

كِتَابُ السَّلَامَةِ

The Book of Wholeness

Being the Fourth Book of the Series on the Non-Existence of Negative Emotion

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ

The human being was created from haste.

Surah Al-Anbiya 21:37

Books I and II dissolved fear.

Book III dissolved grief.

This book dissolves everything that remains.

Not managed. Not accepted. Not carried on better footing.

Dissolved.

What Remains

Books I and II proved that fear has no structural basis. Its two requirements — a bounded self and an independent threat — cannot be found anywhere in the one power's creation. The four prayers contained this demolition in compressed form. Sixty-two fears were named and detonated one by one, the hammer falling again and again, until no object of fear was left standing.

Book III proved that grief has no permanent claim. The sadness that faces the past — loss, regret, disappointed hope, unnamed weight — meets in these prayers a sufficiency so complete that the loss's premise is dissolved: within Al-Wajid, nothing is lost. The book ended not with grief better carried but with *لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ* — present tense, nominal sentence, describing a state that is.

This book addresses what remains. The territory of human suffering that is neither fear of the future nor grief over the past. The self that condemns itself. The self that refuses what arrived. The self wounded by another. The self that measures against others. The self that feels unseen. The self that suffers from wanting. The self that finds existence insufficient. The self whose mind will not stop. The self in darkness. The self that recoils. The self that cannot hold.

Eleven families of negative emotion. Each with its own anatomy. Each requiring its own demolition. And before any of them — the one emotion the Quran identifies as built into the human structure itself: impatience. The refusal not of what arrived but of when it arrived. The self in conflict not with the content of divine governance but with its pace.

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ — the human being was created from haste. This is not a condemnation. It is a diagnosis. And a diagnosis has a treatment. The same four prayers. The same structure. The same result.

By the end of this book, negative emotion as a category will not exist. Not because suffering never visits. Because there is no self left to suffer.

PROLOGUE

Impatience

The Refusal of Divine Timing

حُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ

The Condition Named

Before any section. Before any category of negative emotion is named. Before shame, before rage, before despair, before the self's ten thousand ways of refusing what is — there is impatience. The Quran names it first, before any other negative quality of the human being: the human being was created from haste. Not created and then acquired haste as a bad habit. Created from it, as if haste were part of the raw material.

Impatience is the self's fundamental relationship to time. Every other negative emotion in this book is the self in conflict with what arrived. Impatience is the self in conflict with when. The self that has — sometimes — accepted the what, that has said the words of surrender and meant them, but that has not accepted the when. That wants the relief now, the answer now, the opening now, the arrival now. That can endure what is being asked but cannot endure the duration of the asking.

This is why impatience is the root. Resentment is often impatience that hardened — the self that waited too long and the waiting curdled into bitterness. Anxiety is often impatience about the uncertain future — the self that cannot bear not knowing when. Frustration is impatience with a blocked path — the self that wants to move and cannot yet move. Despair is impatience that finally collapsed — the self that waited until it could not wait anymore and concluded the arrival was never coming. Strip impatience from the interior life and an enormous proportion of everything else loses its fuel.

The Quran returns to this repeatedly. The human being is ever hasty — not was hasty, not becomes hasty under pressure. Is. Present tense. The haste is a structural feature. Which means the treatment must also be structural — not an exhortation to be more patient but the demolition of the conditions that make impatience possible. Those conditions are: a self that believes time is its own, and a future that belongs to something other than the one power's governance. Both collapse under the four prayers.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَاكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with lordship — not just of what exists but of when what exists unfolds. The Lord of the seven heavens does not only govern what arrives. He governs the moment of its arrival. The timing is not a separate domain from the content, an autonomous clock running alongside divine governance. The when is within His lordship as completely as the what. The relief the self is waiting for — He holds both the relief and the moment of its arrival in the same governance.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى — be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The duration of the waiting is from within divine permission. The self that is waiting is waiting within His governance of the duration. The protection from the overwhelm of the waiting — from the weight of not-yet — is asked from the one who governs not-yet. Not: make it come sooner. Be my protector within the duration You have chosen. عَرْجَاكَ — mighty is this protection: the protection of the one who holds the clock.

The Prophet Yaqub waited decades for Yusuf. The Prophet Ibrahim waited until extreme old age for Ismail and Ishaq. The Prophet Musa waited forty years in Madyan before the

bush. The Prophet Muhammad waited thirteen years in Mecca before Hijra, and twenty-three years for the complete revelation. The divine governance of timing is not indifference to the waiting self. It is the lordship of a governor whose view of the story is complete and whose timing is part of the story's architecture. The Lord is the word for the one who raises, nurtures, brings to completion gradually. The Lord does not rush the raising.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأُحْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the duration. Greater than the not-yet. Greater than the gap between the self's desired timeline and the one power's actual timeline. The self's timeline is creation — a human preference within a created mind. The Creator is greater than all of His creation, including the preference for speed that the Quran says is built into the human structure. اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأُحْذِرُ — mightier than the anxiety of the waiting, mightier than the fear that the thing will not come, mightier than the creeping conclusion that the duration means denial.

اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation, including time itself. Time is His creation. The sequence of before and after is His creation. The gap between now and the arrival is His creation. And the one who is mightier than all of His creation holds the gap in the same governance that holds the arrival. The self in the gap is not in a place outside divine governance. The gap is governed. Its duration is governed. The self waiting within it is held within it by the one who is mightier than the waiting and mightier than what the waiting is waiting for.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ — O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The بِمَا شِئْتَ — whatever You will — applied to impatience is the complete surrender of the timeline. Not: whatever You will regarding the content of what arrives. Whatever You will regarding when it arrives. The self that prays this has given the clock to the one power along with everything else. It has said: the timing is Yours. I do not have a preferred timeline that I am holding alongside Your governance. Your will includes the duration. Whatever You will.

اكْفِنِيكَ — suffice me with You. Not: give me the patience to endure the gap. You be sufficient within the gap itself. The self waiting for the relief finds that Al-Ghani — the Self-Sufficient, who lacks nothing — is sufficient now, in the waiting, before the arrival. The waiting is not a deficiency that the arrival will complete. The one power is not more present after the arrival than He is within the waiting. Suffice me here, in the not-yet. Whatever You will for the duration of the not-yet. You be sufficient within it now.

This is the demolition of impatience's premise. Impatience assumes that the present moment is insufficient — that something is missing now which will be present later, and the suffering is the gap between the missing thing and its arrival. This prayer says: Allah is sufficient now. The gap is within His sufficiency. The not-yet is held within the One who lacks nothing and within whom nothing is lacking. When this lands — when the self genuinely prays this — there is no gap to be impatient within. Al-Ghani is already here. Whatever He wills for the timeline is sufficient. Because He is sufficient. Now.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ — I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger. Impatience within divine pleasure is the waiting that remains in relationship with the one power throughout the duration — that brings the not-yet to the address, that asks for sufficiency within the gap, that finds Al-Qayyum present in the waiting and Al-Ghani present before the arrival. Within divine anger, impatience becomes the condition that severs the waiting from the one power — the self that cannot bear the duration and concludes from the duration that the one power is absent or has refused. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the not-yet: the condition of remaining in the address throughout the gap, finding the one power sufficient before the arrival, discovering that the waiting itself is within His governance and therefore within His presence.

وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عَفْوَتِكَ — and in Your pardon from Your punishment. The waiting that becomes impatience carries its own punishment: the closing of the self against the one power, the conclusion that the duration means denial, the drift from the address into isolation. The pardon is asked from the self's own impatience — from the punishment it inflicts on itself by refusing the timeline. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ — I seek refuge in You from You. The duration is from within Your will. The not-yet is within Your governance. There is no gap outside Your lordship to be impatient within. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِي — Al-Sabur: the Patient. The one who holds all of creation in its unfolding without haste. He is as He has praised Himself. And within His patience — within the governance of the one who does not rush the raising — the self created from haste discovers that it was created from His haste moving through eternity. Not the self's refusal of the timeline. The one power's own movement. Complete. Unhurried. Already arrived.

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ

The human being was created from haste.

Not created and then acquired haste.

Created from it.

*Which means the haste was His —
moving creation toward its completion.*

Not the self's refusal of the timeline.

The one power's own movement through eternity.

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِينِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

Al-Sabur. He does not rush the raising.

And within His patience —

there is nothing left to wait for.

SECTION I

The Self That Condemns Itself

Shame. Guilt. Moral injury. Embarrassment. Humiliation. Self-contempt. Self-hatred. Worthlessness. Inadequacy. Inferiority. Insecurity. The self turned against itself. The self as its own prosecutor, judge, and cell.

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا

Say: O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Indeed Allah forgives all sins.

The tribunal that condemns the self is not the one power's tribunal. The voice that says you are beyond mercy has never heard this verse.

CHAPTER ONE

Shame

The self that believes it is wrong at its root — not that it did something wrong, but that it is wrong.

The Condition Named

Shame is the deepest of the self-condemning emotions because it does not point at a behaviour. It points at the self itself. Guilt says: I did something wrong. Shame says: I am something wrong. The difference is the difference between a wound and a verdict. Guilt can be addressed by addressing the act. Shame has no act to address — it has reached behind the act to the self that produced it and placed the judgment there.

The self in shame does not believe it needs forgiveness for something. It believes it is the kind of thing that cannot be forgiven — that the flaw is not in the deed but in the root, that whatever produced the deed is unfixable, that the self, known fully, would be found to be fundamentally unworthy. This is why shame causes hiding. Not the hiding of evidence but the hiding of existence. The shamed self does not want to be seen — not because it has something to conceal but because it believes what would be seen is itself.

The tradition's answer to shame is not encouragement or reassurance. It is a verse. Say: O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Indeed Allah forgives all sins. The address is to those who have sinned against their own souls — not the ones who transgressed against others, but the ones who turned against themselves. The verse is directed precisely at the shamed self. And its claim is total: do not despair of Allah's mercy, for He forgives all sins. Not most sins. Not sins below a certain severity. All.

Hold the shame. Whatever it has said about the root of the self. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one whose knowledge of the self is complete and whose verdict is the only verdict that stands. The Lord of the seven heavens knows the self fully — the root the self fears is broken, the depth of the pattern the shame has named, everything the self has hidden from everyone else. He knows it completely. And His verdict is not the verdict of shame. His verdict is: O My servants. Mine. Not: O you who have disqualified yourselves from being Mine. My servants. The address itself is the refutation of shame's claim.

Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The shame has been its own transgression against the self — a verdict passed without the authority to pass it. The protection from the overwhelm of the shame's verdict is asked from the one whose verdict it actually is. Not: protect me from the shame's judgment. Be my protector within the space between shame's verdict and Your verdict, which is the space this prayer is standing in. Mighty is Your protection — the protection of the one who knows the self completely and has said: do not despair of My mercy.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَلَ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the shame's verdict. Greater than the root the shame has condemned. Greater than the evidence the shame has assembled against the self. The shame is creation — a human experience within a human interior. The Creator is greater than all of His creation, including the experience that has declared the self unfixable. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the conclusion that the self, seen fully, would be found unworthy.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The shame's verdict is creation. The flaw it claims to have found is creation. The root it has condemned is creation — a human soul made by the one power, which He has addressed as His servant, which He has declared He will not abandon to shame's despair. The one who is mightier than all of His creation is mightier than the tribunal shame constructed. He is the only judge with actual jurisdiction. And His jurisdiction has produced: do not despair of My mercy.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. Shame tells the self it is insufficient — that the root is flawed, the self is defective, what is there is not enough and cannot become enough. This prayer places the insufficiency before the only sufficiency that is absolute. Not: fix what shame has found. Be sufficient where shame said there was nothing worth being sufficient for. The self that shame has declared beyond repair is brought to Al-Musawwir — the Fashioner, the One who formed the self in the first place, the One who knows what He made and why He made it.

Whatever You will for what shame said about the root. The root is Yours. You made it. You addressed it as Your servant. Whatever You will for what it is and what it contains.

Be sufficient within it — not around it, not despite it, but within the very place shame said was the irredeemable flaw. Whatever You will.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the self that shame condemned is the self that brought the shame to this address — that refused shame's verdict of despair, that said do not despair of Allah's mercy, that stood in the prayer and gave the root to the one who made the root. Within divine anger, shame becomes the permanent condition — the self that accepted shame's jurisdiction, that stopped bringing itself to the address because shame said the address would confirm the verdict. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the self shame condemned: not the self that has been proved worthy, but the self that has been told it is His servant and has believed it.

I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Ghafur: the repeatedly forgiving. Al-Rahim: the merciful. These are not conditional titles — He is Ghafur and Rahim as He has praised Himself, independent of what the shame has found. The self shame condemned is within the mercy of the one who has praised Himself as mercy itself.

Shame says: you are wrong at the root.

The verse says: O My servants.

Mine.

Do not despair of My mercy.

Indeed I forgive all sins.

Not most. Not some.

All.

The tribunal that condemned the self

had no jurisdiction.

Al-Ghafur. Al-Rahim.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER TWO

Guilt

The self that knows it did wrong and cannot put it down.

The Condition Named

Guilt is the honest recognition that something was done that should not have been done, or left undone that should have been done. In this it differs from shame: shame condemns the self's existence, guilt condemns a specific act. This distinction is important, but it does not make guilt simple. The self that carries guilt honestly knows it did wrong. And the weight of that knowing — if carried without resolution — becomes its own prison.

There are two paths guilt tends to take that both miss the tradition's answer. The first is the path of suppression — the self that pushes the guilt down, refuses to name it, treats it as a weakness to be overcome. This path does not resolve guilt; it buries it, and buried guilt poisons from below. The second is the path of self-punishment — the self that will not put the guilt down, that returns to the act again and again, that believes the ongoing suffering of guilt is somehow what the one power requires or what the wronged person deserves. This path also does not resolve guilt. It replaces the act with an endless loop.

The tradition's path is tawba — turning. Not replay, not suppression. Direction. The Prophet said: the one who repents from sin is as one who has no sin. Not: the one who has suffered enough for the sin. The one who turned. The turning is the resolution. And the one who receives the turning is Al-Tawwab — the one who continuously receives the return, who turns toward the one turning as they turn. Hold the specific guilt. The specific thing done or not done. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرِّي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one to whom the turn is made. Every tawba is a return to this address — the Lord of the seven heavens who receives the return without requiring the self to have suffered a sufficient duration of guilt first. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The guilt of what was done is within divine governance — the one power permitted the act and permits the guilt and governs both. The protection from being overwhelmed by the guilt is asked from the one whose forgiveness is what resolves it.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who said: the one who repents from sin is as one who has no sin. Not: as one who has done penance. As one who has no sin. The forgiveness is that total. The one whose protection is being asked has already told us what His protection does to guilt: it removes it entirely, as if the act had not been. This is not the self telling itself it doesn't matter. This is the one who was wronged — whose right was violated in every sin — saying: when the one who wronged Me turns, I receive the turning and the slate is clean.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the guilt. Greater than the act that produced the guilt. Greater than the damage the act caused. The guilt and its object are both creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier

than the fear that the act is unforgivable, mightier than the dread that the guilt will never lift, mightier than the conclusion that the one power's forgiveness has a threshold the self has crossed.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The act was creation. The damage was creation. The guilt is creation. And the tawba — the turning — is creation that the one power has said He loves: Allah loves those who are constantly repentant. The one who is mightier than the guilt and mightier than the act that produced it is the one who loves the movement of the turning. The guilt has been brought to the one who loves what the guilt can become.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The guilt has held itself as insufficient — the self saying: I must carry this more, I must feel this longer, what I have brought to tawba is not enough for what I did. This prayer surrenders that calculus entirely. Not: I will keep carrying the guilt until You indicate I have carried it enough. Be sufficient against whatever You will. The one power's sufficiency for the act is His call, not the self's. And His call is already declared: tawba makes the one who repents as one who has no sin. Whatever You will for the guilt and its resolution. You be sufficient within it. The self's continued suffering of guilt is not the coin that purchases forgiveness. His mercy is not purchased. It is received.

Whatever You will. The guilt is given to the one whose will includes the tawba and the forgiveness and what happens to the self after both. Given completely. Not held back for further self-punishment. Whatever You will for the one who has turned.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the guilt is the guilt that moved the self to turn — that did its work of pointing toward what was wrong, that was brought to the address, that has become the occasion for tawba, which the one power loves. Within divine anger, the guilt becomes the permanent condition — the loop that replays without turning, that mistakes self-punishment for resolution, that stays in the guilt rather than bringing it to the address. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the guilt: the condition of the self that let the guilt do its pointing and then turned.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. The pardon is asked directly — the specific act, brought to the specific address, presented to the one who said He forgives all sins. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Tawwab: the continuously receiving. Every turning reaches Him. The door of tawba does not close. He is as He has praised Himself.

*Guilt's work is to point.
Once it has pointed, its work is done.
The self that carries guilt past the turning
is not serving justice.
It is refusing mercy.
The one who repents from sin
is as one who has no sin.
Not as one who suffered enough.
As one who has no sin.*

Al-Tawwab.

Every turning reaches Him.

CHAPTER THREE

Moral Injury

The self that acted against its own deepest values and cannot integrate what it did.

The Condition Named

Moral injury is distinct from guilt. Guilt says: I did wrong and I know it. Moral injury says: I did something that I cannot reconcile with who I believe myself to be, and the gap between what I did and who I am has cracked the self's foundation. The soldier who followed an order and killed a civilian. The person who stayed silent when speaking would have changed everything. The one who was made to choose between two options both of which required betraying something sacred. The act may have been committed under duress, under authority, under conditions the self did not choose. But the self still committed it.

Moral injury resists the standard consolations. The person suffering from it often cannot be comforted by: you had no choice, you were following orders, it wasn't your fault, anyone would have done the same. Because the injury is not primarily about culpability. It is about the fracture between the act and the self's sense of what it is. The self that held a value — protected the innocent, never betrayed a trust, never participated in cruelty — and then did the thing it held as unthinkable is a self that has lost something about itself it does not know how to recover.

The tradition holds this condition with a specific depth. The Quran does not only speak to intentional sin. It speaks to the self that transgressed against itself — whose soul bears a wound it inflicted through action in a world that sometimes forces impossible choices. The one power saw the act. He saw the conditions it occurred within. He saw the self that did it and what it cost that self. And He said: do not despair of My mercy. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one whose knowledge of the conditions is complete. The Lord of the seven heavens saw what led to the act, saw what the self was navigating when the act occurred, saw what was broken in the self when the act was done. The full context — which the self may not even fully possess — is within His knowledge. He governs not just what was done but everything that produced what was done. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The moral injury is within divine governance — including what created the conditions for it. The protection from being overwhelmed by the fracture is asked from the one who holds both the act and its full context.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who sees what no human court and no human conscience has the full information to see. The self in moral injury has been both judge and defendant using incomplete evidence. The one power's protection is the protection of the only judge whose knowledge is complete — whose verdict on the act, and on the self that committed it under those conditions, is the only verdict with full information.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the act. Greater than the fracture the act produced in the self. Greater than the gap between the value held and the value violated. All of it is creation — the act, the conditions, the fracture, the value, the self that held the value and the self that violated it. The Creator is greater than all of it simultaneously. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that the act has permanently defined the self, mightier than the dread that the fracture cannot be healed, mightier than the conclusion that a self that did what was done is not a self that can be whole again.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The fracture is creation. The act is creation. The conditions that produced both are creation. And the one who is mightier than all of creation is also the one who fashioned the self before the fracture — who knows what the self is beneath the moral injury, what it was before and what it can be after. He sees the self across the fracture simultaneously: the self before, the act, and what the self is now. He is mightier than all three and He holds all three.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The moral injury has created a gap in the self — the place where the value was held and the act that violated it have left a wound that the self does not know how to fill. This prayer offers the gap to the one power to fill with what He wills. Not: restore me to who I was before the act, as if it didn't happen. You be sufficient within what happened, within what the self is now that it has acted against what it held sacred. Whatever You will for the fracture. Whatever You will for whether the gap is closed or whether it is transformed into something the self could not have become without it.

Whatever You will. Al-Jabbar — one of the divine names — means both the Compeller and the One who restores what is broken. Al-Jabbar: the Setter of broken bones. The moral injury is a fracture. The prayer places the fracture in the hands of the one who sets what is broken. Whatever He will for how it heals and what the healed self becomes.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the moral injury is the wound that brought the self to the address — the fracture that proved the value was real by the depth of the pain when it was violated, that moves the self to bring what broke it to the one who heals. Within divine anger, moral injury becomes the permanent condition — the fracture that defines rather than the fracture that is given to the one who sets broken things. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the fractured self: the condition of bringing the injury to Al-Jabbar and letting Him be the healer.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. The pardon is asked for what was done under conditions the self did not fully choose. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Jabbar: the one who restores what is broken. The self did not fracture itself beyond Your reach. You are as You have praised Yourself.

The act is known.

The conditions are known.

The fracture is known.

By the one whose knowledge is complete.

And He said: do not despair of My mercy.

Al-Jabbar.

The one who sets broken bones.

The fracture was not the last word.

*Whatever He will for what the healed self becomes
is not what the self could have imagined from inside the fracture.*

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FOUR

Embarrassment

The self exposed before others in a moment it did not choose.

The Condition Named

Embarrassment is the acute distress of the self caught in exposure — the stumble in public, the wrong word said at the wrong moment, the private thing made visible, the mistake witnessed by those whose opinion the self values. It is smaller than shame in that it points at a specific incident rather than the root, and it passes more quickly. But in the moment it is present, embarrassment can be overwhelming — the heat in the face, the wish to disappear, the replaying of the moment in the mind long after the moment itself has passed.

What makes embarrassment a form of suffering is the same thing that makes all the emotions in this section a form of suffering: the self's relationship to the gaze of others has been given governing authority over the self's peace. The embarrassed self is not simply uncomfortable. It is suffering because someone saw — because the witness exists, because the exposure was real and cannot be undone, because the self is now defined in that person's perception by the stumble or the wrong word or the private thing.

The tradition's answer is the one power's gaze. Not as a replacement for the human gaze but as the gaze within which the human gaze is infinitely small. The one who sees the stumble in public is a created being with limited perception, limited memory, and limited authority. The one who was watching all along — who saw the stumble and everything before the stumble and everything the stumble meant — is the Lord of the seven heavens. In His sight, the stumble is the stumble of His servant, and He has said of His servants: they do not grieve. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the gaze that was present before, during, and after the moment of embarrassment. The Lord of the seven heavens saw the self stumble. He saw it with complete knowledge — the conditions that produced the stumble, what the self was trying to do, what it actually did, and what the human witnesses saw and will remember and will eventually forget. His seeing is the primary seeing. The human witness's seeing is contained within it. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The embarrassment is within divine governance. The exposure was within His permission. The protection from the heat of the exposure is asked from the one who permitted it.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one in whose sight the stumble of His servant is the stumble of His servant — not a catastrophe, not a permanent definition, not the incident that will follow the self forever. He saw it. He knows what it meant and what it didn't mean. He governs what it does to the self and what the self does with it.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the moment of exposure. Greater than the human witness and what the witness saw. Greater than the heat of embarrassment and the wish

to disappear. The moment of exposure is creation. The human gaze is creation. The embarrassment is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that this is how I will now be known, mightier than the dread that the exposure was permanent.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The witness's perception is creation. Its governing authority over the self's peace is creation. And the one power is mightier than the authority the self has given the human gaze. The stumble was seen. The stumble is not the definition. The one who is mightier than all of creation is mightier than the definition the moment of exposure seemed to establish.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The embarrassment has created a gap — the self as it was before the exposure and the self as it now imagines itself in the perception of the witness. This prayer gives both to the one power. Not: remove the memory from the witness. Be sufficient within the gap between who I am and how I was seen in that moment. Whatever You will for how the self carries the embarrassment forward — whether the moment fades quickly or stays in the memory for a long time, whether the witness remembers or forgets, what the exposure did to the relationship between the self and being seen.

Whatever You will. The self is not defined by the stumble. Not because the stumble didn't happen but because the one power is the one who defines the self, and His definition is: My servant. Whatever He will for what happens after the moment of exposure.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the embarrassment is the moment the self brought to the address — that did not let the human gaze be the final word, that placed the exposure within the one power's sight and found it small within the sight of the Lord of the seven heavens. Within divine anger, embarrassment becomes the incident that defines — the thing the self keeps returning to, that grants the human witness permanent authority, that shrinks the self's willingness to be seen again. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the exposed self: the condition of the one whose peace is governed by the one power's gaze and not by the stumble's visibility to others.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Halim: the Forbearing. He saw the stumble. He has not defined the self by it. He is as He has praised Himself.

The human gaze saw the stumble.

The one power's gaze saw His servant.

These are not the same seeing.

The human gaze is creation.

The one power is mightier than all of His creation.

Including the authority the self gave

to the moment of exposure.

Al-Halim.

He saw the stumble.

He has not defined the self by it.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FIVE

Humiliation

The self stripped of dignity by another's deliberate action. Not the stumble. The push.

The Condition Named

Humiliation differs from embarrassment in a crucial way: embarrassment is accidental, humiliation is inflicted. The embarrassed self stumbled. The humiliated self was pushed. Another person or institution or system deliberately, or with callous disregard, stripped the self of its dignity — made it small, made it an object of contempt, forced it into a position of powerlessness and exposure it did not choose. The wound of humiliation is both the degradation itself and the violation of its being deliberately done.

Humiliation carries a particular poison because it seems to confirm a verdict about the self's value — the degradation performed upon it appears to argue that the self deserved to be degraded, that its humiliation was appropriate to what it is. This is the cruelty within the cruelty: the act of humiliation makes its own case for why the self was appropriate to humiliate. The self that has been publicly degraded, stripped of dignity, made to be seen as less — that self must somehow hold within itself the knowledge that the degradation was done by a created being with no authority to establish its value, against a self whose value was established before the degradation by the only one with authority to establish it.

