conjunction with the Active Intellect, Ibn Arabi's post-mortem continuation of *tajalli* through the names, Mulla Sadra's explicit statement that the soul is potentially an angel, and Khusraw's *angel-in-potentia* doctrine, all of which are used here as primary philosophical grounding. Suhrawardi provides cosmological structure and the generative contradiction the framework resolves. His distinction between the *anwar qahira*, the dominating lights, and the *anwar mudabbira*, the managing lights that tend the corruptible domain, provides the cosmological vocabulary for understanding why the *khalifa* appointment is specifically to *ard* understood as corruptible existence. The managing lights govern the corruptible domain from a station of pure luminosity, from outside it. The human being tends the same domain from within it, as a fellow

participant in corruptibility, which is precisely what makes the human mirror function both more demanding than the angelic and more cosmologically necessary: the corruptible domain requires stewardship from within because that is what corruptible existence is, and the human being's participation in corruptibility is not the limitation it appears but the enabling condition of the mirror capacity the divine names require.

His epistemological distinction between *bahthi* knowing, discursive and propositional, and *dharwqi* knowing, direct and intuitive, the tasting of reality through presence to it, is equally foundational for the framework and stands independently of his practical programme. This distinction is precisely what differentiates the angels' accurate propositional knowledge of the divine names from the human being's constitutive capacity to be their locus: the angel knows *bahthi*, the human being who has cultivated a name through faithful action knows *dharwqi*. It is also what grounds the *suhba* session's method of intuitive questioning, *tasa'ul dharwqi*, as a Suhrawardian epistemological practice rather than simply a facilitation technique. Key secondary study: Mehdi Aminrazavi, *Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination* (Routledge, 1996).

Nasir-i Khusraw (1004–88)

The Ismaili philosopher and poet, provides in his *Between Reason and Revelation (Jami' al-Hikmatayn*, translated by Eric Ormsby, I.B. Tauris, 2012) a sustained account of the human being as *angel-in-potentia*, the soul constituted from birth for an angelic function that faithful cultivation brings into actuality. His argument that whoever transforms another from potential to actual angel has reached an angelic rank, grounded in his reading of Qur'anic passages on jinn and humanity, provides the philosophical basis for the *kashif al-asma'* role as a genuinely cosmic rather than merely pedagogical function. Khusraw's angelological framework is drawn on here for the specific insights that are Qur'anically groundable independently of the specifically Ismaili doctrinal context in which he developed them.

Avicenna (Ibn Sina) (980–1037)

Avicenna's account of the soul's conjunction with the Active Intellect, the cosmic intellect governing the sublunary realm and identified in the tradition with Gabriel, provides the earliest systematic philosophical grounding for the soul's angelic trajectory within Islamic thought. The relevant psychology is most accessibly available in *Avicenna's Psychology*, Fazlur Rahman's English translation of *Kitab al-Najat*, Book II, Chapter VI (Oxford University Press, 1952)."

Mulla Sadra, Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi (1572–1640)

Mulla Sadra's doctrine of *al-haraka al-jawhariyya*, or transubstantial motion, deepens the eschatological dimension of the framework. His argument that beings exist with varying intensity, and that the soul grows in its very degree of being through righteous action and faithful striving, provides a dynamic account of how good deeds cultivate the soul's post-mortem capacity for participation. Death removes the material limitation that slowed the soul's substantial motion; the trajectory established by earthly life continues and intensifies. His synthesis of Suhrawardi's light hierarchy with Ibn Arabi's metaphysics of divine self-disclosure produces a more dynamic and theologically grounded account than either alone. The primary source for the substantial motion doctrine in English is Mehdi Dehbashi's *Transubstantial Motion and the Natural World*, which includes a translation of the relevant chapters from the *Asfar al-Arba'a (the Four Journeys)* in which Mulla Sadra presents the theory directly, alongside a comprehensive critical exposition. For broader contextualisation of Mulla Sadra's thought within Islamic philosophy: Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sadr al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy* (Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, 1997) and Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (SUNY Press, 1975).

Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938)

Iqbal's *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (particularly Lectures 1 and 5) makes the most explicit modern Islamic argument for the human being as co-worker in an unfinished, dynamic universe.