The tradition answers humiliation with the highest possible counter-testimony. The Prophet himself was humiliated — mocked, spat upon, called insane, had refuse thrown on him during prayer, was driven from his home. And he said of the one power: whatever You have decreed for me, I am content with it. Not because the humiliation was not real or did not hurt. Because the authority of the one who humiliated belongs to creation, and creation's authority to establish the self's worth is zero. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one whose authority is the only authority that establishes the self's value. The one who humiliated is a created being. The Lord of the seven heavens made the self before the humiliation, made it with a dignity that a created being's act cannot remove, and held it in His governance throughout the degradation. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The humiliation was within divine permission. The one power permitted a created being to degrade another created being, within a governance that the self cannot fully see from inside the wound of it. The protection from being overwhelmed by what the humiliation said about the self's value is asked from the one whose assessment of the self's value has never changed.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who established the self's dignity before the humiliation and has not revised His assessment because a created being acted to degrade it. The one who humiliated had no access to the account of the self's worth. They degraded a self whose worth is held in the one power's knowledge, not in the memory of what was done to it.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحَدَّرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the humiliation. Greater than the one who inflicted it. Greater than the degradation performed and the wound it left. The humiliator is creation. The humiliation is creation. The wound is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that the humiliation has permanently established the self's value in the eyes of those who witnessed it, mightier than the dread that the degradation is the truth about what the self is.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation, including the authority of the one who humiliated. That authority is creation — it came from within a created system, was exercised by a created being, and carries the weight that creation carries in relation to its Creator: none. The self's dignity was not established by the one who humiliated it. Its dignity was established by the Lord of the seven heavens. What creation cannot grant, creation cannot remove.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The humiliation has placed something in the self's interior that was not there before — a recording of what was done, a wound that replays the degradation, a diminishment that the self carries without having chosen it. This prayer gives the wound to the one power. Not: remove the memory of what was done. Be sufficient within the wound. Whatever You will for the self that carries the mark of what was done to it — for what the humiliation was permitted to do to this self, for what the self is now that it has been treated as something that could be degraded, for what comes after the wound.

Whatever You will. Al-Muizz: the Bestower of honour. The only one who actually confers dignity is the one power — and the one power has already conferred it on every soul He

created. The self that was humiliated carries a dignity given by Al-Muizz that the humiliator could not see and could not reach. Whatever He will for the self that knows this but is still carrying the wound.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the humiliation is the wound that brought the self to the address — that forced the self to distinguish between what a created being did to it and what the one power says it is, that moved the self toward the only authority whose assessment of its worth is final. Within divine anger, humiliation becomes the permanent definition — the self that accepted the degradation as testimony about its value, that allowed the act of a created being to override the word of the Creator. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the humiliated self: the condition of holding the wound while refusing to let the wound be the verdict.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Muizz: the Bestower of honour. What creation cannot grant, creation cannot remove. He is as He has praised Himself.

The humiliator is creation.

The humiliation is creation.

*What creation cannot grant,
creation cannot remove.*

The self's dignity was established

*before the degradation,
by the only one with authority to establish it.*

Al-Muizz. The Bestower of honour.

*He has not revised His assessment
because a created being acted against it.*

He is as He has praised Himself.

Self-Contempt

The self that does not merely dislike itself but has moved into active disdain for what it is.

The Condition Named

Self-contempt is shame that has hardened into a posture. Shame still has a quality of pain — it hurts to believe you are wrong at the root. Self-contempt has moved past pain into a kind of cold settled verdict: the self is beneath regard. The self-contemptuous person does not weep over what they are. They dismiss it. They have found the self unworthy of even the care required to grieve it. This is a more advanced and more dangerous form of self-condemnation than shame because it has extinguished the signal that would normally drive seeking. The self in shame might still hope to be different. The self in contempt has concluded that there is nothing here worth the effort of hoping.

Self-contempt also tends to turn outward in particular ways — the self that holds itself in contempt often holds others in contempt as well, because the posture of dismissal is not easily contained. The interior disdain for the self becomes a lens that sees the contemptible everywhere. This is one of the ways the tradition recognises self-contempt as a spiritual danger: it closes the heart not only to the self but to the rest of creation, which the one power made and called good.

The answer the tradition offers is not self-improvement — telling the self in contempt to simply try harder or be different. It is a direct confrontation of the contempt's epistemological claim. You have looked at yourself and found nothing worth keeping. The one power looked at you and made you. These two assessments cannot both be correct. The one who made the self — who fashioned it, breathed into it, addressed it as His servant, placed in it the capacity to bring this prayer — has not looked at His creation and found it beneath regard. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who made the self the contempt has dismissed. The Lord of the seven heavens is the Creator — the one who fashioned the self in its mother's womb, who breathed into the human form the capacity for speech and prayer and love and knowledge. He fashioned the self that self-contempt has dismissed. His act of creation is the counter-testimony to contempt's verdict. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The self-contempt is within divine governance — the one power has permitted a human soul to hold itself in disdain. The protection from the contempt's cold verdict is asked from the one whose act of making the self is the strongest possible argument against the verdict.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the Creator against the creature's contempt for His creation. Not: convince me the self is worth something. You made it. The act of making is the testimony. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one whose assessment of what He made has not changed because the thing He made decided it was beneath regard.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحَدَّرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the self-contempt's verdict. Greater than the disdain the self has developed for what it is. Greater than the closed posture that dismissed the self as not worth the effort of care. The contempt is creation. The verdict it produced is creation. The Creator is greater than all of His creation, including the creature's assessment of His creation's worth. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the conclusion that there is nothing here worth the one power's attention.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The self in contempt has made an assessment of creation — specifically of this creation, this soul, this particular thing the one power fashioned. That assessment is itself creation. The one who is mightier than all of His creation is mightier than the assessment the creation made of itself. He fashioned what the contempt dismissed. These are not equal authorities.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The self-contempt has found the self insufficient — not in the way shame finds the root flawed, but in the way that has stopped looking because there is nothing worth finding. This prayer places the dismissed self before the one who made it and asks Him to be sufficient within it. Not: show me what is worth keeping. Be sufficient here, in what the contempt has decided is beneath regard. Whatever You will for the self that has held itself in disdain — for the specific content of the contempt's verdict and what it did to the self's interior life.

Whatever You will. Al-Musawwir: the Fashioner of forms. The one who made the shape of what self-contempt dismissed. He has not lost interest in His own fashioning. Whatever He will for what the contempt missed when it looked at the self and found nothing.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the self-contempt is the closed verdict that the self has brought to the address — that has placed even the contemptible self before the one power and said: here it is, what I have dismissed, I give it to You. Within divine anger, self-contempt is the permanent posture — the hardened disdain that does not bring itself to any address because it has concluded there is nothing worth bringing. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the dismissed self: the condition of presenting to the Creator what the creature's contempt decided was beneath presentation.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Musawwir: the Fashioner. He made what the contempt dismissed. He is as He has praised Himself.

The contempt looked at the self and found nothing.

The Creator looked at the self and made it.

These are not equal testimonies.

The one who fashioned it

has not revised His assessment

because the self decided it was beneath regard.

Al-Musawwir. The Fashioner.

He made what the contempt dismissed.

Whatever He will for what the contempt missed

when it looked and found nothing.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Self-Hatred

The self that has moved from dislike to active enmity against its own existence.

The Condition Named

Self-hatred is the most severe form of self-condemnation. Where shame says I am wrong at the root, and self-contempt says I am beneath regard, self-hatred says I am an enemy to myself — I wish I were not, I resent my own existence, I actively oppose what I am. This is not hyperbole for very strong dislike. True self-hatred is the self turned against itself as a genuine adversary, with the emotional charge of hatred directed inward.

The danger of self-hatred is its completeness. The other forms of self-condemnation in this section leave some part of the self available to observe the condemnation — shame can be noticed and brought to the address, contempt can be recognised as a posture, guilt can motivate turning. Self-hatred has a quality of totality: when the self hates itself, the observer and the observed, the hater and the hated, are the same. There is no safe position from which to process the hatred. The self is both the weapon and the wound.

The tradition's answer is a direct theological counter. The human soul was made by the one power and has within it the divine breath — *nufakha fihi min ruhi*. Whatever the self has done or become or failed to be, this is its origin: directly made, directly breathed into, directly created by the one power. Hating the self the one power made is not a neutral act. It is a position in relation to the Creator. And the Creator's position on His creation is: He made it. He sustains it. He has not retracted the breath. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَنِي عَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who breathed into the self it hates. The Lord of the seven heavens breathed His own spirit into the human form — and that breath is in the self that self-hatred has targeted. The self that hates itself hates something that carries within it a dimension the hatred cannot reach: the breath of the one power, which He placed there and has not removed. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The self-hatred is within divine governance. The protection from the hatred is asked from the one who breathed into what is being hated.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one whose breath is within the self the hatred is aimed at. The self-hatred cannot reach the nufakha — the divine breath — no matter how total the hatred becomes. The protection of the one power is the protection of that which He placed within the self before the self had the capacity to hate itself.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأَخَذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the self-hatred. Greater than the enmity the self has developed against its own existence. Greater than the wish the self did not exist. The hatred is creation — the act of a created self against itself, within a created life. The Creator is greater than all of it, including the hatred directed at His creation. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the self-hatred and mightier than what the self-hatred says the self deserves.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The self that hates itself hates creation — a specific portion of creation that the one power fashioned and breathed into. And the one who is mightier than all of His creation is mightier than the self's hatred of what He made. He made it. The hatred did not unmake it. He breathed into it. The hatred cannot reach the breath.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The self-hatred has placed the self in a position of enmity against its own existence. This prayer gives the existence — including the enmity against it — to the one power entirely. Not: make me stop hating myself. Be sufficient within the self I hate. You be sufficient here, in the self that wishes it were not, in the existence the self has turned against. Whatever You will for this existence — for the self that hates itself, for what the hatred has done to the interior life, for what the self is beneath the hatred that it cannot see because the hatred is between it and seeing.

Whatever You will. The self's existence is Yours to give and Yours to govern. The self did not create itself and does not sustain itself. Whatever You will for the existence that the self has decided it would prefer not to have.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the self-hatred is the enmity that the self has brought to the address — that has placed even the hated self before the one power, that has said: here is what I hate, what I wish were not, I give it to You. Within divine anger, self-hatred is the permanent condition — the enmity that does not bring itself anywhere, that is complete in its turning away from both the self and the one power simultaneously. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the existence the self hates: the condition of giving to the Creator the creation the creature has decided it would prefer to destroy.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He breathed into the self it hates. The breath is still there. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The hatred is aimed at something
that carries the divine breath.
The breath was placed before the hatred arose.
The hatred cannot reach it.
The self's existence is His to give
and His to govern.
Whatever He will for the existence
the self has decided it would prefer not to have.
He breathed into it.
The breath is still there.
He is as He has praised Himself.*

CHAPTER EIGHT

Worthlessness

The self that has concluded it has no value. Not that it lost value — that it never had any.

The Condition Named

Worthlessness is the settled conviction that the self has no worth — not that it has done nothing worthy, not that it has failed to demonstrate its value, but that the value was never there. The worthless self does not believe it has fallen short of a standard. It believes there is no standard it could meet because the capacity to meet any standard was never part of what it is. This is a distinct and particularly paralyzing form of self-condemnation because it removes the self from the possibility of effort — effort requires believing that the effort can produce something, and the worthless self has concluded that nothing it produces has value.

Worthlessness often arrives gradually, installed by repeated messages from others or from circumstances that seemed to confirm the same conclusion: the rejection, the failure, the invisibility, the series of events that appeared to testify consistently in one direction. The self that has absorbed enough of these messages has not consciously decided to believe in its own worthlessness. It has simply stopped finding evidence to the contrary — and the absence of counter-evidence, over time, has allowed the worthlessness-conviction to become invisible, structural, the ground of perception rather than a conclusion sitting on top of it.

The tradition's counter to worthlessness is the act of creation itself. The one power does not make worthless things. He made the human being and called it the best of creation — *khalaqna al-insan fi ahsani taqwim*. Not: made the human being with the capacity for worth if it performs well enough. Made the human being in the finest form. The worthlessness-conviction is not just wrong. It is a claim about the quality of the Creator's work. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who made what the conviction of worthlessness has assessed. The Lord of the seven heavens made the self and said: finest form. The worthlessness-conviction has assessed the same self and said: no value. These two assessments belong to very different authorities. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The worthlessness-conviction is within divine governance — the one power has permitted a human soul to believe it was never worth anything. The protection from the conviction is asked from the one whose act of creation is the argument against it.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who made the self that believes itself worthless. Not: reassure the self that it has value. You made it. The making is the testimony. The one who fashioned the human being in the finest form has not revised His assessment because the human being concluded it was worthless.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُؤَمِّلُكَ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the conviction of worthlessness. Greater than the evidence that seemed to confirm it. Greater than the accumulated messages that installed it. The worthlessness-conviction is creation — a human conclusion within a human

interior. The Creator is greater than all of His creation, including the creature's assessment of its own worth. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the conclusion that there was never anything here that had value.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The self the worthlessness-conviction dismissed is creation — specifically, creation the one power described as finest form. The conviction is also creation. And the one who is mightier than all of creation is mightier than the conviction's assessment of His creation's worth. He made it in finest form. The conviction does not have the authority to revise that.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The worthlessness-conviction has told the self it has nothing to bring — no capacity, no value, nothing that warrants the attention of the address. This prayer brings the nothing. Not: first demonstrate some worth, then pray. Bring the worthlessness to the address. Whatever You will for the self that has concluded it has no value — for what is actually there beneath the conviction, for the finest form that the conviction has been sitting on top of, for what the self cannot see about itself because the worthlessness-conviction is between the self and seeing.

Whatever You will. The self's worth was not established by the self's performance. It was established by the act of creation. Whatever He will for the self that has forgotten that.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِعَافَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the worthlessness-conviction is the conclusion the self brought to the address — that presented even the worthless self to the one power and said: here it is, what has no value, I give it to You. Within divine anger, worthlessness is the permanent conviction — the self that does not bring itself to any address because it believes it has nothing to bring and no address would receive it. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the worthless self: the condition of bringing what the conviction says has no value to the one who said finest form.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He made the self in finest form. The conviction does not revise the making. He is as He has praised Himself.

The conviction said: no value, never had any.

The Creator said: finest form.

These are not equal testimonies.

The self's worth was not established by its performance.

It was established by the act of creation.

The conviction has been sitting on top of finest form.

Whatever He will for what is beneath the conviction.

He made it.

He has not revised His assessment.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER NINE

Inadequacy

The self that measures itself against what is required and always finds itself short.

The Condition Named

Inadequacy is the persistent sense of not being enough — not enough for the task, not enough for the relationship, not enough for the role, not enough for what the moment is asking. It differs from worthlessness in that it is comparative and contextual: the worthless self believes it has no value in absolute terms, the inadequate self believes it falls short of a specific measure. And the measure keeps shifting. Adequacy in one area does not transfer to another — the person who feels adequate as a professional can feel profoundly inadequate as a parent, and the person who feels adequate in calm conditions feels inadequate the moment the stakes rise.

The particular torture of inadequacy is its relationship to effort. The inadequate self often works very hard — harder than those who feel adequate — because the felt shortfall drives constant compensation. But the effort does not resolve the inadequacy feeling because the feeling is not primarily about actual performance. It is about the self's assessment of its capacity relative to what is being asked. No amount of good performance reliably convinces the inadequate self that it is adequate, because the measure adjusts upward to meet whatever was achieved.

The tradition's answer is in the framing of what the one power asks of the self. He does not ask for more than the self has. This is explicit: *la yukallifu allahu nafsan illa wus'aha* — the one power does not burden a soul beyond its capacity. Not: does not burden beyond what a good soul should be able to handle. Beyond its capacity. The one who created the soul and gave it its specific capacity does not then demand from it what its specific capacity cannot meet. The inadequacy-feeling is measuring the self against a standard the one power has not set. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who made the self with the capacity it has and did not make it with more than it has. The Lord of the seven heavens knows the exact capacity of what He made — not the capacity the self imagines it should have, not the capacity it compares itself against others to assess, but the actual capacity of this specific soul as it was fashioned. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The feeling of inadequacy is within divine governance. The protection from the overwhelm of the shortfall is asked from the one who set the measure.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who said: I do not burden a soul beyond its capacity. The measure being failed is not His measure. His measure is: what this soul can actually bear. The protection of the one who set that measure is the protection that says the shortfall the self is experiencing is a shortfall from a standard He did not set.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the measure the self is failing. Greater than the shortfall between what is being asked and what the self believes it can provide. Greater than the

accumulation of moments in which the self assessed itself and found itself short. The measure is creation. The shortfall is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that the self will never be enough for what is being asked.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The measure the self is failing is creation — a human standard, often set by the self itself or by other created beings. And the one who is mightier than all of His creation is mightier than the measure. He does not burden beyond capacity. Whatever the self is being asked within His governance is within the capacity He gave the self to meet it. The shortfall is from a standard He did not set.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The inadequacy has told the self it cannot provide what is needed — that it will fall short, that it does not have enough. This prayer gives the shortfall to the one power. Not: give me more capacity. Be sufficient within the capacity I have. Whatever You will for what this specific soul with its specific capacity is being asked to do. You are sufficient for what Your servant cannot be sufficient for. The gap between what is being asked and what the self can provide — You be sufficient within that gap.

Whatever You will. He does not burden beyond capacity. Whatever He will for the self that has been measuring itself against a standard He has not set.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the inadequacy is the feeling the self brought to the address — that gave the shortfall to the one power, that said: You be sufficient where I am not. Within divine anger, inadequacy becomes the permanent condition — the self that keeps measuring, keeps failing, keeps compensating without ever giving the measure to the one who set the real measure. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the self that feels short: the condition of the one who gives the shortfall to Al-Ghani and lets Him be sufficient.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He does not burden beyond capacity. The shortfall is from a standard He did not set. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The self measured itself against the standard
and found itself short.
He does not burden a soul beyond its capacity.
The standard the self was failing
was not His standard.
He set the real measure:
what this specific soul can actually bear.
Whatever He will for the self
that has been measuring against a standard He did not set.
He is as He has praised Himself.*

CHAPTER TEN

Inferiority

The self that measures itself against others and finds itself consistently below.

The Condition Named

Inferiority is the felt sense that others are more — more capable, more worthy, more loved, more intelligent, more significant — and that the self occupies a lower position in an implicit hierarchy. Where inadequacy measures the self against a task, inferiority measures the self against other selves. The inferior self is not simply aware that others have qualities it lacks. It experiences this awareness as a verdict on its position — as if the human world were a ranked order and the self's place in it is near the bottom.

The suffering of inferiority is aggravated by comparison, and the contemporary world has made comparison constant and inescapable. The self that encounters the achievements and capacities of others — especially through the carefully curated visibility that social existence now provides — is in a continuous implicit ranking process. And for the self prone to inferiority, this ranking almost always produces the same result: others are above, the self is below.

The tradition's answer is a dismantling of the hierarchy being used. The one power does not rank human beings by the criteria inferiority uses: achievement, capacity, intelligence, appearance, recognition. The Quran gives the single criterion of ranking explicitly: *inna akramakum inda allahi atqakum* — the most honoured among you in the sight of the one power is the most mindful of Him. Not the most capable, not the most successful, not the most visible. The most mindful. And mindfulness is not a competition — it is a relationship between each soul and the one power that is entirely its own, entirely private, entirely outside the comparison that inferiority conducts. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَاؤَكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who does not use the hierarchy inferiority uses. The Lord of the seven heavens holds a ranking criterion that the inferiority-comparison has no access to: the state of the soul in its relationship to the one power. The self that ranks below others in achievement or capacity or recognition may rank entirely differently in the only ranking that has standing before the Lord of the seven heavens. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The experience of inferiority is within divine governance. The protection from the hierarchy's verdict is asked from the one whose hierarchy is different.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who set a different criterion. The self that has ranked itself low in the comparison has not yet checked its ranking against the only criterion that stands with the Lord of the seven heavens. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one who says the most honoured is the most mindful, and who alone knows where the mindfulness actually stands.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَلَ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَاؤُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the hierarchy. Greater than the ranking the self has assigned itself within the hierarchy. Greater than the comparison that produced the sense of being consistently below. The hierarchy is creation. The comparison is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that the self's position near the bottom of the hierarchy is permanent, mightier than the conclusion that others simply are more and there is no changing that.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The hierarchy the self ranked itself in is creation — a human ordering by human criteria. The one who is mightier than all of His creation is mightier than the ordering. His criterion is not the comparison's criterion. His ranking is not the comparison's ranking. What the comparison found at the bottom and what He finds at the top in the only ranking that counts are not necessarily — are perhaps rarely — the same.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The inferiority has told the self it is below — below others, below what it should be, occupying a position that is less than those around it. This prayer gives the position to the one power. Not: raise my position in the comparison. Be sufficient within the position I occupy. Whatever You will for this soul in its specific place — for what the comparison cannot see about the mindfulness it may or may not contain, for what is being built in the specific soul that ranked itself low.

Whatever You will. The most honoured in His sight is the most mindful. Whatever He will for the mindfulness — or its growth — within the soul that inferiority has placed at the bottom of the comparison.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the inferiority is the comparison that the self brought to the address — that placed the ranked-below self before the one who uses a different ranking, that gave the hierarchy to the one whose criterion is mindfulness. Within divine anger, inferiority becomes the permanent condition — the self perpetually measuring against others, perpetually finding itself below, perpetually accepting the comparison's verdict as the only one that counts. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the self that ranks low in the comparison: the condition of turning from the comparison's hierarchy to the one power's criterion.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. The most honoured in His sight is the most mindful. The comparison did not assess mindfulness. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The comparison ranked the self below.
The one power's criterion is mindfulness.
The comparison did not measure mindfulness.
What the comparison found at the bottom
and what He finds most honoured
are not necessarily the same.
The hierarchy is creation.
He is mightier than all of His creation.
Including the hierarchy.
Including its verdict.*

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Insecurity

The chronic background sense of being unstable — not in a specific fear, but in the self's ground.

The Condition Named

Insecurity is the pervasive low-grade state of not feeling safe in oneself or one's position. It is not a specific fear from Book II — it is not the fear of losing a job or a relationship or health. It is the background condition before any specific fear has been named: the self that walks through life without a secure foundation beneath it, that is always slightly braced for the ground to shift, that cannot fully rest in any position because the rest always feels temporary and the safety always feels borrowed.

Insecurity is therefore different from anxiety, which involves the mind running through scenarios. Insecurity is quieter and deeper — it is not about what might happen but about what is: the self's fundamental sense of its own stability. The insecure self is not necessarily worrying about specific threats. It simply does not feel grounded. It is always slightly off-balance, always slightly provisional in its confidence, always aware at some level that what it has could be lost and what it is could be found insufficient.

The tradition's answer to insecurity is the name Al-Matin — the Firm, the Strong, the absolutely secure foundation. Not as an argument but as an address. The self that has no secure ground in itself is pointed toward the only ground that does not shift: the one power. Not: develop more self-confidence. Not: accumulate more of the things that security seems to require. Al-Matin. Build on the one who does not shift. The insecurity is real — the self's own ground is not the right ground to build on. It never was. It never will be. Al-Matin is. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who holds the seven heavens without shifting. The Lord of the seven heavens is the only truly secure foundation — the one whose stability is not contingent on circumstances, whose position does not depend on external conditions, who does not brace for the ground to shift because He is the ground. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The insecurity is within divine governance — the one power has permitted a human soul to walk without a secure foundation in itself. The protection from the instability is asked from the one who is the only secure foundation.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of Al-Matin — the Firm. The self has been looking for its security in the wrong place: in itself, in its positions, in the stability of circumstances. The protection of the Firm one is the only protection that addresses what insecurity is actually about: the self needs a ground it does not have to generate itself, that is not subject to the losses and changes that have made it feel unsafe.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the insecurity. Greater than the lack of ground the insecurity has made the self feel. Greater than every position and circumstance and self-quality that the self has tried to build its security on and found shifting. The insecurity is

creation. The unstable ground is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the background sense of instability that makes the self always slightly braced.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The self and its instability are both creation. The positions and circumstances the self tried to use as security are creation. And the one who is mightier than all of His creation is the only ground that is not creation — the only foundation that does not shift because it is not within the system of contingent things that can shift. Al-Matin. He is as He has praised Himself.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The insecurity has been looking for a ground to stand on that the self can generate or possess. This prayer gives the search to the one power. Not: give me stable circumstances. Be sufficient as my ground. You be the stable place. Whatever You will for the self that has been trying to generate its own security — for what is built when the self gives the search to Al-Matin and stands on Him instead of trying to produce its own foundation.

Whatever You will. Al-Matin does not shift. Whatever He will for the self that stops trying to build its own ground and places itself on His.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the insecurity is the groundlessness the self brought to the address — that stopped trying to generate its own security, that gave the search to Al-Matin, that placed itself on the ground that does not shift. Within divine anger, insecurity is the permanent condition — the self perpetually trying to stabilize its own ground, perpetually finding it insufficient, perpetually braced for what is built on contingent things to shift. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the ungrounded self: the condition of finding the ground in Al-Matin rather than in the self's own construction.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Matin. The Firm. He does not shift. The self's ground does not need to be generated by the self. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The self looked for a ground
it could generate and possess.
Every ground it tried shifted.
Al-Matin does not shift.
The insecurity was real:
the self's own ground was never the right ground.
It never was. It never will be.
Al-Matin is.
Whatever He will for the self
that stops trying to build its own foundation
and places itself on His.*

SECTION II

The Self That Refuses What Arrived

Anger. Rage. Fury. Frustration. Indignation. Irritability. The self that did not consent to what was given. The self that says: this should not be.

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمُ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

Do not weaken and do not grieve, for you are the highest if you are believers.

The self that refuses what arrived has made itself lower than what arrived. The self that receives what arrived within His governance remains above it.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Anger

The self that did not consent to what arrived and is hot with the refusal.

The Condition Named

Anger is the heat of refusal. Something arrived that should not have arrived — or failed to arrive that should have — and the self rises against it. Anger has energy, direction, and a claim: this is wrong. This is unjust. This should not be. Anger is not passive; it is the self in active opposition to what is. It contains within it a moral assertion — the angry self is not simply uncomfortable with what arrived, it is declaring that what arrived violates something that should have been protected.

The tradition does not condemn anger in itself. The Prophet experienced anger. He said: the strong person is not the one who can physically overpower others; the strong person is the one who controls himself when angry. Anger is real and can be just. The question is what the self does with the heat — whether it is brought to the address or expressed outward without governance, whether it remains the self's energy or becomes the self's master.

The anger being addressed in this chapter is specifically the anger at what the one power has permitted — the anger at circumstance, at what life has dealt, at the gap between what arrived and what should have arrived. This is the anger that has the one power as its implicit object, even when it is directed at a person or situation. Something arrived within His governance that the self did not consent to. The heat is ultimately heat toward the governance. And the governance — which holds everything that arrived and everything that should have arrived — is the address to which the heat must be brought. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who permitted what the anger is directed at. The Lord of the seven heavens governed the arrival of what arrived. Not permissively, not absent-mindedly, not despite His better judgment — He governed it. This is the most difficult confrontation the angry self faces: the object of the anger is ultimately within the one power's governance. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The anger is against what arrived from within His governance. The protection from being overwhelmed by the heat of the refusal is asked from the one who governed the arrival.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who governed what the anger is refusing. Not: remove the reason for the anger. Be my protector within the heat of refusing what You permitted. The anger is brought to the address it has been implicitly directed at. The heat is placed before the one who holds what produced the heat. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the governor whose governance is being refused.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the anger. Greater than the thing the anger is directed at. Greater than the injustice the anger has identified — even if the injustice is real. The

anger is creation. The thing that produced the anger is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it, including the wrong that may genuinely have been done. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the heat of refusal, mightier than the claim that what arrived should not have arrived.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The anger is creation — a human heat within a human interior. What produced the anger is creation. And the one who is mightier than all of His creation holds both the anger and its cause within a governance the anger cannot see from inside the heat. The anger's moral claim — this is wrong, this should not be — is real as a human response. It is not final as a verdict on what the one power's governance permitted.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The anger is a refusal: I do not consent to what You permitted. This prayer reverses the refusal — not by extinguishing the moral sensitivity that noticed the wrong but by surrendering the governance of the response to the one power. Not: I consent to injustice. You be sufficient within what arrived, within the heat of what I did not consent to. Whatever You will for the anger — for whether it is righteous energy that moves toward justice or whether it consumes the self, for what it does to the self and to those around the self, for what the one power governs in the situation that produced it.

Whatever You will. The heat is given to the one who governed the arrival. Not cancelled. Not suppressed. Given. Whatever He will for the energy of the anger in His governance.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the anger is the heat the self brought to the address — that placed the refusal before the one power rather than releasing it outward without governance, that gave the heat to the one who governed what produced it. Within divine anger, anger becomes the permanent condition — the hot refusal that never reaches the address, that discharges outward, that makes the self its own punisher through sustained heat. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the angry self: the condition of bringing the heat to the one who holds what produced it.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Halim: the Forbearing. He received the heat of refusal. He governs what it becomes. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The heat rose against what arrived.
What arrived was within His governance.
The heat has been brought to the governor.
Not cancelled. Not suppressed.
Given.
Al-Halim. The Forbearing.
He received the heat.
He governs what it becomes.
Whatever He will for the energy of the anger.
He is as He has praised Himself.*

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Rage

Anger that has passed the point of governance. The heat so complete it has become its own authority.

The Condition Named

Rage is anger that has left the self's governance. Where anger is hot, rage is consuming. The self in anger still has a perspective — it knows it is angry, it can observe the heat, it retains some capacity to choose what to do with it. The self in rage has been overtaken. The heat has become so total that the self is no longer directing it; it is being directed by it. Rage acts without deliberation, speaks without consideration, burns without awareness of what it is burning.

Rage is distinct from anger not only in intensity but in what it does to the self. Anger leaves the self's basic structure intact — the angry self is still the self, just heated. Rage temporarily replaces the self. The person in the grip of full rage is not themselves as they normally are, and they know this afterward — the shame that often follows rage is the self recognizing that something else was in charge for that duration. The tradition names this with precision: the Prophet said about anger, I advise you not to become angry, I advise you not to become angry, I advise you not to become angry — the repetition is the recognition that anger has a progression that, once started, becomes increasingly difficult to interrupt.

Rage in the context of this book is specifically the rage at what was permitted within divine governance — the moment when the self's refusal of what arrived became so total that governance left and the heat took over. The return from rage to governance requires exactly what anger requires, but more urgently: the bringing of the heat to the address before it discharges into destruction. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرِّي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the governor — the one who governs even the rage, who permits the heat to reach the point of overtaking the self within His governance, who holds the consequences of what rage does within the same governance that held the arrival that produced the anger that became rage. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The rage is the overwhelm — the point at which the heat transgressed the self's own limits. The protection from the overwhelm is asked from the one who governs the progression from anger to rage and who holds what the rage has done and will do.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who governs what the rage cannot govern in itself. The self in rage has lost its own governance. The governance it has lost was always borrowed from the one power. The return to governance is the return to the address. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one who can receive the heat that has left the self's control and hold it within His own.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the rage. Greater than what the rage has done or is doing. Greater than the heat that overtook the self's governance. The rage is creation — a

human state in which the heat of a human emotion has exceeded the human capacity to govern it. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the rage and mightier than what the rage has made the self do or say or become.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The rage is creation. What produced the rage is creation. What the rage produced is creation. And the one who is mightier than all of His creation is mightier than the heat that took the self's governance. He governs what the rage could not. He holds what the rage released. He is present within what the self's own presence was absent from during the height of the rage.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The rage has discharged — something was said, something was done, something was burned in the heat. This prayer gives the aftermath to the one power. Not: undo what the rage did. Be sufficient within what was done during the rage — within the damage, within the shame that follows, within the self that now must live with what it was when governance left it. Whatever You will for what the rage produced — for the relationships it affected, for the self it revealed, for what comes after the heat.

Whatever You will. Al-Ghafur: who forgives even what was done in the loss of governance. Whatever He will for the self in the aftermath of the heat that overtook it.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the rage is the heat the self has brought back to the address — that has returned from the place governance left, that recognizes the heat was too great for the self's own governance and gives it to the one power's. Within divine anger, rage becomes the cycle — the heat that discharges, causes damage, is followed by shame, but does not reach the address, and so the conditions for the next rage remain intact. The prayer asks for divine pleasure after and within the rage: the condition of returning to the address from the place where the self's own governance failed.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Ghafur: who forgives even what was done in the heat that overtook the self. He is as He has praised Himself.

The heat exceeded the self's governance.

It did not exceed His.

He governs what the rage could not govern.

He holds what the rage released.

Al-Ghafur.

*Who forgives even what was done
when governance left.*

*Whatever He will for the self
in the aftermath of the heat.*

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Fury

The sustained, directed intensity of anger that has found its target and will not release it.

The Condition Named

Fury differs from rage in its quality of focus. Rage is consuming and totalizing — it burns without specific direction. Fury is cold and precise — it has found its object and holds it in the heat with a sustained intensity that can last far longer than the wild discharge of rage. The furious self is not out of control in the way the raging self is. It is in control — and it is using that control to direct an intense, sustained heat at a specific target. This is what makes fury particularly dangerous: it has the deliberateness that rage lacks, and the intensity that calm anger lacks.

Fury in the context of divine governance is the sustained directed heat toward what the one power has permitted — the specific person who wronged, the specific circumstance that arrived, the specific outcome that should not have been. The furious self has locked onto its target and will not let the heat move. It wants the target to remain in the heat. The sustained direction of fury is itself a refusal: I will not release this until justice is done, until the target suffers what it caused, until what happened is somehow equalized.

The tradition's answer is not that the target is innocent or that what happened was just. The tradition's answer is about what fury does to the one who holds it. The Prophet said: anger corrupts faith the way salt water corrupts honey — it transforms what was there before. Fury held without being brought to the address does not hold the target in the heat. It holds the furious self in its own heat, for longer and more completely than the target ever experiences it. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who governs both the furious self and the target the fury is directed at. The Lord of the seven heavens holds the target within the same governance that holds the self sustaining the fury toward it. Whatever the target did that produced the fury — the one power saw it, it occurred within His governance, He holds what justice toward it looks like across a timeline longer than the fury's holding. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The sustained heat of fury is itself an overwhelm — the self held in its own heat long past the point where the heat serves any purpose. The protection from the fury's self-consuming quality is asked from the one whose governance includes what the target did and what justice for it looks like.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who governs the target and the justice due to it without requiring the furious self to maintain the heat. He does not need the self to hold the fury to ensure the target is held accountable. His governance holds the target in a justice more complete than fury can produce. Mighty is Your protection: He governs the account.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the fury. Greater than the target the fury is locked onto. Greater than the wrong the target did that produced the fury. The fury is creation. The

target is creation. The wrong is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that releasing the fury means the wrong goes unaddressed, mightier than the dread that letting go of the heat means the target escapes.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation, including the target and what the target did. The furious self has appointed itself the keeper of the heat to ensure the target does not escape accountability. But the one who is mightier than all of His creation — including the target — is the only one who can actually hold the target accountable. The self's fury cannot do what His governance can. Releasing the fury does not release the target from the one power's account.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The fury has been holding a sustained heat toward a target in the belief that the heat is necessary — that releasing it would be an injustice to what was done. This prayer releases the heat to the one who governs the account. Not: the wrong doesn't matter. You be sufficient within the wrong that was done, within the target that did it, within what justice for it requires. Whatever You will for the account between the self and the target — not the self's sustained heat but Your governance of the wrong that produced the heat.

Whatever You will. Al-Adl: the Just. The account is His. He sees the wrong more completely than the fury sees it. Whatever He will for the justice due — which is not dependent on the self holding the heat.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the fury is the sustained heat the self releases to the address — that gives the account to Al-Adl, that trusts the governor of the account to hold the target without the self maintaining the heat. Within divine anger, fury is the sustained condition — the self as the keeper of the heat, burning in what was done to it longer and more completely than the target ever will. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the furious self: the condition of releasing the heat to the one who governs the account.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Adl: the Just. He sees the wrong more completely than the fury. The account is His. He is as He has praised Himself.

The fury held the target in the heat.

*The heat was burning the one who held it
longer and more completely
than the target ever experienced.*

Al-Adl. The Just.

The account is His.

He sees the wrong more completely than the fury.

Releasing the heat does not release the target.

It releases the self.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Frustration

The self that wants to move and cannot. The blocked path. The wall where the door should be.

The Condition Named

Frustration is the specific suffering of obstruction — the self that has a direction, a goal, a movement it is trying to make, and finds itself blocked. The block may be external: a circumstance that will not yield, a person who will not cooperate, a system that will not open. Or internal: a capacity the self cannot access, a fear that will not release, a pattern that keeps repeating. In both cases the experience is the same: the self is trying to move and cannot, and the inability to move while wanting to move is the frustration.

What distinguishes frustration from the other emotions in this section is its relationship to effort. The self in anger has been struck by what arrived. The self in frustration is straining against what will not yield. Frustration contains exertion — the effort that meets the wall, the push that finds no give, the attempt that produces no opening. This is why sustained frustration is exhausting in a particular way: the self has been spending its energy against something that will not move, and the expenditure produces nothing except more awareness of the obstruction.

The tradition's answer is in the sovereignty of timing and opening. The one power is Al-Fattah — the Opener. Doors that will not open are not permanently sealed. They are not yet open. The distinction matters enormously. Frustration concludes: this will not open. Al-Fattah says: I have not yet opened this. The frustration's certainty that the block is permanent is a claim about what lies within the one power's governance — a claim the frustration makes from inside the obstruction without the view the governor has. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who governs what is blocked and when it opens. The Lord of the seven heavens holds the obstruction and its resolution within the same governance. He permitted the block. He holds the key to the block. The timing of the opening is within His lordship — not within the self's effort or the world's yielding. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The frustration of sustained obstruction can overwhelm — the effort that finds no give, the exhaustion of pushing against what will not move. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who holds the key.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of Al-Fattah — the Opener. The self straining against a block is straining against something the one power is governing. The protection of the one who holds the key is the protection that says: the block is within My governance, the opening is within My governance, and neither is outside the reach of My key.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the obstruction. Greater than the effort that has met the wall. Greater than the exhaustion of sustained frustration. The block is creation. The

wall is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that the block is permanent, mightier than the conclusion that the door will never open.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The obstruction is creation — a circumstance or person or pattern within the created world that is currently blocking the self's movement. And the one who is mightier than all of His creation is mightier than the obstruction. Al-Fattah. Every door that is closed is closed within His governance. And He opens.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The frustration has been straining against the block, spending its energy on the wall. This prayer gives the block and the effort to the one power. Not: remove the obstruction. Be sufficient within the obstruction. Whatever You will for the blocked path — for when it opens or whether it opens or whether another path opens that was not visible from inside the frustration, for what the self is becoming in the time of the obstruction that it could not become if the door had opened immediately.

Whatever You will. Al-Fattah. He opens what He will, when He will, and sometimes what opens is not the door the self was pushing on. Whatever He will for the path.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the frustration is the strain the self brings to the address — that gives the block to Al-Fattah, that stops spending its energy on the wall and gives the energy to the one who holds the key. Within divine anger, frustration becomes the exhausting permanent condition — the self perpetually straining, perpetually finding no give, perpetually spending its energy against what only He can open. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the blocked self: the condition of giving the obstruction to the Opener.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Fattah. He opens. Not yet is not never. He is as He has praised Himself.

The self strained against the block.

The block is creation.

He is mightier than all of His creation.

Including the block.

Al-Fattah. The Opener.

Not yet is not never.

He holds the key.

The door the self was pushing on

and the door He opens

are not always the same door.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Indignation

The self that has witnessed or experienced injustice and is hot with the rightness of its claim.

The Condition Named

Indignation is the anger of the self that believes it is right — not simply hot, not simply refusing, but claiming that what arrived is unjust and that the claim of injustice is legitimate. The indignant self has a moral argument. Something violated a standard that should have been upheld — a promise was broken, a right was denied, a person was treated as less than they deserve, a principle was trampled. And the indignation rises not just as heat but as righteousness: I am angry and I am right to be angry. The anger is not merely an emotion; it is a verdict.

Indignation is the most morally complex emotion in this section because it may be correct. The injustice may be real. The violation of the principle may be genuine. The self's anger may be entirely righteous. The prophets were indignant. The Prophet Musa threw down the tablets in indignation at his people's worship of the calf. Indignation at genuine injustice is not a failure — it can be the appropriate human response to a wrong.

The complication arises with what indignation tends to do next. Having established that it is right, the indignant self often uses its rightness as permission — permission to speak without restraint, to act without consideration of consequences, to hold others in the heat of its judgment indefinitely. The rightness of the claim becomes the authorization for whatever the indignation does with the claim. And this is where the tradition's governance is needed: the justice of the cause and the governance of the response to it are not the same question. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who is the ultimate standard of what is just. The Lord of the seven heavens sees the injustice the indignation has identified. He sees it more completely than the indignant self — all the context, all the actors, all the stakes, all the history. He does not dismiss the indignation's claim. He holds the injustice within a justice that is larger and more complete than the indignation can see from inside its heat. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The indignation's righteousness can itself become an overwhelm — the self so certain of its right that it transgresses through the very heat of its righteousness.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the only one whose judgment of the injustice is complete — who sees the full ledger that the indignation is working from partial accounts. The protection of the one who is the standard the indignation is appealing to. The indignation says: this is unjust. It has appealed to a standard. The standard is His. He is the protection the indignation actually needs.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحَدَّرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the indignation. Greater than the injustice that produced it. Greater than the rightness of the claim. The injustice is creation. The indignation is creation. The rightness of the claim is a human judgment within creation.

The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that if the indignation releases its heat the injustice will go unaddressed, mightier than the conclusion that only the self's sustained outrage ensures justice.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation, including the injustice and including the self that is rightly indignant about it. The one who is mightier than all of creation is the only one who can actually deliver the justice the indignation is demanding. The self's sustained heat cannot deliver it. His governance can. The indignation has been appealing to a standard that is His. He is mightier than the injustice the standard was applied to.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The indignation holds the heat because it believes the heat is the instrument of justice — that releasing it means releasing the injustice. This prayer gives both the injustice and the response to it to the one power. Not: the injustice is acceptable. You be sufficient within the injustice — within the wrong that was done, within the violated principle, within what justice for it actually requires. Whatever You will for the response to the injustice — for whether the self speaks or acts or holds the heat or releases it, for what actually serves the justice the indignation is claiming to pursue.

Whatever You will. Al-Adl: the Just. Al-Hakam: the Judge. The justice the indignation is claiming is His justice. Whatever He will for how it is served — which is not necessarily through the self's sustained heat.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the indignation is the righteous heat the self brings to the address — that places the injustice before Al-Adl, that gives the cause to the only one who can actually deliver what the cause requires, that releases the heat from its own hands into the governance of the governor. Within divine anger, indignation becomes permission — the righteousness of the cause used as authorization for whatever the heat does, the self as the instrument of its own justice rather than placing the justice in its proper jurisdiction. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the indignant self: the condition of bringing the righteous cause to the only judge whose judgment is complete.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Adl. Al-Hakam. The justice the indignation claimed is His. The account is His. He is as He has praised Himself.

The indignation was right.

The injustice was real.

And the justice due for it

belongs to the only judge

whose judgment is complete.

Al-Adl. Al-Hakam.

The account is His.

The self's sustained heat

cannot deliver what His governance can.

He sees the full ledger.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Irritability

Not anger at a specific thing. The raw state where everything feels like too much.

The Condition Named

Irritability is anger without a specific object. The irritable self is not angry at a particular injustice or a specific person. It is simply reactive — every sound slightly too loud, every demand slightly too much, every imperfection slightly intolerable. The threshold at which things become unbearable has dropped. The buffer between stimulus and reaction has thinned. What would normally pass without notice now produces a friction that the self cannot smooth over.

This makes irritability distinct from every other emotion in this section. Anger, rage, fury, frustration, indignation — all have a target. Irritability has a state. The irritable self is not in conflict with a specific thing; it is in a condition of heightened reactivity in which everything becomes a potential conflict. And because the cause is a state rather than an object, the usual remedies — addressing the source of anger, seeking resolution, correcting an injustice — do not touch it. You cannot resolve irritability by fixing a specific thing, because irritability does not come from a specific thing.

Irritability is most often a signal of something underneath: exhaustion, depletion, unprocessed stress, the accumulated weight of many small things that were each managed individually but have collectively exceeded the self's capacity. The body and soul are telling the self something through the heightened reactivity. The tradition answers this not with correction of the irritability itself but with the recognition of what it is pointing to: a self that needs to be brought to the address not to fix a specific wrong but to be replenished by the only one who replenishes. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins not with a specific complaint but with an arrival: the depleted self, the thinned buffer, the raw state that everything is irritating, brought to the Lord of the seven heavens without a specific injustice to name. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The irritability is an overwhelm of accumulated things — not one overwhelming event but the cumulative weight that has made the threshold drop. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who holds the accumulated weight.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who sees what the irritability is actually about — the total weight, not just the most recent irritant. The protection of the Lord of the seven heavens over a self that is not angry at a specific injustice but is simply carrying too much. His protection is not just for the dramatic moments. It is for the raw state that everything feels like too much.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّحْمِ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the irritability. Greater than whatever has accumulated to produce it. Greater than the thinned buffer and the dropped threshold and the heightened reactivity. The irritability is creation. The accumulated weight that produced

it is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the irritability and what it is doing to the self's relationships and interior life.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The accumulated weight is creation — the sum of many created circumstances and created demands and created stresses that have added up to more than the self's current capacity. And the one who is mightier than all of His creation is mightier than the sum. He holds the total that the irritability is the symptom of.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The irritability is a signal that something needs to be replenished — that the self has been spending beyond its reserves and the reserves have dropped to a point where the threshold drops with them. This prayer gives both the irritability and whatever is underneath it to the one power. Not: give me more patience. Be sufficient within the depletion — within what has accumulated, within the raw state, within what the self needs that it cannot generate for itself. Whatever You will for what the irritability is pointing to — for the replenishment of what has been spent, for the rest that would lower the threshold back to where it belongs.

Whatever You will. Al-Ghani: the Self-Sufficient, from whom sufficiency flows. The self cannot replenish itself from itself. Whatever He will for the replenishment.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the irritability is the raw state the self brings to the address — that does not hide the heightened reactivity but gives it, gives the depletion underneath it, gives the accumulated weight, to the one who holds all of it. Within divine anger, irritability becomes the permanent condition — the depleted self that does not reach the address, that keeps discharging into the nearest available target without ever addressing what is underneath. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the irritable self: the condition of bringing the rawness to the replenisher rather than discharging it outward.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Ghani. From Him sufficiency flows. The self cannot replenish from itself. He is as He has praised Himself.

*Everything felt like too much.
Not because of a specific wrong.
Because the reserves had dropped.
Al-Ghani.
From Him sufficiency flows.
The self cannot replenish from itself.
The irritability was a signal:
bring the depletion to the address.
Whatever He will for the replenishment.
He is as He has praised Himself.*

SECTION III

The Self Wounded by Another

Resentment. Bitterness. Betrayal. Grudge. Spite. The suffering of being fundamentally misunderstood. Another person reached into the self and left damage.

وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ

Let them pardon and overlook. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you?

The one who was wronged holds something the one who wronged does not. The question is what they do with what they hold.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Resentment

The anger that stayed. The wound that did not close but calcified.

The Condition Named

Resentment is what anger becomes when it is not processed, not brought to any address, not resolved — but simply held. The anger at what was done remains in the interior, day after day, and gradually loses its heat while retaining its structure. What was once hot becomes cold and hard. Resentment is cold anger — the version of the anger that has been compressed into a permanent interior feature. The resentful self does not rage. It carries. The carrying is the condition.

Resentment has a particular quality of recurrence. The resentful self does not think about what was done all the time. But it returns to it with a regularity that the self often does not consciously choose. Something triggers the memory — a word, a situation, a person — and the resentment activates, fills the interior briefly with the compressed anger, and then subsides back into its permanent position. The self has built, without intending to, an interior architecture around what was done. The resentment is load-bearing.

The tradition's most precise answer to resentment is not about the one who wronged but about the one who holds the resentment. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? The question is directed at the resentful self: you are holding what was done against you. You are also holding something yourself — your own failures, your own debts to the one power. The connection is not a manipulation but a mirror: the same mercy you are declining to extend is the mercy you are asking for. Withholding it from another does not put it out of reach of your own need. But it does reveal something about the self's relationship to mercy as a currency. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجِي جَارُكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who holds both the self that resents and the person who wronged — who sees the full account between them, what was done and what was not done, what the wrong cost and what the resentment is costing. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The resentment has been a kind of transgression — not against the one who wronged but against the self carrying the cold anger. The protection from what the resentment is doing to the interior of the self that holds it is asked from the one who sees both sides of the account.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who holds the full account — not the partial account the resentment has assembled, which sees the wrong done and does not see the carrying-cost, which sees what the other person did and does not see what the resentment is doing to the self that holds it. The one power's protection is the protection of complete sight.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the resentment. Greater than what produced it. Greater than the architecture the resentment has built inside the self. The wrong that produced

the resentment is creation. The resentment is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that releasing the resentment means the wrong goes unaddressed, mightier than the conclusion that the resentment is necessary to preserve the record of what was done.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The self's resentment is creation — a human response to a human wrong, compressed into a permanent interior feature. And the one who is mightier than all of His creation holds the record of the wrong without requiring the resentful self to carry it. He does not need the resentment to remember what was done. He already knows, more completely than the resentment does.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The resentment has been filling a space in the interior — occupying the place where something else might be. This prayer gives the space to the one power. Not: make me forgive before I am ready. Be sufficient within the wrong that was done, within the record of it, within what justice for it requires. Whatever You will for the resentment — for whether it is held or released, and if released, when and how and by what mercy the release becomes possible.

Whatever You will. The resentment has been the self's own management of the wrong. Whatever He will for how the wrong is held and what it becomes.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِعَافَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the resentment is the wound the self brings to the address — that gives the cold anger and the calcified hurt to the one power, that places the record of the wrong in the governance of the only one who holds the full account. Within divine anger, resentment is the permanent architecture — the load-bearing cold anger that the self has organised its interior around, that is never brought to any address but is simply carried indefinitely. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the resentful self: the condition of giving the record of the wrong to the one who holds it more completely.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Ghafur. He holds the account. He holds the record. He holds the capacity to forgive what neither the self nor the person who wronged can fully resolve between themselves. He is as He has praised Himself.

The anger stayed. It calcified.

It became load-bearing.

*He holds the record of what was done
more completely than the resentment does.*

He does not need the resentment to remember.

Do you not love that Allah should forgive you?

*The same mercy withheld from another
is the mercy being asked for.*

Al-Ghafur.

He holds the account.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Bitterness

Resentment that has spread beyond its source and flavoured everything.

The Condition Named

Bitterness is resentment that has expanded. Where resentment is a compressed interior feature organised around a specific wrong, bitterness has spread outward from that wrong and begun to colour the self's entire perception. The bitter self does not only resent what was done by the specific person who did it. It has begun to see the world through the lens of what was done — to find the betrayal of trust everywhere, the disappointment of hope in everything, the proof of what was done to it confirmed by what keeps arriving. Bitterness is the generalisation of a wound.

This makes bitterness particularly corrosive. It is no longer contained to the original injury. It has infected the self's relationship to others, to possibilities, to the future. The bitter self approaches new people already slightly braced for betrayal, new situations already slightly expecting disappointment, new hopes already slightly aware that they will not be met. The wound taught a lesson and the lesson has been applied too broadly — but the bitter self often cannot see the over-application because the wound was real enough to teach.