The Javanmardi Tradition

Javanmardi, from the Persian for Young Manhood but coming to mean Spiritual Chivalry, is an ethical tradition within Persian Sufism that placed selfless service, overlooking others' faults, and prioritising others' welfare as core expressions of spiritual development rather than its preparation. The tradition runs through figures such as Abu Said Abul Khayr (967–1049), whose teaching centred on liberation from the self as the foundation of outward service. What Lloyd Ridgeon's study of the primary texts reveals is that the javanmardi path was explicitly designed for working people who could not follow the full-time residential Sufi programme. Abu Hafis Umar Suhrawardi, author of the first treatise in Ridgeon's translation, specifically names guards, soldiers, merchants and tradespeople as the intended participants, those who were not occupied in Sufism on a full-time basis. Ibn Battuta observed that the *akhi*, the *futuwwa* (guild) brother, works during the day and brings his earnings to his master after the afternoon prayer. Importantly, the javanmardi path was not a watered-down Sufism for those who could not manage the real thing. It was a recognition that working life is the primary site of spiritual development for the vast majority of human beings, and that a path which took that life seriously was not a compromise but a genuine form of the human calling. This is the closest historical precedent for the paths described in this guide. Its institutional forms, the shared gathering, the mutual accountability, the code of conduct held in common — provide a historical template to be drawn on and modernised. Its historical expression was socially specific and does not carry forward unchanged. The divine names framework provides a more universally grounded and philosophically developed account of what working-life worship looks like across the full diversity of human configurations.

Further Reading

Ibn 'Arabi

Ibn 'Arabī — *The Ringstones of Wisdom (Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam)*, trans. Caner Dagli (Kazi Publications, 2004) — complete translation with running commentary from the centuries-old tradition

Pablo Beneito — *The Secret of God's Most Beautiful Names* (Anqa Publishing) — first English translation of Ibn 'Arabī's *Kashf al-ma'na* on the divine names, with summary of the relevant *Futūḥāt* chapter; the most direct Ibn 'Arabī source for the practical names methodology

William C. Chittick — *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (SUNY Press, 1989) — the essential secondary guide to Ibn 'Arabī's metaphysical architecture

William C. Chittick — *The Self-Disclosure of God* (SUNY Press, 1998) — focused specifically on *tajalli* and the divine names as they unfold through the *Futūḥāt*; the more direct source for Chapter VII's eschatological claims

William C. Chittick — *Ibn Arabi: Heir to the Prophets* (Oneworld, 2005) — accessible introduction to Ibn 'Arabī's thought and its implications

Al-Ghazala

Al-Ghazālī — *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God (Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā)*, trans. David Burrell and Nazih Daher (Islamic Texts Society, 1992) — the primary practical text for working with the individual names; essential for Chapter X

Al-Ghazālī — *The Alchemy of Happiness (Kīmiyā-yi Sa'ādat)*, trans. Claud Field (widely available) — recommended entry point for practical self-examination; translation is dated but accessible

Al-Ghazālī — *Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn (Revival of the Religious Sciences)*, Islamic Texts Society (multiple volumes) — full treatment of the heart's diseases and their remedies

Mulla Sadra

Mehdi Dehbashi — *Transubstantial Motion and the Natural World*, with a translation of Chapters 18–32 of the *Asfār* of Mulla Ṣadrā — primary English source for the substantial motion doctrine

Fazlur Rahman — *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (SUNY Press, 1975) — most rigorous English secondary account of Ṣadrā's system

Seyyed Hossein Nasr — *Sadr al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy* (Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, 1997) — broader contextualisation of Ṣadrā's philosophy

Suhrawardi and Nasir-i Khusraw

Mehdi Aminrazavi — *Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination* (Routledge, 1996)

Nasir-i Khusraw — *Between Reason and Revelation (Jāmi' al-Ḥikmatayn)*, trans. Eric Ormsby (I.B. Tauris, 2012) — the angel-in-potentia doctrine and the *kashif* role as cosmological function

Muhammad Iqbal

Muhammad Iqbal — *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Oxford University Press, 1934)

Practical cultivation and the ego

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Iskandarī — *The Book of Wisdoms (Kitāb al-Ḥikam)*, trans. Victor Danner (Paulist Press, 1978) — concise and precise on the ego's relationship to spiritual practice

Al-Qushayrī — *Al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya (Epistle on Sufism)*, trans. Alexander Knysh (Garnet Publishing, 2007) — the most comprehensive classical account of Sufi terminology including *dharwq*, *qabd/bast*; a source for the terminological clarifications in Chapter X