The tradition's answer addresses both the specific source and the general spread. The Quran promises: after hardship, ease. Not: eventually good things will happen to compensate for bad things. After the specific hardship, its specific ease. After the specific wrong, what comes on the other side of it. Bitterness has concluded from the wound that what comes next will also wound. The promise says: what comes next is held in the same governance that held the wound — and the governance has already announced its direction. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجِي جَارُكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who holds both the source of the bitterness and everything the bitterness has spread into. The Lord of the seven heavens governs the original wrong and governs every situation the bitterness has pre-coloured with its lesson. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The bitterness has been a kind of overwhelm — the original wound expanding until it occupies the self's entire lens. The protection from what the bitterness has done to the self's perception is asked from the one who governs everything the bitter lens is now seeing through.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who holds the original wrong and everything that came after it — who governs the situations the bitterness pre-judges, who sees what is actually in those situations rather than what the bitter lens is finding in them. The protection of the one who said: after hardship, ease. He holds the ease that the bitterness has concluded is not coming.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the bitterness. Greater than the original wound that produced it. Greater than the spread of the bitterness through the self's perception of the

world. The original wrong is creation. The bitterness is creation. The world the bitter lens is seeing is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the conviction the bitterness has produced that the wound is the lesson about everything.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The bitter lens is creation — a human perception shaped by a human wound. And the one who is mightier than all of creation holds the original wound and everything the bitterness has concluded from it within a governance the bitter lens cannot see from inside the original injury. He governs what is actually in the situations the bitterness pre-judges. He holds the ease that comes after hardship.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The bitterness has pre-occupied the self's perception of what is coming — it has concluded from the wound what the future will taste like. This prayer gives the pre-occupation to the one power. Not: promise me the future will be better. Be sufficient within the bitterness — within the wound that spread, within the lens it has shaped, within what the self expects based on what it has experienced. Whatever You will for the bitterness and what it has done to the self's perception — for when and how the lens is cleared, for what is actually in the situations the bitterness pre-judges.

Whatever You will. After hardship, ease. He has already announced the direction. Whatever He will for when the ease of this specific hardship arrives and what form it takes.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the bitterness is the spread wound the self brings to the address — that gives the original wrong and everything it has coloured to the one power, that places the infected lens before the only one who can see through it clearly. Within divine anger, bitterness is the permanent lens — the self seeing every new situation through the wound's teaching, pre-judging based on what was done, unable to receive what is actually there because the bitter lens has already decided. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the bitter self: the condition of giving the infected lens to the one who governs what it is seeing through.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. After hardship, ease. He holds the ease that the bitterness concluded was not coming. He is as He has praised Himself.

The wound taught a lesson.

The lesson was applied too broadly.

*The bitterness became the lens
through which everything was seen.*

*He governs what is actually in the situations
the bitter lens pre-judges.*

After hardship, ease.

He has already announced the direction.

*He holds the ease
the bitterness concluded was not coming.*

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Betrayal

Trust was given. It was used against the one who gave it. The specific wound of violated trust.

The Condition Named

Betrayal is the wound that requires trust to inflict. You can be harmed by a stranger. You can only be betrayed by someone you trusted. This is what makes betrayal a category of suffering entirely distinct from anger, resentment, or humiliation: it requires an antecedent act of openness. The betrayed self gave something — trust, confidence, access, love, loyalty — to a person who then used what was given against the one who gave it, or simply abandoned the responsibility that came with receiving it. The wound is in the violation of the specific gift of trust.

Betrayal carries a double injury: the specific damage done, and the distortion it causes in the self's relationship to trust itself. The second injury is often worse than the first. The person who betrayed is gone, or changed, or the damage from the specific betrayal has been addressed. But the self's capacity to trust — to give that specific openness that makes betrayal possible — has been compromised. The betrayed self must now navigate the tension between the self-protection that says: do not open again, and the recognition that a self that never opens again is not whole.

The tradition holds a particular understanding of trust that the betrayal's wound operates against. The one power is Al-Wakil — the Trustee, the one in whom trust is absolutely warranted. Every trust given to a human being is a trust given within the one power's governance — the person trusted was a created being with a limited capacity to carry what was given. Not as an excuse for the betrayal, but as a reframing of where the unbreakable trust lives. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the only trust that cannot be betrayed. The Lord of the seven heavens is Al-Wakil — the Trustee, the one whose holding of what is given to Him is absolute. He does not use what is given against the one who gave it. He does not abandon the responsibility that comes with receiving. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The betrayal was within divine governance — the one power permitted a trusted person to violate the trust given. The protection from the wound of that violation is asked from the one in whom trust is absolutely safe.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of Al-Wakil — the absolute Trustee. The self's capacity to trust was not destroyed by the betrayal. It was misdirected — placed in a created being with a limited capacity to carry it. The protection of the one who holds trust without limit is the protection that says: the trust itself is not the problem. Where it is ultimately placed is.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the betrayal. Greater than the person who betrayed. Greater than the wound the betrayal inflicted on the self's capacity to trust. The betrayal

is creation — an act by a created being against another created being, within a world the one power governs. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that the self can never safely open again, mightier than the conclusion that the wound has permanently compromised the self's capacity for trust.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The betrayer is creation. The betrayal is creation. The wound is creation. And the one who is mightier than all of His creation held the trust the person violated — saw it given, saw it received, saw what was done with it — and holds both the account of the betrayal and the self's capacity to trust within a governance that the wound cannot permanently foreclose.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The betrayal has created a gap in the self — the place where the trust was and where the violation of it now lives. This prayer gives the gap to the one power. Not: restore the capacity to trust immediately. Be sufficient within the wound — within the specific violation, within what the betrayal did to the self's relationship to openness, within the tension between self-protection and wholeness that the betrayal has created. Whatever You will for the capacity to trust — for when and whether and how the self opens again, and what the opening looks like after the wound.

Whatever You will. Al-Wakil: the absolute Trustee. The trust the betrayer violated was always, ultimately, held most safely with the one who cannot betray. Whatever He will for the self that must now learn to hold both the wound and the capacity that the wound compromised.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the betrayal is the wound the self brings to the address — that gives the violated trust to Al-Wakil, that finds in the one power the trust that cannot be betrayed, that allows the wound to be held by the only one who holds it with complete safety. Within divine anger, betrayal becomes the permanent foreclosure — the self that closes after the wound and does not open again, that protects itself from future betrayal by eliminating the trust that makes betrayal possible, that becomes whole in its closure but no longer whole as a person. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the betrayed self: the condition of giving the wound to the one in whom trust is absolute.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Wakil: the Trustee. What is given to Him is held without violation. He is as He has praised Himself.

Trust was given. It was violated.

The wound is real.

And the trust itself was not wrong.

*It was placed in a created being
with a limited capacity to carry it.*

Al-Wakil. The absolute Trustee.

What is given to Him is held without violation.

*The self's capacity to trust
was not destroyed by the betrayal.*

It was misdirected.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Grudge

The deliberate holding. The refusal to release what was done. The self that keeps the account open.

The Condition Named

A grudge is resentment made intentional. Where resentment often forms without the self's conscious choice — the anger that stayed because it had nowhere to go — a grudge is held. The self that holds a grudge has made a decision: I will not release this. The account remains open. I will remember what was done when the person who did it encounters me again. The holding is itself the point. The grudge is the assertion that what was done deserves to be remembered and that the person who did it deserves to experience that it is remembered.

The grudge has an internal logic that feels like justice. The wrong was real. The person who did it has perhaps moved on, perhaps forgotten, perhaps shows no awareness of what the damage cost. The grudge is the self's way of ensuring the wrong is not simply absorbed and forgotten — of making the account visible, of holding the person in the memory of what they did. There is something in the grudge that does not want to let the other person off cheaply.

The tradition addresses the grudge with the most searching question available: the one who holds the grudge is also in debt. Every self that holds another in an open account is itself in an open account with the one power — for the small and large failures, the things done and left undone, the gap between what the self has been and what the one power deserves. The question is not whether the wrong deserved to be remembered. The question is whether the self wants the same accounting applied to itself. The Prophet forbade holding grudges and said: do not cut off from one another, do not hate one

another, do not envy one another — be servants of Allah, brothers and sisters. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who holds the complete account — between the self and the person it holds the grudge against, and between the self and the one power, and between the one power and everyone in the account. The Lord of the seven heavens sees the wrong done, sees the self holding it in an open account, and sees the self's own open account with Him. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The grudge has been a kind of transgression — the self appointing itself the keeper of an account that belongs to the one power's governance. The protection from what the grudge-holding does to the self is asked from the one who actually holds the account.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who holds the full account — not just the account between the self and the person who wronged it, but all accounts, including the self's own. His keeping of the account does not require the self to hold the grudge to ensure the wrong is remembered. He already knows. More completely. Without the carrying cost to the self that holds it.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven

heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the grudge. Greater than what produced it. Greater than the self's determination to keep the account open. The wrong is creation. The grudge is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that releasing the grudge means letting the person who wronged get away with it.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The person who wronged is creation. The wrong itself is creation. And the one who is mightier than all of His creation holds the account of the wrong without requiring the self to hold the grudge. He does not forget. He does not let accounts slip through the governance. The self's holding of the grudge does not add to His knowledge of what was done. He already holds it, more completely than the grudge can.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The grudge has been the self's management of the account — ensuring the wrong is not absorbed and forgotten. This prayer transfers the account management to the one power. Not: the wrong is forgotten. You be sufficient within the account — within what was done, within what it cost, within what justice for it requires. Whatever You will for how the account between the self and the person who wronged is settled — not by the self's holding of the open account, but by the governance of the one who holds all accounts.

Whatever You will. He holds the account. He does not forget. He does not let the wrong simply absorb into the world without consequence. Whatever He will for the account — which does not depend on the self maintaining the grudge to ensure it is remembered.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the grudge is the account the self transfers to the address — that gives the open account to the one who holds all accounts, that releases the self from the position of account-keeper. Within divine anger, the grudge is the permanent appointment — the self as keeper of the account indefinitely, carrying the open record, refusing closure, while its own open account with the one power remains unaddressed. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the grudge-holding self: the condition of releasing the account to the one who holds it more completely.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He holds the account. He does not forget. The self's own account is also His. He is as He has praised Himself.

The self held the account open.

He already holds it.

More completely.

Without the carrying cost.

The self's account is also His.

*Do you not love that Allah should forgive you?
The account management belongs to the governor.
Whatever He will for what was done.
He does not forget.
He does not let it absorb without consequence.
He is as He has praised Himself.*

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Spite

The desire not just for justice but for the other's suffering. The wound that wants to wound back.

The Condition Named

Spite is the wound that has turned toward retaliation — not the retaliation of justice that wants the wrong corrected, but the retaliation of satisfaction that wants the one who wronged to hurt. The spiteful self does not primarily want the wrong addressed. It wants the person who caused the wrong to experience something equivalent to what they caused. The suffering they caused to be returned to them in kind. The spite is not about equity or principle. It is about witnessing the other's pain as a form of relief from one's own.

This is what makes spite distinct from anger or even fury: it is not primarily about the wrong. It is about the other person's subjective experience of suffering. The spiteful self imagines the person who wronged it struggling, hurt, humiliated, experiencing the consequences of what they did — and this imagination provides a satisfaction that the mere correction of the wrong does not. Spite wants the person to feel it. Not just to be accountable for it, not just to correct it, but to feel it in their own interior.

The tradition names this clearly as a spiritual danger. The Prophet said: beware of spite, for spite consumes good deeds as fire consumes wood. The image is precise: spite does not primarily damage the person spited. It consumes the good deeds of the one who holds it. The spiteful self is burning its own reserves to fuel the desire for another's suffering. The tradition's answer is not indifference to the wrong but the transfer of the account — the wrong and its consequences — to the one power, who holds what actual justice looks like in a way that does not require the self to consume itself in wanting the specific suffering. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who holds the account of the wrong and holds the person who wronged within His governance — who sees what they have done, what it cost, and what actually happens to them as a consequence. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The spite has been turning inward as much as outward — consuming what was there before in the self's own interior while aiming at the person who wronged. The protection from what the spite is consuming in the self is asked from the one who governs the account.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who governs what actually happens to the person who wronged — without requiring the self to consume its own good deeds wanting it. He governs the consequences. He governs the person's account. The self's spiteful desire is not necessary to ensure consequences occur. His governance is sufficient for that.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the spite. Greater than the satisfaction the spite is seeking. Greater than the person the spite is directed at and whatever the spite wishes on

them. The spite is creation. The wish for the other's suffering is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that if the self releases the spite the person who wronged will experience no consequences, mightier than the conclusion that only the self's sustained desire for their suffering ensures they will feel it.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The person who wronged is creation. Their account with the one power is creation. And the one who is mightier than all of creation governs their account without requiring the self's spite to fuel the consequences. The consequences — whatever they are, in whatever form and timing the one power governs — do not depend on the self maintaining the desire for them.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The spite has been seeking a specific satisfaction — the witnessing of the other's suffering as relief from one's own. This prayer gives the relief-seeking to the one power. Not: the wrong doesn't matter and has no consequences. You be sufficient within the wound — within what was done, within the self's desire for the pain to be returned, within the relief the self is seeking. Whatever You will for the relief from the wound — not through the other's suffering, which the self cannot control and which consumes what should not be consumed, but through Your governance of the wound and what comes after it.

Whatever You will. The relief from the wound is His to give. The consequences for the person who wronged are His to govern. Whatever He will for both.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the spite is the wound the self brings to the address — that gives the desire for the other's suffering to the one power, that releases the self from the position of wanting something it cannot deliver and that consumes what it cannot afford to lose. Within divine anger, spite is the permanent consumption — the self burning its reserves on the desire for another's pain, consuming its own good deeds as fire consumes wood, for a satisfaction that does not arrive because the other's suffering is not actually in the self's governance. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the spiteful self: the condition of releasing the desire to the one whose governance actually holds the account.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Beware of spite, for it consumes good deeds as fire consumes wood. He holds the account. The consequences are His to govern. He is as He has praised Himself.

The spite wanted the other to feel it.

While it was consuming what should not be consumed.

*Beware of spite, for it consumes good deeds
as fire consumes wood.*

The consequences are not in the self's governance.

They are in His.

He holds the account.

He governs what actually happens.

*The self's sustained desire for their suffering
is not necessary for the account to be kept.*

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The Suffering of Being Misunderstood

Known to oneself one way. Known by others as something else. The chronic gap between who the self is and how it is perceived.

The Condition Named

The suffering of being fundamentally misunderstood is not the acute pain of a specific moment of misperception. It is the chronic, persistent condition of the self that knows itself one way and is consistently perceived by others as something different — sometimes almost opposite. The intentions are read as other than they are. The care is invisible and the awkwardness is what is seen. The complexity is reduced to a type. The depth is missed and the surface is taken for the whole. And the self stands inside its own knowledge of itself, unable to make the gap close, unable to transfer what is interior to the exterior where others perceive.

This suffering has a particular loneliness to it. It is not the loneliness of having no one around — the misunderstood self may be surrounded. It is the loneliness of the gap: being present in a room full of people who are relating to a version of you that is not you. The real self is there and is not being met. The perceived self is being met and is not real. The gap between them is where the suffering lives.

The tradition's answer is in the one who knows the self most completely. Al-Khabir: the Fully Aware, who knows the interior as directly as the exterior — who has no gap between what the self is and what He knows the self to be. Every human perceiver operates on the exterior — they see actions, hear words, observe patterns. The one power sees what is interior: the intention behind the action, the love behind the awkwardness, the depth beneath the surface. He knows what the self knows about itself, and He knows it more completely than the self does. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who perceives the self from the inside — who has no gap to close because He already inhabits the interior the self is unable to communicate. The Lord of the seven heavens does not see the self the way others see it. He sees what the self knows about itself, and He sees more than that — what the self does not yet know about itself, what it has been and is and is becoming, all at once. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The suffering of misunderstanding can overwhelm — the chronic gap, the loneliness of being present and not met. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who meets the self exactly where it is.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who has no gap. Who perceives the interior directly. Who knows the intention behind what was seen and the love behind what was awkward and the depth beneath what was reduced to a type. The most important perceiver has no misunderstanding. He knows.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the misunderstanding. Greater than the gap between the self's interior and others' perception of it. Greater than the loneliness of being present

and not met. The gap is creation — the limitation of human perception, the irreducible distance between one interior and another. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that the gap will never close, that the self will never be known as it actually is.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The limitation of human perception is creation. The gap is creation. And the one who is mightier than all of creation has no gap. He is Al-Khabir — the Fully Aware. He knows the self from the inside. Not through inference, not through exterior signals, not through what can be communicated. Directly. The most complete knowing that exists knows the self without misunderstanding.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The misunderstanding has created a longing — the self wanting to be known as it actually is, wanting the gap between its interior and others' perception to close. This prayer gives the longing to the one power. Not: make others understand me. Be sufficient within being known by You — within the complete interior knowing that You have of what I am, within the perception that has no gap. Whatever You will for the gap between the self and others' perception — for whether it closes or remains, for what the self does with the loneliness of the misunderstanding.

Whatever You will. Al-Khabir. He knows. The most important knowing is not the knowing of those who misunderstand. Whatever He will for the self that is known completely by the only one whose knowing is complete.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the misunderstanding is the gap the self brings to the address — that gives the loneliness of not being known to the one who knows it most completely, that finds in His interior knowing the primary witness to what the self actually is. Within divine anger, misunderstanding becomes the defining condition — the self whose entire sense of itself is governed by how it is perceived by those who cannot see it clearly, who has no recourse to the knowing that has no gap. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the misunderstood self: the condition of finding the primary witness in the one whose knowledge of the self is complete.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Khabir. He knows the interior directly. The gap that exists between the self and every human perceiver does not exist between the self and Him. He is as He has praised Himself.

Others saw the exterior.

He sees the interior.

*The gap that exists between the self
and every human perceiver*

does not exist between the self and Him.

Al-Khabir. The Fully Aware.

He knows the intention behind the action.

The love behind the awkwardness.

The depth beneath the surface.

The most important perceiver has no misunderstanding.

He is as He has praised Himself.

SECTION IV

The Self That Measures Itself Against Another

Envy. Jealousy. Contempt. Scorn. The self that looks sideways instead of upward. The self that uses another as the measure of itself.

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ

Do not covet what Allah has given to some of you over others.

What was given to another was given by the one power. The self that covets it has taken issue with the distribution.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Envy

The self that wants what another has and is pained by their having it.

The Condition Named

Envy is the pain of another's good. The envious self does not simply wish it had what another has — it is genuinely pained by the other's possession of it. The other's success, beauty, talent, relationship, position, wealth is not neutral information to the envious self. It is an injury. Something good happened to another person and the self feels it as a wound. This is what distinguishes envy from mere desire: envy is not the wanting of a thing, it is the suffering produced by another's having of it.

The tradition marks hasad — envy — as one of the most spiritually dangerous conditions, because of where it places the self in relation to divine governance. The one power distributed what He distributed. He gave to this person this thing. The envious self's pain at the distribution is, at its root, a pain at the distributor's decision. The Prophet said: beware of envy, for envy consumes good deeds as fire consumes dry wood. And he identified two permissible forms of aspiration that resemble envy but are not: to wish one had what another has in knowledge, or what another has in wealth that they spend in the way of the one power — but not to wish the other did not have it.

The precise distinction is in the second half: hasad wants the other not to have it. It is not satisfied by the self acquiring the thing. It would be satisfied by the other losing it. This is the knife's edge. The envious self's relief is not self-improvement. It is the other's loss. And this places the envious self in direct opposition to the one power's distribution — wanting undone what He chose to give. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجِي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the distributor. The Lord of the seven heavens gave what He gave to the person the envy is directed at. He chose the distribution. The self's pain at the distribution is pain directed ultimately at the one who distributed. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The envy has been a form of transgression against the one power's distribution — a pain at what He chose, a wish that what He gave were otherwise. The protection from the envy's consuming quality is asked from the one whose distribution produced it.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the distributor over the one who is pained by the distribution. Not: give me what was given to another. Be my protector within the pain of receiving less, within the wound of seeing another receive more. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one who chose the distribution and who holds the reason for it within a wisdom the envy cannot see.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the envy. Greater than the thing the envy is directed at. Greater than the distribution the envy finds unjust. The thing given is creation. The distribution is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and

what I dread — mightier than the pain of what was not given to the self, mightier than the wound of what was given to another.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. What was given to another is creation — a specific gift from the one power to a specific person within a specific governance the self cannot fully see. The one who is mightier than all of His creation is mightier than the gift and mightier than the pain the gift produced in the one who did not receive it. Do not covet what Allah has given to some of you over others. He gave it. His giving is the word of the distributor who holds the reason for the distribution.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The envy has been wanting what was given elsewhere — pained by the distribution and wanting it redistributed. This prayer gives the distribution to the one power entirely. Not: give me what was given to another. Be sufficient within what was given to me — within my specific allocation, within what the one power chose for this specific self in this specific life. Whatever You will for my distribution — not by taking from another but by Your governance of what You have chosen for me.

Whatever You will. Al-Razzaq: the Provider, who provides for each from His own inexhaustible abundance. What was given to another was not taken from the self's portion. Whatever He will for the self's portion — which He has already chosen.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the envy is the pain the self brings to the address — that gives the distribution to the distributor, that asks for sufficiency within what was given rather than pain at what was given elsewhere. Within divine anger, envy is the consuming fire — good deeds burned wanting what was given to another, the self in opposition to the one power's distribution, losing what it has in the pain of what it does not. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the self that received less: the condition of sufficiency within the distribution chosen for it.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Razzaq. What was given to another was not taken from the self's portion. He provides from inexhaustible abundance. He is as He has praised Himself.

The other was given something.

The distribution was His.

*The pain at the distribution
was pain at the distributor's choice.*

Al-Razzaq.

*What was given to another
was not taken from the self's portion.
He provides from inexhaustible abundance.*

Whatever He will for the self's portion.

He has already chosen it.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Jealousy

The self that fears losing what it has to another. Not pain at another's gain — fear of one's own loss.

The Condition Named

Jealousy is often confused with envy but operates differently. Envy is pained by another's having. Jealousy is afraid of its own losing. The jealous self has something — a relationship, a position, an affection, a place — and perceives another as a threat to its holding of that thing. The jealousy is not about wanting what the other has. It is about the terror of the other taking what the self has. This makes jealousy a fear-based emotion as much as a comparison-based one: the self measuring itself against another in order to assess the threat the other represents to what the self possesses.

The particular torment of jealousy is its relationship to attention. The jealous self is constantly vigilant — watching for signals that the threat is real, interpreting ambiguous information in the direction of danger, finding confirmation of the feared loss in things that might mean nothing. The jealousy becomes its own self-fulfilling dynamic: the vigilance exhausts those around the jealous self, the interpretation of everything as threat creates the very distance it fears, the clinging that jealousy produces drives away what the clinging was trying to hold.

The tradition's answer is in the understanding of who actually holds what the self possesses. Every relationship the self is afraid of losing is within the one power's governance. The affection, the position, the belonging — these were given by the one power and are held within His governance. The threat the jealousy is watching is a created being, operating within a world the one power governs. If what the self has is to be kept, it is kept by His governance. If it is to be given away, it is given within His governance. The jealousy is watching the wrong guardian. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجِي جَارُكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the actual guardian of what the self is afraid to lose. The Lord of the seven heavens holds the relationship, the position, the affection — holds it within a governance the jealous self cannot access through vigilance. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The jealousy has been overwhelming — the constant vigilance, the interpretation of everything as threat, the exhausting surveillance of the perceived competitor. The protection from the overwhelm of the jealousy is asked from the one who actually holds what the self is trying to protect.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the actual guardian — not the jealous self's surveillance, but the one power's governance. What is meant to be held is held in His governance. What is not meant to be held will not be preserved by the jealous self's vigilance. The protection of the Lord of the seven heavens over what He has given is the only protection that actually governs the outcome.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهَمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the jealousy. Greater than the threat the jealousy has identified. Greater than the fear of losing what the self has. The threat is creation —

another person, operating within a created world. What the self possesses is creation — a relationship, a position, a belonging, given and held within creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear of losing what the self has to another, mightier than the surveillance the jealousy requires.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The perceived threat is creation. What the self has that it fears losing is creation. And the one who is mightier than all of creation governs both — the thing possessed and the thing perceived as threat — within the same governance. The jealous self has been watching the wrong variable. What actually determines whether what the self has is kept or lost is not the relative position of the self and the perceived threat. It is the one power's governance of both.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The jealousy has been trying to hold what the self possesses through vigilance and surveillance — guarding it against the perceived threat. This prayer gives what the self has to the one power's keeping. Not: keep it for me by any means. You be the guardian of what I have been trying to guard. Whatever You will for what I possess — for whether it is kept or given or changed, for what Your governance of it looks like, for what the self is meant to hold and for how long.

Whatever You will. Al-Hafiz: the Guardian, the Preserver. The self has been trying to preserve what He governs. Whatever He will for what He governs.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the jealousy is the fear the self brings to the address — that gives what it has been trying to guard to the actual guardian, that releases the surveillance into His governance. Within divine anger, jealousy is the permanent vigil — the self exhausting itself and those around it in constant surveillance of a threat that is in His governance, not the self's. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the jealous self: the condition of giving what it possesses to Al-Hafiz and releasing the watch.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Hafiz: the Guardian. What is meant to be held is held in His governance. The self was watching the wrong guardian. He is as He has praised Himself.

The self watched the threat.

The threat was creation.

What the self possessed was also creation.

He governs both.

Al-Hafiz. The Guardian.

What is meant to be held is held in His governance.

What the self's vigilance could not preserve

and what His governance holds

are not determined by the same watch.

The self was watching the wrong guardian.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Contempt

The self that has looked at another and found them beneath regard. The verdict of the measuring self against another.

The Condition Named

Contempt is the downward verdict — not the self measuring itself against another and finding itself deficient (that is inferiority, in Section I) but the self measuring itself against another and finding the other deficient. Where envy looks sideways and up at what another has, contempt looks sideways and down at what another is. The contemptuous self has assessed another person and concluded they are beneath the standard the self applies — less intelligent, less moral, less capable, less refined, less worthy of regard. The contempt is the settled holding of this verdict.

What makes contempt spiritually dangerous is the same thing that makes all the emotions in this section spiritually dangerous: the comparison being made uses a standard the self has appointed itself to apply. The contemptuous self has made itself the measure. It has looked at another human being — whom the one power made, breathed into, addressed, and holds in His governance — and declared them beneath the standard. The declaration is made by a created being about another created being, using a criterion of its own invention, without access to what the one power knows about the person being dismissed.

The Prophet said: it is sufficient evil for a person to hold their Muslim brother in contempt. The tradition treats contempt as a complete sin on its own — not a sin that requires some accompanying action, but the verdict itself. The reason is what the verdict requires the self to do: it requires dismissal of another's humanity, which is dismissal of something the one power placed in them. The contempt does not touch the one it is directed at in the way the contemptuous self imagines. It occupies the self that holds it. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who made both the self holding the contempt and the person the contempt is directed at. The Lord of the seven heavens breathed into both. He addressed both as His servants. The contemptuous self's verdict — that one of His servants is beneath regard — is a verdict about His creation, made by His creation, using a criterion He did not authorize. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The contempt has been a transgression — the self positioning itself as the measure of the one power's creation. The protection from what the contempt does to the self that holds it is asked from the one who made what the contempt dismissed.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the Creator against the creature's contempt for His creation. Not: prove to me that the person I hold in contempt is worthy of regard. You made them. You breathed into them. You addressed them as Your servant. The act of making is the testimony. The contempt does not have the information the Maker has.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the contempt. Greater than the verdict the contempt produced. Greater than the standard the contemptuous self appointed itself to apply. The

person being held in contempt is creation. The contempt is creation. The standard being applied is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the self's investment in the verdict, mightier than the identity the contemptuous self has built partly on the basis of finding others beneath its standard.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The person dismissed in contempt is creation — a specific human being whom the one power made and knows and holds. The contempt is also creation — a human verdict made with incomplete information. And the one who is mightier than all of creation made both the one who holds the contempt and the one it is directed at, and has not ranked either beneath regard. It is sufficient evil for a person to hold their brother in contempt. That is the one power's verdict on the contemptuous self's verdict.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The contempt has positioned the self as the measure — the one whose standard the other fails to meet. This prayer removes the self from the position of measure. Not: force me to find the person worthy. Be sufficient within my not-knowing — within the limits of my perception of another human being who You know completely and I know partially. Whatever You will for the person I have dismissed in contempt — for what they actually are beneath the surface the contempt assessed, for what You know about them that the contempt does not.

Whatever You will. He made them. He knows them from the inside. Whatever He will for the person the contemptuous self assessed with incomplete information.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the contempt is the verdict the self brings to the address — that gives the measuring-self's verdict on another to the one who made both, that releases the self from the position of measure. Within divine anger, contempt is the permanent posture — the self enthroned as the measure of others, building its identity partly on the basis of whom it finds beneath regard, holding the verdict without ever submitting it to the one whose knowledge of the person dismissed is complete. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the contemptuous self: the condition of releasing the verdict to the one who made what the contempt assessed.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He made both. He breathed into both. He holds both in His governance. It is sufficient evil to hold another in contempt. He is as He has praised Himself.

The contempt looked at another and declared: beneath regard.

He looked at that person and made them.

He breathed into them.

He addressed them as His servant.

The contempt's verdict was made

with incomplete information

by a created being

about another created being

whom the Creator knows from the inside.

It is sufficient evil to hold another in contempt.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Scorn

Contempt expressed. The dismissal performed before others. The verdict made public.

The Condition Named

Scorn is contempt with an audience. Where contempt is an interior verdict, scorn is the same verdict made exterior — performed, expressed, communicated to others, often with the specific aim of ensuring the person being scorned experiences the dismissal. The scorner does not simply hold the verdict privately. They perform it: the raised eyebrow, the cutting remark, the dismissive tone, the public diminishment. Scorn says: not only do I hold you beneath regard, I want you to know it, and I want others to see that I know it.

This makes scorn carry an additional layer of damage beyond contempt. Contempt is a wound to the self that holds it. Scorn is that plus the deliberate infliction of the verdict on another. The person scorned experiences the public dismissal — the being made small in the presence of others, the knowledge that the scorner's verdict has been broadcast. And the scorner has committed something the tradition identifies with particular severity: the Quran warns against mocking others — let not a people mock another people, perhaps they are better than them.

Perhaps they are better. This is the precise cut of the verse. The scorn's verdict — issued with public confidence — is immediately qualified by the one power: perhaps the opposite is true. The scorner does not have the information to issue the verdict. They have assessed an exterior. The one power holds the interior. And He has said of His assessment: perhaps they are better. The scorn was performed. Its premise was the scorner's superior position. The one power has not confirmed the premise. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجِي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who holds both the scorner and the scorned — who sees the performance of the dismissal and who knows what He knows about the person dismissed that the scorner does not. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The scorn has been a transgression — the self performing a verdict it does not have the information to issue, inflicting the dismissal on another before an audience. The protection from what the scorn does to the self that performs it is asked from the one who holds complete information about both.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who said: perhaps they are better. The scorner's confidence in the verdict is not confirmed. The one power has qualified it: perhaps. The self that performed the scorn did not have access to the one power's perhaps. His protection is the protection of the one who holds the information the scorn lacked when it issued the verdict.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the scorn. Greater than the performance of the dismissal. Greater than the audience before whom it was performed. The scorn is creation. The performance is creation. The person scorned is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the

identity the scorner has built on the basis of the dismissals it has performed, mightier than the social position the scorn was partly designed to establish.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The person scorned is creation — a human being whom the one power holds and whom He qualified as perhaps better. The scorner is creation. The performance was creation. And the one who is mightier than all of creation holds the person the scorn dismissed within a knowledge the scorn did not have — and has said of that person: perhaps they are better than you.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The scorn performed a verdict and an identity simultaneously — the self as the one who recognises what is beneath regard, and performs the recognition publicly. This prayer gives the identity and the verdict to the one power. Not: force me to praise those I have scorned. Be sufficient within my not-knowing — within the gap between what I assessed and what You know, between the exterior I performed the verdict on and the interior You hold. Whatever You will for the person I dismissed publicly — for what they are in Your knowledge that the scorn did not see.

Whatever You will. Perhaps they are better. He holds what the scorn did not know when it performed its verdict. Whatever He will for the self and the person and the gap between the scorn's assessment and His.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the scorn is the performance the self brings to the address — that gives the issued verdict and the identity behind it to the one power, that places the self's public dismissal of another before the one who said perhaps they are better. Within divine anger, scorn is the permanent posture — the self building its public identity on the performed dismissal of others, issuing verdicts it does not have the information to issue, performing confidence it has not earned. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the scorning self: the condition of releasing the verdict to the one who holds the full information.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Let not a people mock another people — perhaps they are better than them. He holds what the scorn did not know. He is as He has praised Himself.

The scorn performed the verdict before others.

He qualified it immediately:

perhaps they are better than you.

The scorner did not have access to perhaps.

He holds the interior.

The scorn assessed the exterior.

Let not a people mock another people —

perhaps they are better than them.

He holds what the scorn did not know.

The verdict was issued with incomplete information.

He is as He has praised Himself.

SECTION V

The Self That Believes Itself Unseen and Unloved

*Loneliness. Existential loneliness. Alienation. Feeling unloved. Feeling unworthy of love.
Abandonment. The self that is present in the world and not met by it.*

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

And We are closer to him than his jugular vein.

The self that believes itself unseen is being watched from closer than its own pulse. The self that believes itself unloved is already within the mercy of the Most Merciful.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Loneliness

The absence of felt connection to others. Present in the world but not accompanied by it.

The Condition Named

Loneliness is the ache of unmet connection — the self that wants to be accompanied and is not, that reaches for presence and finds absence, that is in the world but not held by it in the way it needs to be held. It is one of the most universal human experiences and also one of the most isolating, because the very condition of loneliness makes it harder to seek the remedy. The lonely self often cannot tell others it is lonely — the loneliness itself becomes a barrier to the connection that would address it.

Loneliness has two distinct registers. There is situational loneliness — the loneliness of a specific circumstance: the new city, the loss of a companion, the period in life when connections are thin. This loneliness has a recognizable cause and a potential remedy: different circumstances, new connections, time. Then there is the deeper loneliness that exists even in the presence of others — the person surrounded by people who still feels alone, who has connection in form but not in substance, whose companionship does not reach the place that needs to be reached.

The tradition answers both but especially the second. The Prophet was reported to have said: be with Allah, and if you cannot, be with those who help you reach Allah. The structure of this guidance is significant: the primary companion is the one power. Not: if you cannot have human connection, the one power is a substitute. If you cannot be with the one power, human companions who lead toward Him are the alternative. The primary address for the ache of unmet connection is the one who is closer to the self than its own jugular vein. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who is already present — who does not need to be sought across distance because He is closer than the pulse. The Lord of the seven heavens is the companion who is never absent, never distracted, never unable to receive what is brought. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The loneliness can overwhelm — the ache of unmet connection, the absence where presence should be. The protection from the overwhelm of the loneliness is asked from the one whose presence is absolute and whose companionship is already given before the prayer is made.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who is closer than the jugular vein. The loneliness has been measuring connection by what is felt from other created beings — and finding insufficiency. But the one who is closest to the self has never been absent. The presence that the loneliness does not feel is not absent. It is the primary presence. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one whose companionship is not contingent on the self's circumstances.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَلَ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the loneliness. Greater than the absence the loneliness has measured and found unbearable. Greater than every connection the self has or has not had. The loneliness is creation — a human experience of felt separation within a created life. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that the loneliness is permanent, mightier than the conclusion that the self is fundamentally alone.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The absence the loneliness has named is creation — the gap between the self and the human connections it reaches for. And the one who is mightier than all of creation has already placed Himself closer to the self than its own pulse. The loneliness is measuring the distance to other created beings. It has not measured the distance to the one who said: We are closer to him than his jugular vein.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The loneliness has been aching for a presence it cannot find in its current circumstances. This prayer turns toward the presence that is already there. Not: send me companions. Be sufficient as my companion — within the specific ache of unmet connection, within the circumstances that have produced the loneliness, within the absence of the human presence the self is reaching for. Whatever You will for the loneliness — for whether circumstances change or remain, for what the self finds in the companionship of the one who is closer than the pulse.

Whatever You will. He is already closer than the self's own heartbeat. Whatever He will for the self that turns toward the presence it has not felt but that has never been absent.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the loneliness is the ache the self brings to the address — that turns toward the presence that is already there, that finds in the one who is closer than the jugular vein the companionship the self has been reaching for in created beings. Within divine anger, loneliness is the permanent condition — the self reaching only outward for connection, never turning toward the one who is already inward and present, perpetually measuring absence by what other created beings provide. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the lonely self: the condition of turning toward the companion who has never left.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Closer than the jugular vein. The companionship was already given. The self was looking outward for what was already inward. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The self reached for presence and found absence.
It measured connection by what created beings provide.
It did not measure the one who said:
We are closer to him than his jugular vein.
The companionship was already given.
The self was looking outward
for what was already inward.
Closer than the pulse.
He has never been absent.
He is as He has praised Himself.*

Existential Loneliness

Not the loneliness of absent company. The loneliness that no presence can address.

The Condition Named

Existential loneliness is the loneliness beneath loneliness. It is not solved by companions. The person who experiences it may be surrounded by people who love them genuinely, who are present and attentive and warm — and still feel a loneliness that the companionship does not reach. It is not a loneliness of circumstances. It is a loneliness of condition: the irreducible separateness of one consciousness from every other, the fact that the self's interior is finally inaccessible to even the most loving other, the recognition that each self is born into itself alone and moves through its life in a privacy that no relationship fully penetrates.

This loneliness is, in one sense, structural. It is built into the nature of individual existence. Every human being exists in a privacy that cannot be entirely shared — the interior that knows itself from the inside and cannot be fully communicated to another who knows it only from the outside. The loving companion holds the exterior. The self holds the interior. The gap is real and is not going away.

The tradition's answer to this specific loneliness is also structural — because the loneliness has identified something real, and the answer must address what is real. The gap between the self and every human other is real. The gap between the self and the one power is not. He is closer than the jugular vein — not as a metaphor for near-but-still-separate, but as a description of a closeness that has no gap. The self's interior, which no human companion can fully enter, is already known from within by the one power. The privacy that existential loneliness names as irreducible is the privacy He already inhabits. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who has no gap — who does not know the self from the outside, who does not require the self to communicate its interior because He already inhabits it. The Lord of the seven heavens is present in the interior that existential loneliness has named as finally inaccessible to any companion. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The existential loneliness can overwhelm — the recognition of the irreducible separateness, the gap that even love cannot close. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one for whom no gap exists.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who inhabits the interior the loneliness named as unreachable. He does not approach the self from outside and find the privacy. He is already within the privacy — closer than the pulse, already in the place the existential loneliness was describing as finally alone. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one who is where the loneliness thought it was alone.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the existential loneliness. Greater than the structural separateness the loneliness has named. Greater than the gap between the self and every

human other. The gap is creation — the irreducible distance between one created consciousness and another. The Creator is greater than all of it, and He is not subject to the gap. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the loneliness that no presence can address, mightier than the irreducible separateness.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The gap between the self and every human other is creation — a feature of individual existence within a created world. And the one who is mightier than all of creation is not separated from the self by the gap. He is closer than the jugular vein. The privacy that the existential loneliness named as finally alone is not finally alone. He is already there.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The existential loneliness has named a real structural fact: the self's interior is inaccessible to any human companion. This prayer gives the inaccessible interior to the one who already inhabits it. Not: send me a companion who can reach the depth. Be sufficient within the depth that no companion reaches — within the interior that is finally private, within the loneliness that the most loving presence could not dissolve. Whatever You will for the self within the structural separateness that is built into existence.

Whatever You will. He is already in the interior the loneliness described as finally alone. Whatever He will for the self that turns toward the presence that was already there.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the existential loneliness is the real structural fact the self brings to the address — that names the irreducible separateness accurately, and then turns toward the one for whom the separateness does not exist, the one who is already within the privacy the loneliness called finally alone. Within divine anger, existential loneliness is the permanent verdict — the self concluding from the structural separateness that it is ultimately alone, without turning toward the one who is closer than the pulse. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the existentially lonely self: the condition of finding in the interior the presence that was already there.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Closer than the jugular vein. He is in the interior the loneliness called finally alone. He is as He has praised Himself.

The loneliness was structural.

The gap between the self and every human other is real.

And the gap between the self and the one power is not.

He is already in the interior

the loneliness described as finally alone.

Closer than the jugular vein.

Not approaching from outside.

Already within the privacy.

The loneliness thought it was alone.

It was not.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Alienation

The self that does not belong. Present in the world but not of it.

The Condition Named

Alienation is the loneliness of not-belonging — not the loneliness of absent company but the specific suffering of being present among others and feeling categorically foreign to them. The alienated self is not simply without friends. It is without a sense of fit — the feeling that it inhabits a different register than those around it, that it cannot quite translate itself into the currency of its environment, that what it is does not correspond to what the world it is in requires or values or can recognise. The alienation is not a failure of effort. The self that feels alienated may have tried, may be warm and capable of connection. The foreignness is experienced as prior to effort.

Alienation has a particular relationship to identity. The self that feels alienated often has a strong sense of what it is — it is precisely the clarity of what it is that makes its foreignness to the environment so apparent. The misfit is not uncertain about itself. It is uncertain about where it belongs. The sense of place that others seem to inhabit without effort — the easy social belonging, the implicit membership in a world — is what the alienated self cannot find. It looks at others moving through their environments with belonging and experiences its own movement as permanent, low-grade exile.

The tradition speaks directly to this experience. The Prophet said: be in this world as a stranger or a traveller passing through. This is not consolation for alienation — it is the reframing of the condition as the correct one for the believer. The feeling of not-quite-belonging to the world is not a defect. It is the accurate perception of a soul that is oriented toward what is beyond the world. The alienation signals something about the self's direction. And the Prophet identified himself with it. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the Lord of what the alienated self is oriented toward — the one whose address is not in the world that feels foreign but in what is beyond the world. The Lord of the seven heavens governs the world the self moves through as a stranger and governs what lies beyond it. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The alienation can overwhelm — the persistent low-grade exile, the inability to find the belonging others seem to inhabit effortlessly. The protection from the overwhelm is asked from the one who said through the Prophet: be a stranger in this world.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who reframed the condition. The alienation that feels like a defect is, in the tradition, the description of the correct orientation — the soul that knows it is passing through, that holds the world lightly because it is a traveller, that feels foreign to the world because it is foreign to it in the way the traveller is foreign to the road. The protection of the one who named the condition and said it is the right one.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَلَ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the alienation. Greater than the environment that the alienated self does not belong to. Greater than the belonging others seem to have that the self cannot find. The belonging of others is creation. The alienation is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that the not-belonging is permanent defect, mightier than the conclusion that the self is simply wrong for the world it finds itself in.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The world the self feels foreign to is creation. The belonging it cannot find within that world is creation. And the one who is mightier than all of creation is the destination the traveller is moving toward. The alienation is not evidence of wrongness. It is evidence of direction. The soul that does not quite settle into the world is a soul that is oriented beyond it.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The alienation has been experienced as loss — the belonging the self cannot find, the place it cannot locate. This prayer gives the homesickness to the one who is the home. Not: make me belong here. Be sufficient as my belonging — within the foreignness to the world, within the traveller's condition, within the exile that the Prophet named as the correct orientation. Whatever You will for the alienated self as it passes through — for what it carries with it that the world cannot recognise, for what it is moving toward.

Whatever You will. Be in this world as a stranger or a traveller passing through. He named the condition. Whatever He will for the traveller within it.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the alienation is the condition the self brings to the address — that gives the foreignness to the one who named foreignness as the correct orientation, that finds in the traveller's condition not a defect but a direction. Within divine anger, alienation is the permanent wound — the self reading the not-belonging as evidence of its own defectiveness, with no access to the reframing that says the traveller is supposed to feel foreign to the road. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the alienated self: the condition of finding in the foreignness the correct orientation, and in the one power the home that the world cannot provide.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Be in this world as a stranger or a traveller passing through. He named the condition. He is the destination. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The self could not find where it belonged.
The Prophet said: be a stranger in this world.
The alienation was not defect.
It was direction.
The soul that does not settle into the world
is a soul oriented beyond it.
He named the condition.
He is the destination.
Whatever He will for the traveller
as it passes through.
He is as He has praised Himself.*

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Feeling Unloved

The self that has concluded it is not loved. Present in others' lives but not held in their hearts.

The Condition Named

Feeling unloved is the specific suffering of the self that has looked at its relationships and concluded: I am not loved here. Not simply that love is insufficient, or that the forms of love on offer do not match what the self needs — but that the love itself is absent. The self has assessed the evidence and reached a verdict: no one holds me in their heart the way I need to be held. The feeling of being unloved is not simply sadness. It is a verdict that has a self as its object and concluded it fails to merit what is being looked for.

The feeling of being unloved often has a long history. It is rarely a sudden conclusion. It arrives through accumulation — the repeated experience of reaching for warmth and finding coolness, of expecting care and finding indifference, of being present in others' lives without feeling held by their regard. Each individual experience might be explainable. The pattern, over time, becomes the verdict. And the verdict, once formed, tends to interpret new information through itself — seeing confirmation of the unloved condition even in situations that might mean something else.

The tradition's counter to the feeling of being unloved does not begin with human love. It begins with divine love. The Quran says: He loves them and they love Him. The one power loves. Not past tense, not conditionally, not as a response to the self's merit. He loves. Al-Wadud: the All-Loving, the Affectionate. And this love is not a compensation for human love that is absent. It is the primary love — the love that preceded any human relationship, that does not depend on the self's performance, that is not subject to the verdict the feeling of being unloved has reached. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who loves — who addressed the self as His servant, who breathed into it, who has held it in His knowledge and governance from before its existence. The Lord of the seven heavens loves what He made. The feeling of being unloved has assessed human relationships and reached a verdict. It has not assessed the love of the one who made the self. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The feeling of being unloved can overwhelm — the verdict, once reached, colours everything. The protection from the overwhelm is asked from the one whose love the verdict has not reached.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of Al-Wadud — the All-Loving. The self that feels unloved has been measuring love by what human beings provide. The primary love — the love of the one who made the self, breathed into it, addressed it as His servant, and said He loves them — has not been included in the measurement. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one whose love the verdict did not count.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَرَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the feeling of being unloved. Greater than the evidence that assembled it. Greater than the verdict it reached. The human relationships the feeling assessed are creation. The feeling itself is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the conclusion that the self is not held in anyone's heart, mightier than the accumulated evidence that assembled the verdict of being unloved.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The love the self has been seeking — and not finding sufficiently in created beings — is present in the one who is mightier than all of creation. He loves them and they love Him. The love is His. Al-Wadud. The feeling of being unloved has been measuring the wrong source. The primary love has not been absent. It has not been measured.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The feeling of being unloved has reached a verdict about what the self receives from others. This prayer gives the verdict and the ache behind it to the one whose love preceded the verdict. Not: make others love me. Be sufficient within the ache — within the specific hunger for being held in someone's heart, within the evidence the feeling has assembled, within the verdict it has reached. Whatever You will for the self that feels unloved — for what it receives from human relationships, and for what it finds in the love that has never been absent.

Whatever You will. Al-Wadud. He loves. The love that preceded the self's existence and does not depend on its performance has not withdrawn while the feeling of being unloved was being assembled. Whatever He will for the self that now turns toward the love that was always there.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the feeling of being unloved is the ache the self brings to the address — that gives the verdict and the hunger behind it to Al-Wadud, that finds in the one power the primary love the self has been seeking in created beings. Within divine anger, the feeling of being unloved is the permanent verdict — the self measuring love only by what created beings provide, never turning toward the love that preceded and transcends and does not depend on what created beings give. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the self that feels unloved: the condition of finding in Al-Wadud the love the verdict did not count.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Wadud. He loves them and they love Him. The love was always there. The self was measuring the wrong source. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The self looked for love in created beings
and found insufficiency.*

It did not look at the one who said:

He loves them and they love Him.

Al-Wadud. The All-Loving.

The love that preceded the self's existence.

That does not depend on its performance.

That does not withdraw.

The love was always there.

The self was measuring the wrong source.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Feeling Unworthy of Love

Beyond feeling unloved — the conviction that love, if offered, could not be deserved.

The Condition Named

Feeling unworthy of love is a step deeper than feeling unloved. The self that feels unloved believes the love is absent. The self that feels unworthy of love has a more complete conviction: even if love were offered, it could not be genuinely deserved. The love that exists is built on an incomplete picture — if the other truly knew, truly saw, they would not love. The self holds a private knowledge of its own unworthiness that the love of others cannot reach because the love of others does not have the full information the self has about itself.

This is a particularly isolating conviction because it undermines the remedy from within. Someone loves the self. The self that feels unworthy of love cannot fully receive it — cannot let the love land — because the self knows what the lover does not know. The love is real, but it is based on a partial view. The love of a complete view would not survive. So the self lives inside a relationship where love is present and unreachable simultaneously: present in the other, unreachable to the self that believes it is based on the other's not-knowing.

The tradition's answer is the completeness of divine knowing combined with the completeness of divine love. The one power who loves the self is also Al-Khabir — the fully aware. His love is not based on a partial view. He knows the interior the self believes would disqualify it. He knows the private evidence of unworthiness the self holds. He knows it more completely than the self does. And He loves. The love that survives complete knowledge is the only love whose survival is not provisional. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one whose love is based on complete knowledge. The Lord of the seven heavens knows the interior evidence the self has assembled against itself — the private knowledge of what it is that it believes would disqualify it from love if known. He knows it more completely than the self does. And He is Al-Wadud. He loves with the complete knowledge. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The conviction of unworthiness can overwhelm — the inability to receive love, the sense that all love is conditional on not-knowing. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one whose love is not conditional on not-knowing.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who loves with complete knowledge — who has seen the private evidence the self believes is disqualifying, who knows the interior the self cannot fully communicate to others, and who loves. The love that knows everything and loves anyway is the only love that is not conditional on the self remaining partially hidden. Mighty is Your protection: Al-Khabir who loves.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحَدَّرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the conviction of unworthiness. Greater than the private evidence the self has assembled against itself. Greater than the love it cannot receive. The conviction is creation — a human conclusion within a human interior. The

private evidence is creation — the self's own knowledge of what it is, partial and interpreted. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the conviction that if truly known, the self would not be loved.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The private evidence of unworthiness is creation — a human self's knowledge of its own interior, incomplete even to itself. The one who is mightier than all of creation knows the interior more completely than the self does and loves it. The conviction says: if truly known, not loved. He truly knows. And He loves.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The feeling of unworthiness has told the self that love is not something it can deserve — that the gap between what the self is and what love requires is too great to cross. This prayer gives the gap to the one whose love does not require it to be crossed. Not: make me worthy. You be sufficient within what I am — within the interior evidence the self has assembled, within the private knowledge of what it is, within the gap between what it is and what it believes love requires. Whatever You will for the self that cannot receive love because it believes its own knowing of itself disqualifies it.

Whatever You will. Al-Khabir who loves. His love is not based on the self's partial view of itself. Whatever He will for the self that turns toward the love that already knows everything and loves.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the conviction of unworthiness is the private evidence the self brings to the address — that gives the disqualifying interior to the one who already knows it and loves it, that finds in the complete-knowing-love the love that does not depend on partial view. Within divine anger, the conviction of unworthiness is the permanent condition — the self unable to receive love from any source because its own knowledge of itself has convinced it that all love is based on not-knowing, with no access to the love that knows everything and loves. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the self that believes itself unworthy: the condition of turning toward the one who knows completely and loves anyway.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Khabir. Al-Wadud. He knows everything. He loves. The conviction said: if truly known, not loved. He truly knows. And He loves. He is as He has praised Himself.

The selfheld private evidence of its unworthiness.

It believed: if truly known, not loved.

He truly knows.

More completely than the self knows itself.

And He loves.

Al-Khabir. Al-Wadud.

*The love that knows everything and loves anyway
is the only love whose survival is not provisional.*

He knows the interior.