The jawanmardi tradition

Lloyd Ridgeon — *Jawanmardi: A Sufi Code of Honour* (Edinburgh University Press, 2011) — first English translations of three major medieval texts on spiritual chivalry and outward service as spiritual practice

Lloyd Ridgeon — *Morals and Mysticism in Persian Sufism: A History of Sufi-Futuwwat in Iran* (Routledge, 2010) — history of the jawanmardi/futuwwa tradition and its connections to social engagement

Appendix: Glossary

The following terms form a connected vocabulary rather than a list of independent definitions. They are arranged in a logical order that follows the framework's own conceptual movement, from cosmological terms through anthropological terms to practical and community terms. Several terms, particularly *tariqa*, *salik*, *wird*, and *suhba*, carry established meanings in the Sufi tradition which this framework both draws on and in some cases extends or restructures. Where the framework's usage departs from classical usage this is noted.

Cosmological Terms

Tajalli

Divine self-disclosure; the unfolding of divine reality into the world through its attributes becoming expressed and actual in creation. The central concept of the framework, from which its name derives. Each moment of *tajalli* is unique and non-repeating. The framework's primary claim is that *tajalli* occurs through faithful human expression of the divine names and does not stop at the boundary of this earth.

Asma'

Names; specifically the divine names or attributes of God. The 99 beautiful names (a traditional and not a set number) are not merely titles but realities that seek expression in the world through human beings who carry particular configurations of them.

Nur al-Anwar

The Light of Lights; Suhrawardi's term for the divine source from which all created reality proceeds as a hierarchy of luminosity. Used in Chapter VII for the eschatological vision of the soul's post-mortem participation in creation's governance.

Rabb al-'Alamin

Lord of the Worlds; the Quranic description of God in Al-Fatiha, the opening surah recited in every prayer. The framework presses the plural, worlds, not world, as the theological ground for understanding the human calling as cosmically rather than geocentrically scoped.

Al-haraka al-jawhariyya

Substantial motion; Mulla Sadra's doctrine that beings exist not statically but with varying intensity, and that the soul grows in its actual degree of being through righteous action and faithful striving. The soul does not merely accumulate merit; it becomes different, more luminous, more capable of the work it was formed for. Central to the framework's eschatological account.

Anthropological Terms

Khalifa

Vicegerent, active representative. The Qur'anic term for the human being's role, not passive inhabitant but active representative of the divine purpose in creation. The framework reads the *khalifa* role as permanent: continuing after death at a higher station.

Amana

The trust; the weight of genuine agency offered to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, all of which declined, and accepted by humanity. The framework reads the *amana* as the structural ground of human responsibility and irreplaceability, the specific form of agency that makes human beings genuinely necessary to the cosmos rather than optional additions to it.

Fitra

The original natural disposition; the configuration inscribed in each soul before birth. The framework grounds the diagnostic work of Chapter X in the *fitra*, what is genuinely there is not imposed from outside but recovered from what was always already present.

Takhallaq bi-akhlaq Allah

Taking on the character of God; Al-Ghazali's term for the human expression of the divine names. Not identity with the divine but becoming a vessel through which divine qualities flow into the world. The framework's account of what the practice actually is at its deepest level.

Practical Terms

Suluk

Traversal; the active walking of the path. The practice of engaging with one's configuration, expressing the names sincerely, and cultivating the capacity for deeper expression over time.

Niyyah

Intention; the orientation from which an act flows. The framework follows the tradition in treating *niyyah* as constitutive of the spiritual character of an act; the same external act flows from entirely different spiritual realities depending on the intention at its source.

Ikhlas

Sincerity; the quality of acting for Allah's ﷻ observation alone rather than for human recognition. The framework's anti-performativity commitment is grounded in the classical concept of *ikhlas*.

Riya

Ostentation; the performance of righteous conduct for an audience. The tradition's term for the corruption of sincere action into performance. The framework identifies *riya* as not merely morally inferior but cosmologically self-defeating: when *riya* is present, no *tajalli* actually unfolds through the act.

Dhawq

Taste; direct experiential knowledge of what genuine name-expression feels like from inside. The quality that distinguishes genuine configuration-recognition from intellectual identification with a flattering name. You know a name is genuinely yours not because it fits your self-image but through *dhawq*, the specific felt quality of its genuine expression, including the cost and the opening it produces simultaneously.