He loves.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

Abandonment

Someone was there and left. The wound of being left by one who should have stayed.

The Condition Named

Abandonment is the wound of the departure of someone whose presence was needed. Not the ordinary coming and going of relationships. The departure of someone on whom the self depended — whose presence was not optional but necessary, who held something the self cannot hold for itself, who left a specific vacancy that the self does not know how to fill. The abandonment may be literal: the parent who left, the partner who ended it, the friend who withdrew. Or it may be more ambiguous: the person who is present physically but has emotionally withdrawn, who is there but not there, whose vacancy the self feels without being able to name it cleanly.

What makes abandonment different from the other losses in this section is the element of choice. Loneliness may be circumstantial. Alienation may be structural. But abandonment carries the specific wound of the decision: they could have stayed and they did not. This is what gives abandonment its particular sting — not just the loss of the presence, but the knowledge that the presence chose to leave. The self was weighed and found insufficient to keep them. Or it was simply not considered when the decision to leave was made. Either reading wounds.

The tradition's answer to abandonment is in the one who has promised never to abandon. The Prophet, at the hardest moment of his early mission — after revelation paused and he feared it had withdrawn — received the revelation of Surah Ad-Duha: your Lord has not abandoned you nor hated you. The revelation came as the direct counter to the feeling of abandonment. Not: someone left, and the one power is a substitute. But: the one who matters most has not left. His non-abandonment is not contingent on the self's merit or the self's circumstances. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who has not left and has promised not to leave. The Lord of the seven heavens held the self before the person who abandoned it, holds it now in the vacancy the abandonment left, and has said through the Prophet's revelation: your Lord has not abandoned you. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The abandonment can overwhelm — the vacancy, the wound of the chosen departure, the specific ache of the presence that is gone. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who has not left.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who said: I have not abandoned you nor hated you. The self that was left by one who chose to leave is held by the one who has not chosen to leave and has announced that He will not. The vacancy the abandonment left is not within the one power's governance as a permanent vacancy. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one who stays.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the abandonment. Greater than the person who left. Greater than the vacancy the departure produced. The departure is creation — a human

being's decision within a created life. The vacancy is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the wound of the chosen departure, mightier than the specific ache of the presence that is gone and was needed.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The person who abandoned is creation. Their departure is creation. And the one who is mightier than all of creation has not departed — has held the self throughout the abandonment, in the moment of the departure and in every moment of the vacancy. Your Lord has not abandoned you. The most important presence in the self's life has not exercised the departure. Only created beings can abandon. He cannot.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The abandonment has left a vacancy — the specific absence of the one who left, the ache of what they held that is now unmet. This prayer gives the vacancy to the one power. Not: return who left. Be sufficient within the vacancy — within the specific absence, within what was lost when they left, within the ache of the unmet need that their departure produced. Whatever You will for the vacancy — for what fills it, when, and through what mercy the self carries the ache of the departure.

Whatever You will. Your Lord has not abandoned you. The most important holding has not been withdrawn. Whatever He will for the self in the vacancy left by those who chose to leave.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the abandonment is the vacancy the self brings to the address — that gives the wound of the chosen departure to the one who has not departed, that finds in His non-abandonment the counter to what the abandonment claimed. Within divine anger, abandonment is the defining wound — the self whose entire sense of itself is organised around the departure, who has no access to the one who said I have not abandoned you, who measures all presence by the departure that could always happen again. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the abandoned self: the condition of turning toward the one who stays.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Your Lord has not abandoned you nor hated you. Only created beings can abandon. He cannot. He is as He has praised Himself.

*Someone who should have stayed chose to leave.
The one power looked at the abandoned self and said:
Your Lord has not abandoned you
nor hated you.
Only created beings can abandon.
He cannot.
The vacancy was real.
The most important holding was not withdrawn.
Whatever He will for the self
in the vacancy left by those who chose to leave.
He is as He has praised Himself.*

SECTION VI

The Suffering of Wanting

The burning of desire. Yearning. Longing. Anticipatory grief. Nostalgia. Restlessness. Dissatisfaction. The emptiness after getting what you wanted. The self that aches before arrival and after it.

وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ

Perhaps you dislike something that is good for you, and perhaps you love something that is bad for you.

The self's wanting is not the measure of the good. The one power's governance is.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

The Burning of Desire

The specific heat of wanting something intensely before it has arrived.

The Condition Named

Desire burns. This is not metaphor — the self that wants something intensely experiences a quality of heat in the wanting, an urgency that consumes attention and displaces rest. The object of desire occupies the interior, draws the self toward it, makes everything else slightly less present by comparison. The desire is not passive — it is an active state of the self, a leaning, a reaching, an orientation that has taken hold of the interior and will not release until either the desire is met or the desire itself is dissolved.

Desire in this chapter is not desire for the prohibited — that has its own treatment. It is the ordinary burning of wanting something lawful and good: a particular relationship, a specific outcome, a thing the self believes would complete or fulfil or satisfy it. The burning is for something the self genuinely wants and may genuinely need. And the suffering is the gap between the wanting and the having — the heat of the desire in the duration before arrival.

The tradition does not pathologise desire. The Prophet made dua — desire expressed as prayer, as turning the want toward the one power. Desire is the energy that drives du'a. But the tradition is also precise about what desire does to the self that holds it without governance: it occupies the interior to the exclusion of what is already present. It orients the self entirely toward the not-yet, making the now appear as merely the duration before arrival. The answer is not the extinguishing of desire but its placement — bringing the burning to the address of the one who holds both the desire and the thing desired. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who holds the object of desire and the self that desires it within the same governance. The Lord of the seven heavens holds the thing the self wants. He holds the self that wants it. He holds the gap between them. The timing of what the desire is burning toward is within His lordship — not just the what but the when, not just the possibility but the arrival. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The burning of desire can overwhelm — the heat that displaces rest, that makes the present vanish into the duration before arrival. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who holds what is desired.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who holds the object of desire — who sees the self burning toward it, who governs whether and when it arrives, who holds the gap between the burning and the arrival. The desire has been burning toward a thing. The thing is in His governance. The protection of the one who governs what the desire is burning toward is the protection that says: the gap is Mine to govern, not yours to suffer through.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُتَمَسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the desire. Greater than the object of desire. Greater than the burning of the gap between them. The object of desire is creation — a specific thing within a created world. The burning is creation — a human experience of wanting. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that the desire will never be met, mightier than the heat that makes the present vanish into the longing for the not-yet.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The object of desire is creation — held within the one power's governance. The desire itself is creation. And the one who is mightier than all of creation holds both the desire and its object within the same governance. Perhaps you dislike something that is good for you, and perhaps you love something that is bad for you. The desire's burning is not the measure of the good. The governor of creation is.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The desire has been burning toward its object — making the present insufficient by comparison with the desired not-yet. This prayer gives the burning to the one power. Not: give me what I want. Be sufficient within the burning — within the heat of the gap, within the wanting that has occupied the interior, within the present that the desire has made to feel like mere duration. Whatever You will for the desire — for whether it is met or redirected or dissolved, for what the self finds when it turns from the burning toward the one who holds what is burning toward.

Whatever You will. Al-Ghani: who lacks nothing, from whom sufficiency flows. The self burning with desire is burning toward something it believes will complete it. Al-Ghani is the only one in whom completion actually lives. Whatever He will for the desire and what it is actually burning toward.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the burning of desire is the heat the self brings to the address — that gives the wanting to the one who holds the wanted, that finds in His governance the only authority on whether the desire leads toward the good. Within divine anger, desire is the consuming occupation — the interior entirely taken by the burning toward the not-yet, the present dissolved into duration, the self governed by the desire rather than giving the desire to the governor. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the burning self: the condition of giving the desire to the one who holds what it is burning toward.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Ghani. He lacks nothing. From Him sufficiency flows. The object of desire is not what completes the self. He is. He is as He has praised Himself.

The desire burned toward its object.

The object is creation.

*He holds the object and the gap
within the same governance.*

Perhaps you love something that is bad for you.

The burning is not the measure of the good.

Al-Ghani. He lacks nothing.

The object of desire is not what completes the self.

He is.

Whatever He will for the desire

and what it is actually burning toward.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

Yearning

The soft, sustained ache of wanting what is far or unavailable or lost.

The Condition Named

Yearning is desire that has accepted its distance. Where the burning of desire is active and urgent, yearning is quieter and more settled — the ache that knows the thing it wants is not near, that has absorbed the fact of the gap, and continues to want across the distance without the fever of imminent expectation. The yearning self is not straining to close the gap. It is living with it, carrying the want in the background of its days, present to its life while also always slightly present to the absence of the thing it yearns for.

This makes yearning one of the most bittersweet of the wanting-emotions. It has a beauty to it that the burning of desire does not — the sustained ache for something deeply valued has a quality of testimony to the value. The yearning self knows what it loves. But it also has a specific suffering: the thing yearned for organises a part of the self's interior permanently around its absence. The yearning becomes a constant companion, sometimes so familiar that the self does not notice it except in the moments when it surfaces.

The tradition speaks to yearning through the concept of *shawq* — the Arabic word that holds both yearning and a specifically spiritual longing. The Sufis used it to describe the soul's ache toward the one power — the pull that the soul has toward its origin. In this framing, all human yearning is, at its root, a version of this original *shawq*: the soul that knows it came from elsewhere and aches toward where it came from. Every particular yearning is a specific form of the original one. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجِي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one toward whom the deepest yearning ultimately turns — whether the self knows it or not. The Lord of the seven heavens is the origin the soul carries in its shawq. The particular thing the self yearns for — the person, the place, the condition, the experience — is a specific form of the soul's fundamental orientation toward what it came from. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The yearning can overwhelm in its quiet way — not with the fever of active desire but with the constant background ache that colours the present. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one toward whom the deepest yearning is directed.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the destination of the soul's original shawq. The self that yearns for a particular thing is a soul that yearns, ultimately, for the one from whom it came. The particular yearning is held within the original one. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one who is the source of the ache.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the yearning. Greater than the thing yearned for. Greater than the distance that separates the self from what it aches toward. The distance is creation. The thing yearned for is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier

than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the sustained ache, mightier than the presence of the yearning in the background of all the days.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The thing the self yearns for is creation — held within the one power's governance. The distance is creation. And the one who is mightier than all of creation holds the thing yearned for and the self that yearns and the distance between them. He also holds the original shawq — the soul's fundamental orientation — of which every particular yearning is a specific expression.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The yearning has been carrying the ache of distance across the days — present to life while also always present to the absence of what is yearned for. This prayer gives the ache to the one power. Not: give me what I yearn for. Be sufficient within the yearning — within the sustained quiet ache, within the presence of the absence, within the days that are lived with the yearning as their background companion. Whatever You will for the yearning — for what it is actually pointing toward, for whether the particular thing is given or not, for what the self finds when it turns the ache toward its original direction.

Whatever You will. The particular yearning is a specific form of the soul's shawq toward the one who made it. Whatever He will for the soul that yearns — and for what the yearning, followed to its source, finally finds.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the yearning is the sustained ache the self brings to the address — that gives the quiet distance-ache to the one toward whom the deepest yearning ultimately points, that follows the particular longing to its original source. Within divine anger, yearning is the permanent background — the self perpetually oriented toward the particular absence without ever following the ache to its origin, the soul that yearns and never discovers what the yearning is ultimately for. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the yearning self: the condition of following the particular ache toward the one who is its origin and destination.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. All particular yearning is a specific form of the soul's shawq toward You. He is the source of the ache. He is as He has praised Himself.

The self carried the quiet ache across the days.

The particular thing yearned for is creation.

He holds it and the distance

within the same governance.

And all particular yearning

is a specific form of the soul's original shawq —

the ache toward the one from whom it came.

He is the source of the ache.

He is the destination.

Whatever He will for the soul that yearns

and follows the ache to its origin.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

Longing

The ache for something that was and is no longer. Or for something that has not yet been and may never be.

The Condition Named

Longing is oriented differently from yearning. Yearning sustains itself across distance from something that exists. Longing tends to be directed at two specific categories: what was and is gone, and what might have been and was not. The longing self looks backward at a past that held something it needs to have again, or looks toward a future that contains something it needs to have at last. The present is insufficient by comparison — made thin by the presence of what used to be or what ought to be, and the knowing that neither is available now.

Longing for what was — for the lost childhood, the departed person, the version of life that existed before a threshold was crossed — carries the specific weight of irreversibility. The thing longed for cannot be recovered because time has moved and the past is sealed. The longing self knows this and aches across the knowing. The longing for what might have been — the road not taken, the life that could have been, the version of the self that the different choice would have produced — carries the additional weight of the counterfactual: this might have been me, and it is not.

The tradition's answer to longing is eschatological in the most literal sense. The one power does not promise that what was lost in this life will be restored in this life. He promises something more complete: what is lost is not finally lost. The meeting is deferred, not cancelled. The person departed will be met. The completeness longed for will arrive. Longing, in the tradition, is not an error to be corrected but a testimony to the soul's knowledge that what satisfies it completely has not yet arrived — and a promise that it will. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who governs both what was and what will be — who holds the departed thing and the self that longs for it and the meeting that is coming within the same governance. The Lord of the seven heavens is the Lord of time itself — of the past that holds what is longed for and the future that holds the promise. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The longing can overwhelm — the irreversibility of what was, the thin present between the lost past and the promised future. The protection from the overwhelm is asked from the one who governs all three.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who holds the timeline — the past where what is longed for lived, the present where the longing lives, the future where the promise lives. The longing is not evidence that what was lost is finally lost. It is evidence that the self knows what it values. And the one who governs the timeline has not cancelled the value. He has deferred the meeting.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the longing. Greater than what is longed for. Greater than the irreversibility of what was. The past is creation — the time in which what is

longed for lived, sealed and gone. The longing is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it, including the seal on the past. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that what is longed for is finally gone, mightier than the thin present that the longing makes insufficient.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The past is creation — and the one who is mightier than all of His creation is not sealed within it. He holds the past and the future in the same governance. What is longed for is not beyond His reach because time has moved. The meeting that the longing aches toward is in His governance, not in the past's irreversibility.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The longing has been aching across what cannot be recovered — the irreversible past, the road not taken, the threshold already crossed. This prayer gives the ache to the one who governs what is on the other side of irreversibility. Not: restore what was. Be sufficient within the longing — within the ache for what was or what might have been, within the thin present the longing has made. Whatever You will for the longing — for what the self finds when it gives the ache to the one who holds both what was and what is coming.

Whatever You will. What is longed for is not finally lost. The meeting is deferred, not cancelled. Whatever He will for the self that carries the longing and the promise simultaneously.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the longing is the ache the self brings to the address — that gives the irreversible past and the road not taken to the one who governs what is on the other side of irreversibility, that finds in His governance the promise that what is longed for is not finally gone. Within divine anger, longing is the permanent condition — the self living in the ache of what was or what might have been, with no access to the promise that the meeting is deferred not cancelled, that the completeness longed for is coming. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the longing self: the condition of giving the irreversible to the one who is not sealed within it.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. The meeting is deferred, not cancelled. He holds the past and the future in the same governance. He is as He has praised Himself.

The thing longed for lived in the past.

The past is sealed.

He is not sealed within it.

*He holds the past and the future
in the same governance.*

The meeting is deferred, not cancelled.

*Longing is the soul's testimony
that what satisfies it completely
has not yet arrived.*

And a promise that it will.

He is as He has praised Himself.

Anticipatory Grief

Grieving what has not yet been lost. The suffering of what is coming before it arrives.

The Condition Named

Anticipatory grief is the experience of loss before it occurs. The self that has been told its person is dying and begins to grieve before the death. The self that knows a departure is coming and mourns the relationship before it ends. The self that can see the loss approaching and begins to carry the weight of it before it lands. In one sense this is the mind doing something understandable — preparing for what is coming, getting ready for the blow. But it doubles the suffering: the loss is grieved twice, once in anticipation and once in fact.

The specific suffering of anticipatory grief is that it takes the present and makes it the duration before the loss. The time with the dying person, the last months of the relationship, the final period before the departure — all of it is shadowed by the coming loss. The present becomes insufficient not because it lacks anything now but because it is going to lack. The grief arrives before the reason for grief, and occupies the time that could have been simply present to what is still there.

The tradition's answer is the governance of the future. The self in anticipatory grief knows the loss is coming — or believes it does. But the future is in the one power's governance. The diagnosis may be wrong. The relationship may not end. The departure may be delayed. Or it may arrive exactly as feared. The grief before the loss is grief for what is in the one power's hands, not the self's. Whatever He will for the coming event is not yet determined by the self's anticipation of it. The anticipatory grief is real but it is grieving a future it does not govern. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who governs what is coming — who holds the future the anticipatory grief is mourning before it arrives. The Lord of the seven heavens is the Lord of the feared event and of everything between now and its arrival. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The anticipatory grief can overwhelm — the loss grieved in advance, the present shadowed by the coming absence. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who governs whether the feared loss arrives as feared.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who holds what is coming — who governs the future the self is already mourning. The anticipated loss is in His governance. He holds the diagnosis and what it means and what comes after it. He holds the relationship and what the departure looks like and when. The anticipatory grief has been mourning what is in His hands, not what is yet established.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the anticipatory grief. Greater than the feared loss it is mourning in advance. Greater than the coming event whose weight the self is already

carrying. The future is creation — what will happen within a created world, held in the one power's governance. The anticipated loss is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the feared event, mightier than the grief that has arrived before the reason for grief.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The feared future event is creation — something that may or may not occur in the form it is feared, held within the one power's governance. The anticipatory grief has been mourning creation in advance. The one who is mightier than all of creation holds whether the feared thing arrives, and in what form, and what comes after it.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The anticipatory grief has taken the present and made it the duration before the loss — hollowing the time that still contains what is about to be lost. This prayer gives the coming loss to the one power and reclaims the present from the future's shadow. Not: promise me the feared loss won't come. Be sufficient within the present — within what is still here now, before the feared event, in the time that the anticipatory grief has been making into mere duration. Whatever You will for what is coming — for whether it arrives as feared, for what it is in Your governance, for what comes after it.

Whatever You will. The future is Yours to govern. The present is already here. Whatever He will for both.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the anticipatory grief is the feared loss the self brings to the address — that gives the coming event to the one who governs the coming event, that releases the present from the future's shadow, that is present to what is still here. Within divine anger, anticipatory grief is the permanent shadow — the present entirely hollowed by what is coming, the time with what is still here consumed by mourning what will be gone, the self absent from now in the suffering of not-yet. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the self in anticipatory grief: the condition of giving the feared future to the one who governs it and returning to the present that still contains what is here.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He governs the coming event. The present is still here. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The self was grieving what had not yet been lost.
The future is His to govern.
The present was still here
and being consumed by the shadow of what was coming.
He holds the feared event.
He holds what comes after it.
The anticipatory grief was mourning
what is in His hands.
Give the coming loss to the one who governs it.
Return to what is still here.
He is as He has praised Himself.*

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

Nostalgia

The sweet ache for a past that cannot return. The present made thin by the beauty of what was.

The Condition Named

Nostalgia is bittersweet in a specific way: it aches but it also comforts. The nostalgic self is not simply in pain from the past — it is drawn to the past, finds warmth in returning to it in memory, experiences something like pleasure in the ache itself. The summer that will never be repeated, the childhood feeling that cannot be recovered, the version of life that existed before a particular threshold — the memory of these things has a quality that the present often lacks. The nostalgia is the self living partly in that quality, refusing to let it be entirely gone.

The suffering within nostalgia is in its relationship to the present. The nostalgic self is not fully here. Part of it has remained in the time or place or version of life that it misses. The present, by comparison, appears washed out — lacking the particular colour or warmth or weight of the time being remembered. This is not always accurate. Memory edits. The past the nostalgia returns to has been partially reconstructed, given a warmth that the actual experience may not have had with such consistency. But the nostalgic self does not experience it this way. It experiences the past as richer and the present as thinner.

The tradition's answer is the fullness of the present when it is received within divine governance. The present is not a lesser version of the past. It is the specific gift the one power is giving now. What was given then was also given — and has been received. What is given now is being given. The nostalgia's thinning of the present is the self refusing the current gift in favour of the memory of the last one. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who gave the past that is remembered and gives the present that is being lived. The Lord of the seven heavens gave the summer that will not return and gives the season that is here. His giving is not exhausted by what was given. The present is not the lesser gift — it is the current gift, given by the same hand that gave what is remembered. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The nostalgia has a subtle overwhelm — the present thinned by comparison with the remembered past, the self partly absent from where it is. The protection from this is asked from the one whose giving fills the present as it filled the past.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one whose hand has not stopped giving. What was given then is held in the memory. What is given now is here. The nostalgic self has been living partly in the memory of the last gift and partly absent from the current one. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the giver whose giving continues.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the nostalgia. Greater than the past it returns to. Greater than the warmth the memory holds that the present seems to lack. The remembered past is creation — a time and place and version of life within a created world. The nostalgia is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear

and what I dread — mightier than the thinning of the present by comparison with the past, mightier than the feeling that what was best is behind.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The past the nostalgia returns to is creation — and the one who is mightier than all of creation gave it. He also gives the present. His giving is not depleted by what was given. The present is not the lesser gift. It is the current one, from the same hand that gave everything the nostalgia returns to.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The nostalgia has been thinning the present by living partly in the past — refusing the current gift in favour of the memory of the last one. This prayer gives both the remembered past and the present to the one power. Not: make the present as good as the remembered past. Be sufficient within the present — within this specific gift, this specific season, this version of life that is currently being given. Whatever You will for what is here now — for the fullness of the present that the nostalgia has been thinning.

Whatever You will. He gave then. He gives now. Whatever He will for the self that returns fully to the present gift.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the nostalgia is the sweet ache the self brings to the address — that gives the remembered past to the one who gave it, that receives the current gift from the same hand, that finds the present sufficiently given without measuring it against the memory. Within divine anger, nostalgia is the permanent thinning — the self living partly in the past and partly absent from the present, refusing the current gift because the remembered gift feels warmer. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the nostalgic self: the condition of receiving the present gift fully from the hand that never stopped giving.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He gave then. He gives now. The hand has not stopped. The present is the current gift. He is as He has praised Himself.

The past was warm.

The present seemed thin by comparison.

He gave the past.

He gives the present.

The same hand. Not exhausted.

*The nostalgia was refusing the current gift
in favour of the memory of the last one.*

He gives now.

The present is the current gift.

Whatever He will for the self

that returns fully to what is being given.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

Restlessness

The inability to settle. The self that cannot arrive where it already is.

The Condition Named

Restlessness is the suffering of the self that cannot be still — not physically but interiorly. The restless self is always slightly somewhere else, always oriented toward the next thing, always experiencing the present as insufficient or incomplete. It is not looking for a specific thing the way desire does. It is simply unable to land. The chair is not quite right, the activity not quite satisfying, the moment not quite enough. The self is present but not settled, here but not arrived.

Restlessness often accompanies a life that is, by external measures, good. The person with no specific complaint who nonetheless cannot rest. The self that has what it wanted and finds itself already looking past it to the next thing. This is what makes restlessness spiritually significant in the tradition: it is evidence that the self is looking for a settling that the world cannot provide. The world is not the right size for what the soul needs to rest in. The restlessness is the soul bumping against the limits of the container it has been trying to settle into.

The tradition addresses restlessness with one of its most precise statements: verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest. Not: in comfort, or in achievement, or in relationship, or in beauty, or in the resolution of problems — in the remembrance. The specific Arabic word is *tatamainn* — to become tranquil, to settle, to be at rest in a complete sense. The heart finds its *tatamainn* in the dhikr of the one power. The restlessness is evidence of what the soul needs. It is pointing at the answer. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the only one in whose remembrance hearts find rest. The Lord of the seven heavens is the size the soul needs to rest in — not too small, not finite, not exhaustible. The restless self has been trying to settle into created things and finding them insufficient. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The restlessness can overwhelm — the inability to land, the perpetual sense of not-quite-enough, the exhaustion of constant interior motion. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one whose remembrance is the specific prescription for the restless heart.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one whose remembrance settles what cannot settle in anything else. Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest. This is not a general spiritual encouragement. It is a precise statement about what the restless heart is looking for and where it is. The protection of the one who is the size the soul needs to rest in.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the restlessness. Greater than everything the restlessness has tried to settle into and found insufficient. The things tried and found

insufficient are creation — finite containers the soul tried to rest in and could not. The Creator is greater than all of it, and He is not a finite container. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the restlessness itself, mightier than the exhaustion of the self that cannot arrive where it already is.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The containers the restless self has tried are creation — finite, exhaustible, unable to hold the soul's full weight. The one who is mightier than all of creation is the only one whose remembrance can hold what the soul brings to it. The restlessness was the soul bumping against the limits of finite containers. He has no limits. In His remembrance, hearts find rest.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The restlessness has been trying to arrive in created things and finding itself unable to land. This prayer gives the restlessness to the one whose remembrance is the landing place. Not: give me better circumstances to settle into. Be sufficient as the place of settling — within the restlessness, within the inability to land, within what the soul needs that no created thing has provided. Whatever You will for the restless self — for the settling that only Your remembrance can produce, for the tatamainn that the soul has been looking for in everything except its source.

Whatever You will. Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest. The prescription was already given. Whatever He will for the soul that turns from the finite containers toward the one in whose remembrance it settles.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the restlessness is the inability to land that the self brings to the address — that gives the perpetual interior motion to the one whose remembrance is the specific prescription for it, that finds in His dhikr the tatamainn the soul has been looking for everywhere else. Within divine anger, restlessness is the permanent condition — the soul perpetually trying finite containers, perpetually finding them insufficient, never turning toward the one in whose remembrance hearts find rest. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the restless self: the condition of turning toward the remembrance that settles.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest. The restlessness was pointing at the answer. He is as He has praised Himself.

The self could not arrive where it already was.

It tried finite containers.

They were insufficient.

Verily in the remembrance of Allah

do hearts find rest.

Not in comfort or achievement or relationship.

In the remembrance.

The restlessness was the soul

bumping against the limits of finite containers.

He has no limits.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FORTY

Dissatisfaction

The self that has enough and still finds it insufficient. The persistent sense that what is here is not quite right.

The Condition Named

Dissatisfaction is the chronic low-grade sense that what is present does not meet what was hoped for. Not a specific complaint that can be addressed — a general condition of insufficiency. The food is fine but not quite. The relationship is good but not what was imagined. The life is functioning but does not feel like the life. Dissatisfaction does not require anything to be wrong. It only requires the gap between what is and what the self expected or imagined or hoped for to feel consistently present.

The particular challenge of dissatisfaction is that it often survives the resolution of its apparent causes. The self that is dissatisfied because of a specific lack addresses the lack and finds itself still dissatisfied — the new version of the thing it wanted also fails to meet the expectation. This is the signal that dissatisfaction is not primarily about what is missing. It is about the self's relationship to what is present. The dissatisfied self is in a posture of finding the present insufficient, and this posture tends to persist regardless of what the present contains.

The tradition's answer is shukr — gratitude, but more precisely the recognition of what has been given. The Quran says: if you are grateful, I will certainly give you more. The logic is not transactional — gratitude as payment for more gifts. It is about perception: the self that is grateful has correctly perceived what is actually present. The dissatisfied self has missed what is there in the search for what is not. Shukr is the corrective not of circumstance but of sight. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجِي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who gave what is present — who is the giver of the specific life, the specific relationships, the specific circumstances that the dissatisfaction finds insufficient. The Lord of the seven heavens gave what is here. The dissatisfaction has found it not quite right. These are two different assessments of the same gift, held by very different assessors. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The dissatisfaction can overwhelm in its quiet way — the persistent sense that the life is slightly off, that what is present is not quite what was hoped for. The protection from this is asked from the giver of what is present.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who gave what the dissatisfaction found insufficient. Not: change what was given. Protect me within the relationship with what was given — within the gap between what is here and what was expected, within the posture of finding it not quite right. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the giver whose giving is being missed by the self that is looking for something else.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَحَافُ وَأُحْدَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّحْمُ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ وَعَرْجِي جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the dissatisfaction. Greater than the gap between what is present and what was hoped for. Greater than every version of the present that was found insufficient. The present circumstances are creation — specific gifts given by the

one power. The dissatisfaction is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the chronic low-grade insufficiency, mightier than the posture of finding what is here not quite right.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The circumstances found insufficient are creation — specific portions of a created world given to a specific self. And the one who is mightier than all of creation gave them. The dissatisfaction has been assessing His giving and finding it not quite right. If you are grateful, I will certainly give you more. The gratitude is the corrective of the dissatisfied sight.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The dissatisfaction has been finding the present insufficient — the posture of not-quite-right applied to what the one power has given. This prayer gives the posture to the one power. Not: change what is given so the posture becomes unnecessary. Be sufficient within what is given — within the specific life, the specific circumstances, what is actually here. Whatever You will for the dissatisfied self — for the correction of the sight that is missing what is present, for the shukr that sees the gift in what is here.

Whatever You will. The gift is here. The dissatisfaction has been looking for something else in what is already given. Whatever He will for the self that learns to see what has already been given.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the dissatisfaction is the posture the self brings to the address — that gives the not-quite-right relationship with what is present to the one who gave what is present, that asks for the corrected sight that sees the gift. Within divine anger, dissatisfaction is the permanent condition — the self perpetually assessing what is given and finding it insufficient, the gift perpetually missed in the search for what is not here. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the dissatisfied self: the condition of the corrected sight that sees what is actually present.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. If you are grateful, I will certainly give you more. The gift is here. The corrected sight sees it. He is as He has praised Himself.

The self found the present insufficient.

The present is His giving.

*The dissatisfaction has been assessing His giving
and finding it not quite right.*

If you are grateful, I will certainly give you more.

*The gratitude is the corrective of the sight
that misses what is given
in the search for what is not.*

The gift is here.

Whatever He will for the self

that learns to see what has already been given.

The Emptiness After Getting What You Wanted

The arrival of the desired thing. The discovery that it was not the answer.

The Condition Named

This is perhaps the most disorienting of the wanting-emotions: not the suffering of not getting what was desired, but the suffering of getting it and finding it insufficient. The thing was wanted. It was obtained. And the self that expected to feel completed by its arrival finds instead a flat emptiness — the thing is there, the wanting has ended, and what was supposed to fill the gap has not filled it. The self stands in possession of what it desired and discovers the gap is still present.

The disorientation is in the premise that is now exposed. The desire assumed: if I had this, I would be satisfied. The having has disproved the assumption. The satisfaction that was expected did not arrive with the thing. The self is left with both the thing and the gap, which is a worse position than having just the gap — because the gap was at least explained by the absence of the thing, and now it has no explanation. The self cannot return to wanting what it has. It can only stand in the exposure of what the desire had promised and what the arrival has delivered.

The tradition speaks to this with precision. The Prophet said: if the son of Adam had two valleys of gold, he would desire a third, and nothing fills the belly of the son of Adam except dust. The want is structural. It is not resolved by any specific object. The objects were never the answer to what was actually being asked. The emptiness after getting what was wanted is the clearest possible demonstration that the want was pointing past its stated object to something that specific objects cannot provide. The one power's governance holds what the want is actually for. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throat. The prayer begins with the one who holds what the want is actually for — who saw the desire for the specific object, saw its arrival, saw the emptiness that followed, and holds within His governance the thing the desire was pointing toward past its stated object. The Lord of the seven heavens governs what actually fills the gap that no created thing has filled. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The emptiness after arrival can overwhelm — the disorientation of possessing what was wanted and finding it insufficient, the exposure of the premise the desire was built on. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who holds what the want is actually for.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one whose governance holds what no object has provided. The emptiness is evidence — it is the gap testifying that it is not object-shaped. It cannot be filled by any specific thing. The protection of the one who holds what is actually being asked for is the protection that says: the emptiness is pointing correctly. Follow it past the objects. The want is pointing at Me.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَلَ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّيْلُ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the desired thing. Greater than the emptiness its arrival exposed. Greater than the gap that the object could not fill. The desired thing is creation — a specific object within a created world. The emptiness is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the disorientation of the empty arrival, mightier than the gap that stands exposed now that the object has been obtained.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The object that did not fill the gap is creation. The gap itself is creation — a specific shape within a human soul that was made by the one power and that corresponds in its shape to something only the one power provides. Nothing fills the belly of the son of Adam except dust — and the one who said this also said: verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest. The emptiness has a specific prescription.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The emptiness stands exposed — the gap that was supposed to be filled by the arrival of what was wanted, now visible in its actual shape. This prayer gives the gap to the one who holds what is actually being asked for. Not: give me something else to want. Be sufficient within the emptiness — within the gap that the object did not fill, within the disorientation of the empty arrival, within what the want was pointing at past its stated object. Whatever You will for the gap now that the object has demonstrated it was not the answer.

Whatever You will. The gap is not object-shaped. It is His-shaped. Whatever He will for the self that has finally seen the shape of what is missing.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the emptiness after arrival is the exposed gap the self brings to the address — that gives the disproved premise and the disorienting vacancy to the one who holds what is actually being asked for, that follows the want past its stated object to its real destination. Within divine anger, the emptiness after arrival becomes the occasion for a new desire — the self filling the gap with a new object to want, perpetually cycling through arrivals and emptinesses without ever following the want to where it is pointing. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the empty arrival: the condition of following the gap to its actual prescription.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. The gap is His-shaped. The want was pointing at Him. He is as He has praised Himself.

The desired thing arrived.

The gap remained.

Nothing fills the belly of the son of Adam except dust.

The want was never object-shaped.

The objects demonstrated this one by one.

The gap is His-shaped.

The want was pointing at Him

past every stated object.

Whatever He will for the self

that has finally seen the shape of what is missing.

He is as He has praised Himself.

SECTION VII

The Self That Finds Existence Insufficient

Emptiness. Boredom. Apathy. Disillusionment. Cynicism. Jadedness. Directionlessness. The self that looked at existence and found it wanting.

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ

Did you think that We created you without purpose and that you would not be returned to Us?

The self that finds existence insufficient has not yet understood what existence is for. The insufficiency is not in existence. It is in the view from inside it.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

Emptiness

Not the emptiness of loss or grief. The hollow quality of existence itself.

The Condition Named

The emptiness addressed here is not the emptiness left by something that was removed — that is grief's territory. This is the emptiness that was there before any specific loss: the hollow quality of existing that some people carry as a background state. The self is present, functioning, often well. And within the functioning there is a vacancy — a sense that something is missing that was never there, that should be the ground of experience but isn't. The self moves through its life not depleted by any specific loss but hollowed by a general absence it cannot name.

This emptiness is different from depression, though they can overlap. Depression flattens. Emptiness hollows. The depressed self cannot feel. The empty self can feel — it just finds that what it feels occurs in a space that lacks substance. The activities that should be full feel thin. The connections that should be grounding feel like they do not reach the place that needs to be grounded. The life is functioning in outline while the interior sits in a vacancy it doesn't know how to address.

The tradition speaks to this directly. The Quran asks: did you think We created you without purpose? The question targets the premise of the emptiness. The hollow quality of existence assumes that existence, as it presents itself within the world's frame, is all there is — and within that frame, it is genuinely insufficient. The tradition's answer is not to rearrange the world's contents but to reveal the frame's error. Existence is not purposeless. It is oriented. The emptiness is what an oriented existence feels like when the orientation has not yet been found. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who made the existence that feels hollow — who created it with purpose and orientation, who holds the meaning the emptiness has not found. The Lord of the seven heavens did not create existence as a purposeless container. The hollow quality the self experiences is the soul's recognition that the container has not been filled with what it was made for. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The emptiness can overwhelm — the vacancy within functioning, the hollow quality that no specific thing addresses. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who holds what fills the hollow.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who made the existence that feels hollow and who holds its orientation. The emptiness is not evidence that existence is without purpose. It is evidence that the purpose has not yet been found by the self experiencing the hollow. The protection of the one who holds the purpose is the protection that says: the vacancy has a shape. The shape corresponds to something I hold.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَرَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the emptiness. Greater than the hollow quality of existence the self is experiencing. Greater than the vacancy that no specific thing has addressed. The emptiness is creation — a human experience within a created existence. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the fear that the hollow quality is permanent, mightier than the conclusion that existence is simply this thin.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The hollow existence is creation — a specific self within a specific life, made by the one power with a specific purpose. And the one who is mightier than all of creation holds the purpose. Did you think We created you without purpose? He did not. The emptiness is the soul's experience of purpose not yet found, not the soul's testimony that purpose does not exist.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The emptiness has been a vacancy within functioning — the hollow that no specific thing addresses. This prayer gives the vacancy to the one who holds what fills it. Not: give me something to fill the hollow. Be sufficient within the hollow — within the vacancy itself, within the existing that feels purposeless, within the life that functions in outline while the interior sits empty. Whatever You will for the emptiness — for what the orientation is that makes the hollow make sense, for what fills the vacancy that the world's contents have not.

Whatever You will. Did you think We created you without purpose? He holds the purpose. He holds what the hollow corresponds to. Whatever He will for the self that gives the vacancy to the one who holds what fills it.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the emptiness is the vacancy the self brings to the address — that gives the hollow quality to the one who holds what fills it, that asks to be filled by what the existence was made for rather than by the world's contents which have not reached the vacancy. Within divine anger, emptiness is the permanent condition — the self inhabiting the hollow without ever giving the vacancy to the one who holds what corresponds to its shape, cycling through contents that do not fill it. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the empty self: the condition of giving the hollow to the one who holds its correspondence.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Did you think We created you without purpose? He holds the purpose. The hollow has a shape. The shape corresponds to something He holds. He is as He has praised Himself.

The existence felt hollow.

Did you think We created you without purpose?

He did not.

The emptiness is the soul's experience

of purpose not yet found —

not testimony that purpose does not exist.

The hollow has a shape.

The shape corresponds to something He holds.

Whatever He will for the self

that gives the vacancy to the one
who holds what fills it.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

Boredom

The self that finds what is present not enough to hold its attention.

The Condition Named

Boredom is the suffering of underengagement — the self whose capacity for experience exceeds what the present moment is offering. The bored self is not empty in the way the hollow self is. It has a capacity for engagement that is not being met. The activities available are insufficient to occupy the attention fully. The stimulation on offer is below the threshold of what would genuinely absorb the self. And the gap between the capacity for engagement and the level of engagement being provided is the boredom.

Boredom in its chronic form is more than the mild restlessness of an unoccupied afternoon. It is the persistent sense that nothing available is worth full attention — that the world's contents are too thin to absorb what the self has to bring to them. This is an important distinction: boredom in this form is not the world failing the self, it is the self's capacity exceeding what the world's contents can meet. The chronically bored self has an appetite for engagement that ordinary life does not satisfy.

The tradition speaks to boredom through the vastness of what is actually available to the attentive self. The Quran invites constant reflection — on the heavens and the earth, on the self, on history, on the signs within and without. The world is not thin if looked at correctly. The boredom is a deficit of attention, not a deficit of the available. The bored self has not yet discovered what genuinely absorbs — the reflection on creation, the contemplation of the one power's signs, the depth that the present moment contains when approached with tafakkur. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one whose creation is inexhaustible. The Lord of the seven heavens made a world that the bored self has found insufficient — but the insufficient world is the world as the bored self is currently attending to it, not the world in its actual depth. The same heavens and earth that appear thin to the bored self are the ones the Quran calls signs to be reflected upon. The Lord of the seven heavens governs a creation that is not thin. The boredom has not yet reached its depth. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The boredom can overwhelm in its flatness — the self unable to find what genuinely absorbs. The protection from the flatness is asked from the one whose creation contains what the boredom has not yet found.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one whose creation the boredom has not exhausted. The world the boredom finds thin is the world as skimmed. The world as reflected upon contains the signs of the one who made it — which are inexhaustible, which deepen with attention, which are precisely scaled to the capacity the bored self has and has not yet fully engaged.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the boredom. Greater than the world the boredom finds insufficient. Greater than the capacity for engagement that the boredom says has not been

met. The boredom is creation — a human experience of underengagement within a created life. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the flatness the boredom produces, mightier than the persistent sense that nothing available is worth full attention.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The world the boredom finds thin is creation — and the one who is mightier than all of creation made it full of signs to be reflected upon. The boredom has not yet reached the depth of what was made. It has skimmed and found insufficiency. The depth is still there. He who made the heavens and the earth and what is between them did not make them as a thin container for the bored self to exhaust.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The boredom has been finding the present insufficient to absorb the capacity the self has for engagement. This prayer gives the capacity and the boredom to the one power. Not: provide me with more interesting content. Be sufficient within the present — within what is actually here, within the depth of the present moment when attended to with genuine reflection, within the signs of the one power that exist in what the boredom has found thin. Whatever You will for the capacity the boredom says has not been met.

Whatever You will. The creation is inexhaustible to genuine reflection. Whatever He will for the bored self that learns to attend to the depth of what has already been given.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the boredom is the underengagement the self brings to the address — that gives the unmet capacity to the one whose creation contains what the boredom has not yet found, that learns to attend to the depth of the present rather than skim it. Within divine anger, boredom is the permanent condition — the self perpetually finding the present insufficient without ever going beneath the surface of what is actually there. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the bored self: the condition of the attention that finds in creation what the skim missed.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He made the heavens and the earth full of signs. The boredom has not yet reached their depth. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The world appeared thin.
He made it full of signs.
The boredom skimmed.
The signs are in the depth.
The capacity for engagement was real.
What it has not yet engaged
is the depth of what is already here.
Tafakkur — genuine reflection.
The creation is inexhaustible to it.
He made the heavens and the earth
not as a thin container.*

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

Apathy

The self that has stopped caring. Not despair — the quieter disappearance of investment.

The Condition Named

Apathy is the withdrawal of care. The apathetic self does not feel the burning of desire or the heat of anger or the weight of grief. It does not feel much at all — not because it is numb in the way that numbness is a defence against pain, but because its investment in outcomes has quietly retreated. Things happen. The self observes. Nothing reaches the level of genuine stake. The apathy is not a protective wall. It is more like a dimming — the dimming of the caring that used to be there.

Apathy is distinct from depression in that it does not necessarily involve the heaviness or hopelessness of depression. The apathetic self is not necessarily suffering. It has simply withdrawn from the field of caring. This is what makes apathy spiritually significant: it is the disappearance of the engagement that would make meaning possible. Meaning requires caring about something — requires the self to be invested in outcomes, to have stakes, to find things worth pursuing. The apathetic self has let the investment drain and has discovered that without investment, meaning becomes inaccessible.

The tradition's answer is in the model of the Prophet's sustained care — his care for his community, for the believers, for the guidance of those who had not yet found it, across decades of hardship and rejection. The Prophet wept for those who refused to believe. He cared intensely and consistently. The tradition presents care as a defining quality of the believing self, not as an optional feature. And the object of the care is never exhausted: the one power's creation is inexhaustible in what it offers to be cared about and cared for. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who cares — whose care for His creation is the model for what care looks like when it does not dim. The Lord of the seven heavens cares for what He made with a care that does not retreat or exhaust itself or withdraw. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The apathy has been an overwhelm in the subtler sense — the caring that was once present has been worn away or was never fully cultivated, and the self has found itself without the investment that makes engagement possible. The protection from the dimmed state is asked from the one whose care is the source from which human care can be replenished.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who cares without diminishment. The apathetic self has run out of its own supply of caring. The protection of the one who cares does not run out — whose care for His creation is not a finite resource that depletes but an expression of what He is. Whatever the apathy has done to the self's capacity to care, the source of care is not depleted.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَرَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the apathy. Greater than the withdrawal of care that has produced the dimming. Greater than the absence of investment that has made meaning inaccessible. The apathy is creation — a human state within a human life. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the dimmed state, mightier than the disappearance of the caring that once was there.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The withdrawal of care is creation — something that happened within the self within a created life, within the governance of the one power. And the one who is mightier than all of creation cares without withdrawal. His care is not subject to the conditions that cause human care to dim. He cares. The apathy has not dimmed the source.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The apathy has withdrawn investment from the field of caring — the self no longer finding things worth the stake of genuine engagement. This prayer gives the withdrawal to the one power. Not: force me to care again. Be sufficient within the dimmed state — within the absence of investment, within the field from which care has retreated. Whatever You will for the apathetic self — for what restores the capacity to care, for what the one power holds as the object of care that the apathy has not yet discovered, for what the dimming has been protecting against that now needs to be brought to the address.

Whatever You will. He cares without diminishment. Whatever He will for the self whose caring has dimmed and who brings the dimming to the one whose care is the source.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the apathy is the dimmed caring the self brings to the address — that gives the withdrawal of investment to the one whose care is the source of care, that places the apathetic self before the one who cares without diminishment. Within divine anger, apathy is the permanent dimming — the self in sustained withdrawal from the field of caring, without access to the source that replenishes what has drained. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the apathetic self: the condition of bringing the dimmed caring to the one who cares without withdrawal.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Himself. He cares. He cares for what He made with a care that does not retreat. The source of care has not been depleted by the apathy. He is as He has praised Himself.

The caring dimmed.

He cares without diminishment.

*The apathy withdrew investment
from the field of caring.*

The source of care was not depleted.

*He cares for what He made
with a care that does not retreat.*

The dimmed state has been brought to the source.

*Whatever He will for the self
whose caring has dimmed*

and who brings the dimming to Him.

Disillusionment

The self whose illusions have been stripped away and finds what remains insufficient.

The Condition Named

Disillusionment is the loss of the version of the world that made it worth living in the way the self had been living. The illusion may have been about a person — they turned out to be different than believed. About an institution — it turned out to serve different ends than claimed. About a cause — the cause turned out to be more complicated, more compromised, more human than it appeared. About the world itself — it turned out to be harder, more indifferent, more structured around interests the self did not sign up for. The dis-illusionment is, technically, the gain of accuracy. But it is experienced as loss.

What makes disillusionment particularly difficult is its relationship to idealism. The disillusioned self was once invested — had hopes, held the person or institution or cause with genuine regard, built something around that investment. The disillusionment is proportional to the investment. The self that cared deeply is the self that can be disillusioned deeply. The cynicism that often follows disillusionment is the self protecting against future investment by concluding that the illusion is the mechanism: all beautiful things turn out this way.

The tradition's answer to disillusionment is the only relationship that cannot produce it. The one power is not capable of being found different than He has presented Himself. He is as He has praised Himself — not as the self imagined Him, not as the tradition's interpreters presented Him, not as the self hoped He was, but as He is. The disillusionment with everything else is preparation — the stripping of every version that could disappoint until what remains is the one who cannot. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who cannot disappoint — whose reality exceeds any version of Him the self held, who is always more and never less than what was believed. The Lord of the seven heavens is not capable of being found to be other than He said He was. He is as He has praised Himself. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The disillusionment can overwhelm — the loss of the version of the world that made it liveable, the stripped quality of what remains after the illusions are gone. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who cannot be the source of disillusionment.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who cannot disappoint. Every person who disappointed was a created being with limits. Every institution that failed was a human creation with corruption. Every cause that turned out to be more complicated was a human project within a complicated world. The Lord of the seven heavens is none of these things. He is as He has praised Himself. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one whose reality exceeds every version of it.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحَدَّرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the disillusionment. Greater than the illusions that were stripped. Greater than what remained after they were stripped and was found insufficient. The illusions were creation — human constructions around created beings and institutions. The Creator is greater than all of them and greater than the disillusionment their stripping produced. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the conclusion that the stripping of illusions leaves nothing worth investing in.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Every source of disillusionment is creation — a created being or institution that turned out to be other than it seemed. The one who is mightier than all of creation cannot be other than He seems because He is what He is without remainder, without the gap between presentation and reality that disillusionment reveals. The disillusionment with creation is the preparation for the encounter with the Creator. The stripping continues until what remains cannot be stripped.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The disillusionment has stripped the versions of the world that made it liveable in the way the self had been living. This prayer gives the stripped state to the one who cannot be stripped. Not: restore the illusions. Be sufficient within what remains after they are gone — within the world as it actually is, without the versions the self built around it. Whatever You will for the disillusioned self — for what is found in the encounter with the real that the illusions were covering, for what remains when everything that could disappoint has.

Whatever You will. He cannot disappoint. He is as He has praised Himself. Whatever He will for the self that has been stripped to the point where only what cannot disappoint remains.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the disillusionment is the stripped state the self brings to the address — that gives the versions that failed to the one who cannot fail, that finds in the encounter with the real what the illusions were preventing. Within divine anger, disillusionment becomes cynicism — the self that concludes from the stripping that nothing is worth investment, that uses the disillusionment as evidence that the illusion is the structure of all things including what the one power offers. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the disillusioned self: the condition of bringing the stripped state to the one who cannot be stripped.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He cannot disappoint. The disillusionment with creation is the preparation for the encounter with the Creator. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The illusions were stripped one by one.
Each stripping was a disillusionment.
The stripping continues
until what remains cannot be stripped.
He cannot disappoint.*

*He is as He has praised Himself –
not as imagined, not as hoped,
but as He is.*

*The disillusionment with creation
is the preparation for the encounter with the Creator.*

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

Cynicism

Disillusionment that has hardened into a posture. The self that expects the worst as a matter of principle.

The Condition Named

Cynicism is disillusionment that has become a policy. Where disillusionment is the experience of having a specific illusion removed, cynicism has drawn a conclusion from the accumulation of those removals: this is how things are. The beautiful presentation conceals the disappointing reality. The stated motive conceals the actual one. The idealism is the mechanism of eventual disillusionment. The cynical self no longer needs to be disillusioned because it has pre-disillusioned itself — it approaches everything already expecting to find the gap between presentation and reality.

Cynicism protects. This is its appeal. The cynic does not get hurt in the way the idealist does, because the cynic never fully invested. The defense is built into the posture. But the protection comes at the cost of exactly what it is protecting against losing: the capacity for genuine investment, the ability to find things worth full engagement, the openness to being surprised by goodness. The cynic is safe and depleted simultaneously — protected from disillusionment by having pre-emptively disillusioned everything.

The tradition's answer is the impossibility of cynicism in the face of the one power's governance. The cynic's conclusion is: things are always worse than they seem. The one power's word is: He is as He has praised Himself. The cynicism applies its generalisation to everything. The one power is the exception that the generalisation cannot reach. He is not subject to the gap between presentation and reality that cynicism has learned to expect. And He is the governor of everything that the cynicism has found disappointing — which means the cynicism's conclusion has not yet accounted for the full picture. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَنِي عَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the exception the cynicism cannot reach. The Lord of the seven heavens is not subject to the gap between presentation and reality that the cynic has learned to expect from everything. He is as He has praised Himself. He is also the governor of everything the cynicism has assessed and found disappointing — which means the cynicism's picture is not complete. It has assessed the created and drawn conclusions about the nature of things. It has not accounted for the Creator. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The cynicism is itself an overwhelm — the posture that has pre-empted genuine investment and depleted the self while protecting it.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who cannot be cynically pre-disillusioned — who is as He has praised Himself, not less, not different. The cynic has learned to expect the gap. The Lord of the seven heavens has no gap between what He presents and what He is. Mighty is Your protection: the exception the cynicism cannot reach.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحَدَّرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the cynicism. Greater than the accumulation of disillusionments that produced it. Greater than the posture that has hardened around the conclusion that things are always worse than they seem. The cynicism is creation — a human posture produced by human experience of created things. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the conclusion that genuine investment always leads to disillusionment.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The cynicism assessed creation and drew conclusions about reality. But the one who is mightier than all of creation is not subject to the conclusions that creation's patterns warranted. He is as He has praised Himself. The cynicism pre-disillusioned everything. It cannot pre-disillusion the one who has no gap to be found in.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The cynicism has pre-empted genuine investment by concluding in advance that everything disappoints. This prayer gives the conclusion to the one who is the exception to it. Not: give me reason to believe in created things again. Be sufficient as the one investment the cynicism cannot pre-disillusion — within the conclusion the posture has reached, within the depletion the protection has produced, within the posture that has defended against disillusionment by foreclosing genuine engagement. Whatever You will for the cynical self — for what it finds in the encounter with the one who cannot disappoint.