Ihsan

Excellence; the standard of full attention, care, and craft applied to any act worth doing. From the hadith: Allah ﷻ has prescribed excellence in all things. The framework's practical standard for how the names are expressed, not minimally or adequately but with the full quality that Allah's ﷻ observation warrants.

Sadaqa jariya

Ongoing charity; good that continues to generate benefit after the life of the one who initiated it. The framework's practical anchor for the eschatological claim that cultivated good does not end at death but continues to unfold from a higher station.

Kashf

Unveiling, disclosure; the act of bringing to light what was covered. The verb from which *kashif al-asma'* derives. The framework uses *kashf* specifically for the recognition of what is already inscribed in a person, not conferring something new but recovering what was always there.

Community Terms

Tasmiyyah

The school of naming and discernment; the name of the order of practice that grows from this framework. From *tasmiya*, the act of naming, formed in the tradition of the great schools of Islamic spiritual thought. *Tasmiyyah* is not a governing institution but a *mashrab*, a shared source, from which the *tariqas* can draw. Its authority is the framework itself, verifiable by anyone who wishes to verify it. The website of the *mashrab* is tasmiyya.org.

Mashrab

Watering place, shared source, common orientation. Used in the tradition, including by Ibn Arabi, to describe a shared spiritual source from which different paths drink. In this framework, *Tasmiyyah* functions as the *mashrab*: the guide, the cosmological architecture, the shared vocabulary and diagnostic method that the *tariqas* draw from without being governed by. The *mashrab* has authority because it is grounded; it does not exercise authority because it is not an institution.

Tariqa

Path, way, order. In classical Sufism, a spiritual order organised around a specific lineage, practice, and guide. In this framework, a complete community of practice sharing a name-cluster orientation, entered and left freely as genuine development requires, with no hierarchy between *tariqas* and no formal ranks within them. Each *tariqa* of *Tasmiyyah* draws from the *mashrab* but governs itself, developing its own *wird*, its own communal practice, its own accumulated practical wisdom independently. The framework draws on the *tariqa's* deepest structural insight, namely,

that the path is walked in community, while restructuring it around democratic and world-engaged commitments.

Suhba

Companionship; sustained encounter with others on the path. The tradition recognises *suhba* as constitutive of development rather than merely supportive of it. Within the *tariqa*, *suhba* is the primary mechanism through which genuine configurations become visible and are confirmed over time.

Wird

In classical Sufism, a specific practice or recitation assigned to members of a *tariqa*. In this framework, the orientation document of each *tariqa*, the accumulated practical knowledge of what expressing its name-cluster looks like, what its characteristic distortions are, and what conditions support deepening. Developed through collective experience rather than established by founding authority.

Tasa'ul dhawqi · تَسَاؤُلْ دُوْقِي

Intuitive questioning; the quality of questioning that arises from genuine presence to another person's situation rather than from the questioner's established frameworks and prior knowledge. Distinguished from *bahthi* questioning, discursive, framework-driven, proceeding toward predictable conclusions. The primary mode of the *suhba* session's questioning round. Grounded in Suhrawardi's epistemological distinction between *bahthi* and *dhawqi* knowing.

Salik al-Asma' (plural: Sulaka al-Asma')

Name Seeker: The *Salik* someone in the process of discovering which divine names most naturally express themselves through their particular configuration of gifts, temperament, and circumstance. The broadest level of engagement with the path. All who walk the path remain *Sulaka al-Asma'* in relation to the names not yet surfaced, however far they have travelled.

Mujalli al-Asma' (plural: Mujallun al-Asma')

Name Embodier or Manifester: The *Mujalli* is someone who has surfaced enough of their configuration to be actively expressing it in the world and, as part of that expression, performing the *kashif* function for those earlier in the process.

Kashif al-Asma' (plural: Kushafa al-Asma')

Name Surfer: The *Kashif* is not a permanent rank or formal designation but a function performed in specific encounters when sustained observation has produced genuine recognition. Within each *tariqa* this function emerges naturally from sustained *suhba*. Across *tariqas* it is performed by those whose breadth of engagement with the broader community has produced a wider recognition capacity. No credential is required and no permanent designation attaches to it.

Tasmiyya does not demand belief. It asks recognition.

Recognition that **your life is not generic.**

That **the names you carry are yours alone to unfold.**

And that **what is possible through you has never existed before, and will not exist again without you.**