Whatever You will. He is as He has praised Himself. The cynicism cannot pre-disillusion what has no gap. Whatever He will for the self that discovers the exception.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the cynicism is the hardened conclusion the self brings to the address — that gives the generalisation to the exception, that places the pre-disillusioned posture before the one who cannot be pre-disillusioned, that finds in the encounter with the gapless one the reason the generalisation was always incomplete. Within divine anger, cynicism is the permanent posture — the self that applied its conclusion to everything including what the one power offers, that pre-disillusioned the address before arriving at it. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the cynical self: the condition of finding the one exception the generalisation cannot reach.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He is as He has praised Himself. No gap. The exception the cynicism cannot reach. He is as He has praised Himself.

The cynicism concluded: things are always worse than they seem.

He is as He has praised Himself.

No gap between presentation and reality.

The cynicism assessed creation.

He is the Creator.

The generalisation did not account for Him.

The conclusion was incomplete.

He is the exception the cynicism cannot reach.

He is the one investment

that cannot be pre-disillusioned.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

Jadedness

The self that has seen too much to be moved by what would once have moved it.

The Condition Named

Jadedness is the dulling of response from overexposure. The jaded self has seen versions of this before — the argument, the crisis, the beauty, the injustice, the excitement. It has cycled through enough iterations of the type that the specific instance no longer produces a genuine response. What would once have moved it, angered it, delighted it, alarmed it — now lands at a reduced register. The first time produced feeling. The hundredth time produces recognition without the feeling the recognition once carried.

Jadedness differs from cynicism in that it is not a concluded posture. The jaded self does not necessarily expect the worst. It simply no longer produces a fresh response to the familiar. The mechanism of response has been worn smooth by repetition. This happens to professionals who work with suffering — the doctor, the emergency responder, the aid worker — who must calibrate their response to avoid being overwhelmed by what they see regularly. But jadedness can also arrive without that professional necessity, simply as the result of enough exposure to the same types of thing.

The tradition's answer is in the inexhaustibility of the real. The one power is never the same twice in the sense that His signs, His governance, His engagement with the self are not repetitions of a type — they are specific, present, not reducible to the category the jaded self has filed them under. The Quran invites reflection on what is actually present — not the category of thing that is present, but the specific thing, this specific sign, this specific moment of governance. The jaded self has been filing the specific under the category. The tradition says: look at the specific. It has never been before and will not be again. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one whose engagement with the self is never a repetition of a type — who is present to the specific self, in this specific moment, in a governance that has never been before and will not be again. The Lord of the seven heavens does not engage with His creation through categories. He governs the specific. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The jadedness has been an overwhelm in the subtler sense — the self no longer able to produce a fresh response because the mechanism has been dulled. The protection from the dulled state is asked from the one whose engagement with the self is always fresh.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one whose presence is always specific and never merely categorical. The jaded self has filed what it encounters under types. The Lord of the seven heavens is present to the specific within each type — the particular iteration, this governance, this moment, this sign — which has never been before. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one whose engagement cannot be reduced to what has been seen before.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the jadedness. Greater than the overexposure that produced it. Greater than the dulled mechanism of response. The overexposure is creation — enough iterations of enough types to dull the response. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the dulled state, mightier than the inability to produce a fresh response to what would once have moved.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Every specific instance the jadedness filed under a category is creation — and the one who is mightier than all of creation governs the specific within each instance in a way that is never merely categorical. He is always present to what is actually there. The jadedness has been looking at the category and missing the specific. The specific is what His governance holds.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The jadedness has filed what is present under what has been seen before — losing the specific to the category, losing the fresh response to the dulled recognition. This prayer gives the dulled self to the one whose engagement with it is always specific. Not: expose me to something genuinely new. Be sufficient within this specific moment — within what is actually here, held by the one who governs the specific and not the categorical. Whatever You will for the jaded self — for the recovery of fresh response, for the attention that stops filing and starts seeing what is actually present.

Whatever You will. His governance of this specific moment has never been before and will not be again. Whatever He will for the self that learns to stop filing and to see what is actually here.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the jadedness is the dulled self the self brings to the address — that gives the filed categories to the one who governs the specific within each, that recovers the fresh response by encountering the specific instead of the type. Within divine anger, jadedness is the permanent dulling — the self perpetually filing the specific under the categorical, perpetually missing what is actually present in the encounter with what has been seen before. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the jaded self: the condition of the attention that encounters the specific.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. His governance of this moment has never been before. He is always present to the specific. He is as He has praised Himself.

The self filed the specific under the category.

The response was dulled by repetition.

He governs the specific.

Not the category — the specific.

This moment of His governance

has never been before

and will not be again.

*The jadedness was missing what is actually present
by filing it under what has been seen before.*

Stop filing. See what is here.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

Directionlessness

Meaning exists but the self cannot find its own place in it. The question is not what matters but where I belong in what matters.

The Condition Named

Directionlessness is distinct from meaninglessness. The meaningless self believes nothing matters. The directionless self may believe deeply that things matter — may have values, care about outcomes, hold convictions about what is important — but cannot find where it belongs in relation to what matters. The question is not what is worth pursuing. The question is: what am I for? What specific contribution does this specific self, with its specific capacities and circumstances, make to what is worth pursuing? The directionless self cannot find the answer to the specific question.

This makes directionlessness a particularly frustrating condition because its usual remedies do not address it. Being told what matters — given values, given causes, given purposes — does not resolve the directionless self's problem. It knows what matters. It does not know where it fits. The career counsellor, the spiritual guide, the mentor with a clear path — all of these address the question of what to pursue, but the directionless self's question is different: given what there is to pursue, what is my specific place in it?

The tradition's answer is in the one power's knowledge of the specific self. He made the self with specific capacities, placed it in specific circumstances, gave it a specific set of encounters and inclinations and gifts. The direction is embedded in the specific — not announced from outside as a general purpose the self must apply itself to, but already present in what the self is and where it has been placed. The one power who made the self knows the direction. The self's task is not to invent the direction but to discover what was already built into it. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who made the self with its specific direction embedded. The Lord of the seven heavens fashioned this specific self with specific capacities, placed it in specific circumstances, gave it specific inclinations and encounters. The direction is not separate from the self — it is within the self as made. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The directionlessness can overwhelm — the self surrounded by what matters and unable to find its specific place in it, the capacity without orientation. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who holds the specific direction within the specific self He made.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who knows the direction because He built it in. The directionless self has been searching for a direction to apply itself to. The direction is not external — it is embedded in what the one power made. It is in the specific capacities, the specific inclinations, the specific encounters that have shaped this specific self. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the maker who knows what He made and for what.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحَدَّرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the directionlessness. Greater than the incapacity to find the specific place in what matters. Greater than the frustration of having values without orientation. The directionlessness is creation — a human experience within a created life. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the inability to find what the specific self is for, mightier than the question that has not yet found its answer.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The specific self the directionlessness inhabits is creation — fashioned by the one power with a specific direction embedded, placed by the one power in specific circumstances that contain the direction's context. The one who is mightier than all of creation knows what He made and holds the direction that the self has not yet discovered. The direction is not absent. It is embedded and not yet found.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The directionlessness has been unable to find the specific place the self occupies in what matters. This prayer gives the searching to the one who holds what is being searched for. Not: tell me what to do. Be sufficient within the not-yet-knowing — within the specific self with its specific capacities and circumstances, within the question that has not yet found its answer. Whatever You will for the direction embedded in what You made — for when and how the specific self discovers what it was built for.

Whatever You will. He built the direction in. Whatever He will for the self that gives the searching to the one who holds what is being searched for.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the directionlessness is the searching self that brings the question to the address — that gives the incapacity to find its specific place to the one who holds the specific place within His knowledge of the specific self He made. Within divine anger, directionlessness is the perpetual searching without address — the self unable to find its direction and with no access to the one who built the direction in. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the directionless self: the condition of giving the searching to the one who holds the answer within His knowledge of what He made.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He built the direction into the specific self He made. The direction is not absent. It is embedded and not yet discovered. He is as He has praised Himself.

The self knew what mattered.

It could not find its specific place in it.

He built the direction in.

It is embedded in the specific capacities,

the specific circumstances,

the specific inclinations of the self He made.

The direction is not absent.

It is not yet discovered.

Whatever He will for the self

that gives the searching to the one

who holds what is being searched for.

SECTION VIII

The Self That Cannot Stop the Mind

Rumination. Obsessive thinking. Worry. Catastrophising. Intrusive thoughts. Overthinking. Mental loops. The mind that will not be still even when the self wants stillness.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.

The mind that cannot stop is a mind that has not found its anchor. The anchor is not a technique. It is an address.

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

Rumination

The mind that returns, unbidden, to the same wound. Thinking about what was done, what was said, what cannot be changed.

The Condition Named

Rumination is the mind's return to a painful subject that the self has not chosen to revisit. The thought comes back. The scene replays. The conversation repeats. The self did not decide to think about this again — and yet here it is again, in the mind, occupying attention that the self would prefer to give to something else. The ruminative thought is not productive. It does not generate new understanding, move toward resolution, or lead anywhere. It simply returns the self to the same painful territory, again and again, without advance.

This is the specific suffering of rumination: the involuntary quality combined with the futility. If the mind were returning to the subject because there was something still to understand, the return would have purpose. But rumination characteristically returns to what is already understood — what was done is known, what was said is remembered, what cannot be changed is acknowledged — and returns anyway. The self is not gaining anything from the return. It is simply being held in the territory.

The tradition does not offer the mind a technique for stopping the return. It offers the mind a different destination. The mind that ruminates is a mind that keeps arriving at the same place. The dhikr — the remembrance of the one power — offers a different arrival. Not the suppression of the ruminative thought but the redirection of the mind's movement: when it returns to the wound, turn it toward the address. The return is real. The direction of the return can change. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجِي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the address — the specific destination toward which the ruminative mind is invited to redirect. The Lord of the seven heavens holds the wound the mind keeps returning to — holds it more completely than the rumination does, understands it in a context the rumination cannot see, governs what it means and what comes of it. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The rumination has been an overwhelm — the involuntary return that holds the self in painful territory without advance. The protection from this is asked from the one who holds what the mind keeps returning to.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who holds the wound the mind cannot leave. Not: stop the mind from returning. Be the destination when it returns — the address to which the ruminative movement is redirected, the one whose governance of the wound gives the return a different character. The mind returns. Let it return to You.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the rumination. Greater than the wound it keeps returning to. Greater than the involuntary movement that holds the self in painful territory. The wound is creation — something that occurred within a created life, held in the governance of the one power. The rumination is creation — a movement of the human

mind within the created interior. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the return itself, mightier than the territory the mind cannot leave.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The ruminative subject is creation — a wound or event or word within a created life, held in the one power's governance. And the one who is mightier than all of creation holds the subject the rumination keeps returning to. He holds it in a context the rumination cannot see. The return has a better destination than the wound. It has the one who holds the wound.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The rumination has been returning the mind to the same territory without advance. This prayer gives both the territory and the return to the one power. Not: stop the mind. Be sufficient within the territory the mind keeps visiting — within the wound or word or scene that the rumination returns to, within the movement of return itself. Whatever You will for the ruminative mind — for the redirecting of the return toward Your address, for what the self finds when the movement that was going to the wound goes instead to the one who holds it.

Whatever You will. The mind returns. Let it return to You. Whatever He will for the movement that finds a better destination.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the rumination is the returning mind that is redirected to the address — that gives the movement of return to the one who holds what the mind was returning to, that finds in the dhikr the destination that the wound was providing. Within divine anger, rumination is the permanent circuit — the mind returning to the wound, gaining nothing from the return, returning again, indefinitely, with no access to the address that could give the movement a different destination. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the ruminative mind: the condition of the return that goes to the address instead of the wound.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest. The return is real. The direction of the return can change. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The mind returned to the wound.
Again and again. Without advance.
He holds the wound
more completely than the rumination does.
The return is real.
The direction of the return can change.
When the mind returns to the wound,
turn it toward the address.
Let it return to the one who holds
what it was returning to.
He is as He has praised Himself.*

Obsessive Thinking

The thought that will not release its hold. The mind captured by a single subject it cannot set down.

The Condition Named

Obsessive thinking is more tenacious than rumination. Rumination returns unbidden to a wound — but the ruminative thought can be interrupted, can be set aside for stretches, can be managed with effort. The obsessive thought does not release. It occupies the mind with a grip that the self's efforts to disengage cannot break. The subject is always present — not cycling in and out but simply there, holding the foreground of attention regardless of what the self attempts to do instead. The obsessive thought is not just returning; it has moved in.

The particular suffering of obsessive thinking is the exhaustion of fighting it. The self that tries to stop the obsessive thought by force — by willpower, by distraction, by argument — discovers that the fight itself keeps the thought active. The resistance is a form of engagement. The more the self pushes against the thought, the more present the thought becomes. This is the trap of obsessive thinking: the self cannot resolve it by engagement and cannot resolve it by resistance. Both approaches keep the thought in the foreground.

The tradition's answer bypasses the fight entirely. The dhikr does not argue with the obsessive thought or suppress it. It offers the mind a different occupation. Not: stop thinking about this. Think about this instead — and the this is not another created subject that the obsessive thought can compete with, but the one power Himself, who is inexhaustible, who cannot be exhausted by the attention the obsessive thought was consuming. The occupation of the mind with dhikr is not a distraction. It is the substitution of the infinite for the finite. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the infinite subject — the one whose inexhaustibility means the mind that turns to Him cannot exhaust what is there to attend to. The Lord of the seven heavens is not a competing thought. He is the ground from which thought arises and to which it can return. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The obsessive thought has been the overwhelm — the single subject that has moved into the foreground and will not release. The protection from the grip of the obsessive thought is asked from the one whose address is the infinite alternative.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the inexhaustible address — the one who gives the mind that has been held by a single finite subject something infinite to turn to instead. Not the fight against the obsessive thought. The turn toward the address. The obsessive thought held the mind because it was always there. The one power is also always there. The mind that turns to Him finds the grip of the obsessive thought loosened not by force but by occupation.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَرَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the obsessive thought. Greater than the subject the mind has been captured by. Greater than the grip that resists the self's efforts to disengage. The obsessive thought is creation — a thought within a created mind, holding a finite subject. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the grip of the obsessive thought, mightier than the exhaustion of fighting what will not release.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The subject the obsessive thought is fixed on is creation — a finite thing within a finite mind. And the one who is mightier than all of creation is the infinite subject that the finite one cannot compete with. The mind that is occupied with the one power is occupied with something that cannot be exhausted. The obsessive thought held the mind because the finite subject had nothing to compete with. Now it does.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The obsessive thought has captured the mind's foreground and will not release it by force. This prayer offers the mind to the one power without fighting what is there. Not: remove the obsessive thought. Occupy me. Be sufficient as the subject of the mind — within the foreground the obsessive thought has taken, within the grip that resists disengagement. Whatever You will for the mind that has been held by a single finite subject and is now offered to the infinite.

Whatever You will. The occupation of the dhikr is not a distraction. It is the substitution of the infinite for the finite. Whatever He will for the mind that turns to Him from the grip of the obsessive thought.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the obsessive thought is the grip the self brings to the address — that stops fighting and turns the captured mind toward the infinite subject, that finds in the dhikr the occupation the obsessive thought was demanding. Within divine anger, obsessive thinking is the permanent capture — the mind held by a finite subject indefinitely, fighting it and feeding it simultaneously, with no access to the infinite occupation that could release the grip without force. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the obsessively thinking mind: the condition of the turn toward the inexhaustible.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He is the infinite subject. The finite grip loosens in the presence of what cannot be exhausted. He is as He has praised Himself.

The thought moved in and would not release.

Fighting it fed it.

He is the infinite subject.

The finite grip loosens

in the presence of what cannot be exhausted.

Not the fight against the obsessive thought.

The turn toward the address.

The dhikr is not a distraction.

*It is the substitution of the infinite
for the finite.*

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

Worry

The mind running through what might go wrong before it has gone wrong.

The Condition Named

Worry is the mind's attempt to control the future by thinking through it in advance. The worrying mind is not simply aware that things might go wrong — it is actively running scenarios, examining possibilities, rehearsing responses to outcomes that have not yet occurred. There is a purpose-like quality to worrying: it feels like preparation, like due diligence, like the responsible management of what might come. And occasionally it produces something useful. But far more often it produces nothing except the suffering of imagined bad outcomes without the suffering having any effect on whether those outcomes occur.

The specific torture of worry is in its relationship to the future. The future is not in the self's governance. What will happen is in the one power's governance. The worry is attempting to do something about what is in the one power's governance by thinking hard about it — but thinking hard about what is in the one power's governance does not change what is in the one power's governance. It only produces the experience of the bad outcome in the present, before the outcome, without any ability to affect the outcome. The worry has all the suffering of the thing feared and none of the capacity to prevent it.

The tradition's answer is the explicit transfer of the future to the one who holds it. Tawakkul — reliance on the one power — is not passivity or negligence. It is the correct allocation of what belongs to the self (effort in the present) and what belongs to the one power (the outcome). The worrying mind has confused these two allocations: it is spending its present energy on what belongs to the one power's governance. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who holds the future the worry is running through. The Lord of the seven heavens governs the outcomes the worry is rehearsing — holds them within a governance that the worry's scenarios are not changing. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The worry can overwhelm — the mind running scenarios indefinitely, suffering imagined outcomes without the suffering affecting any outcome. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who holds the outcomes the worry is running.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the governor of the outcomes the worry cannot govern. The worry has been spending present energy on future outcomes that are in the one power's hands. The protection of the one who holds those outcomes is the protection that says: the future is Mine to govern. Your task is the present. The scenarios you are running are not preparation. They are the suffering of what I hold, in advance, without effect on what I hold.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُؤَسِّسُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَرَ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّيْلُ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the worry. Greater than all the scenarios the worry has run. Greater than every bad outcome the worry has rehearsed. The future outcomes the worry rehearses are creation — things that may or may not occur, held in the one power's governance. The worry is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than every feared outcome the worry has rehearsed, mightier than the scenarios themselves.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The feared outcomes are creation — possibilities within a created future, held in the governance of the one power. And the one who is mightier than all of creation holds every outcome the worry has rehearsed. He governs them. The worry's rehearsal does not change His governance. He holds the future the worry is spending its present suffering on.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The worry has been spending present energy on future outcomes that are in the one power's governance. This prayer returns the energy to the present by transferring the outcomes to the one who holds them. Not: guarantee me the outcomes I fear won't happen. Be sufficient within the future — within the outcomes You govern, within the scenarios the worry has rehearsed, within what will come from Your governance and not from the worry's management. Whatever You will for the future the worry has been trying to govern.

Whatever You will. The future is His to govern. The present is the self's. Whatever He will for the outcomes that are in His hands and not the worry's.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the worry is the future-suffering the self brings to the address — that transfers the outcomes to the one who governs them, that returns its energy to the present where its effort actually belongs. Within divine anger, worry is the permanent misallocation — the self perpetually spending its present on what is in the one power's governance, suffering the outcomes before they arrive, with no effect on whether they arrive, and no access to the governor who holds them. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the worrying mind: the condition of the correct allocation — effort in the present, outcomes with the governor.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. The future is His. The present is here. Tawakkul: the correct allocation. He is as He has praised Himself.

The worry rehearsed the bad outcomes in advance.

The rehearsal did not change what He holds.

It only produced the suffering of the feared thing

before the feared thing,

without affecting the feared thing.

The future is His to govern.

The present is here.

Tawakkul: the correct allocation.

Effort in the present.

Outcomes with the governor.

He is as He has praised Himself.

Catastrophising

The mind that leaps from the small difficulty to the worst possible outcome.

The Condition Named

Catastrophising is worry with an accelerated trajectory. The worrying mind runs through scenarios. The catastrophising mind immediately locates the worst one and treats it as the probable outcome. The headache becomes the brain tumour. The missed call becomes the accident. The slight tension in the relationship becomes the ending of it. The small difficulty at work becomes the lost job becomes the financial ruin. The catastrophising mind does not gradually work through possibilities — it vaults directly to the worst and inhabits it.

What drives catastrophising is a specific distortion of probability: the catastrophising mind does not assess likelihood accurately. It feels the worst outcome as the most probable, as the most real, as the one that deserves the most preparation. This is the mind's threat-detection system operating without governance — the system that evolved to identify danger has been miscalibrated to identify the worst possibility as the most likely one. The suffering is real. The probability it corresponds to is not.

The tradition's answer is in the one power's actual governance of what actually arrives. The Prophet said: know that what afflicted you was not going to miss you, and what missed you was not going to afflict you. This is not fatalism — it is precision about where the governance of outcomes actually lives. The catastrophising mind has been treating worst-case outcomes as probable. The tradition says: what arrives was already determined. The catastrophised outcome is either going to arrive or it is not — and that determination is in the governance of the one power, not in the probability the catastrophising mind has assigned it. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَزَّ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one whose governance determines what actually arrives — not the probability the catastrophising mind assigns but the actual governance of outcomes. The Lord of the seven heavens holds the actual future, not the catastrophised version of it. What arrives was not going to miss you. What misses you was not going to afflict you. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The catastrophising can overwhelm — the leap to the worst outcome and the inhabiting of it before it has occurred, if it ever does. The protection from the catastrophised inhabitation is asked from the one who governs the actual outcome.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who governs what actually arrives — not the worst-case scenario the catastrophising mind has treated as probable, but the actual event, held in actual governance. The catastrophised outcome is either coming or it is not. That is not in the catastrophising mind's hands. It is in the one power's governance. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the governor of what actually arrives.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the catastrophised outcome. Greater than the worst-case scenario the mind has inhabited in advance. Greater than the probability the catastrophising mind has assigned to it. The catastrophised outcome is creation — a possible future event within the one power's governance. The catastrophising is creation — a human mind's distorted probability assessment. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the worst-case scenario, mightier than the catastrophised future the mind has been inhabiting.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The worst-case scenario is creation — a possible outcome held in the one power's governance. And the one who is mightier than all of creation governs what actually arrives. What afflicted you was not going to miss you. What missed you was not going to afflict you. The catastrophised outcome has not been given the governance of itself. He has.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The catastrophising mind has leapt to the worst outcome and treated it as the probable one. This prayer gives the actual outcome to the one who governs it. Not: guarantee me the worst won't come. Be sufficient within the actual future — within what You govern, not what the catastrophising mind has assigned as probable. Whatever You will for what actually arrives — which is in Your governance and not the catastrophising mind's probability assessment.

Whatever You will. What afflicts was not going to miss. What misses was not going to afflict. The governance is His. Whatever He will for the actual outcome that has nothing to do with the catastrophised probability.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the catastrophising is the worst-case inhabitation the self brings to the address — that gives the leap to the worst to the one who governs the actual, that releases the catastrophised probability into the governance that determines what actually arrives. Within divine anger, catastrophising is the permanent inhabitation — the self living in the worst-case scenario as if it were the probable outcome, suffering the catastrophised future before and instead of the actual one, with no access to the governor who holds the actual. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the catastrophising mind: the condition of giving the probability to the one who governs the actual.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. What afflicted you was not going to miss you. What missed you was not going to afflict you. The governance of what actually arrives is His. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The mind leapt to the worst
and inhabited it before it arrived.
What afflicted you was not going to miss you.
What missed you was not going to afflict you.
The governance of what actually arrives
is His.
Not the catastrophising mind's probability.
His governance.*

*Give the actual future to the one
who holds the actual future.*

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

Intrusive Thoughts

Thoughts the self did not choose and does not want. The mind producing what the self would never willingly think.

The Condition Named

Intrusive thoughts are the thoughts that arrive without invitation and whose content the self finds disturbing, shameful, or frightening. The image of harm that the self would never choose to enact. The blasphemous thought that arrives during prayer. The violent scenario that intrudes during an ordinary moment. The thought that seems to contradict everything the self believes itself to be — and which arrives precisely because the self would never choose it, because the mind's attention to what is forbidden is part of what makes the forbidden thought arrive.

The specific suffering of intrusive thoughts is the shame they produce. The self that experiences an intrusive thought often reads it as evidence about itself — as revealing something about its true nature, its hidden desires, its actual character. If I am having this thought, am I the kind of person who would do this? This is the intrusive thought's cruelest feature: it arrives uninvited, and then the self treats its uninvited arrival as self-authored testimony.

The tradition addresses this with precision. The Prophet said: Allah has forgiven my community for what their souls whisper to them, as long as they do not act upon it or speak it. The thought is not the act. The thought is not the speaker. The uninvited thought is not testimony about the self's character — it is the mind's production, which the self did not choose and does not endorse. The one power has already forgiven what was not acted upon. The intrusive thought has not made the self into what the thought described. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who has already forgiven what the self did not act upon — who sees the intrusive thought and its uninvited quality and has already distinguished between the thought and the act, between what the mind produces and what the self chooses. The Lord of the seven heavens knows the thought is not self-authored in the way the self fears. He has already forgiven what was not acted upon. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The intrusive thought can overwhelm — its content, its apparent testimony about the self, the shame it produces. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who has already forgiven the thought that was not acted upon.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who has already drawn the line: thought and act are different. The forgiveness is already given for what was not acted upon. The self that is overwhelmed by the intrusive thought's apparent testimony about its character is being overwhelmed by something the one power has already addressed. Mighty is Your protection: He has forgiven the thought. The thought is not the act.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحَدَّرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the intrusive thought. Greater than its content. Greater than the apparent testimony it seemed to make about the self's character. The intrusive thought is creation — a production of the human mind within a created interior, uninvited and unchosen. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the shame the intrusive thought produced, mightier than the question it raised about what the self actually is.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The intrusive thought is creation — uninvited, unchosen, not self-authored in the way the self fears. And the one who is mightier than all of creation has already addressed it: He has forgiven the community for what their souls whisper to them, as long as they do not act upon it or speak it. The thought was not the act. The one power knows this. He has forgiven accordingly.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The intrusive thought arrived uninvited and produced shame by appearing to testify about the self's character. This prayer gives the thought and the shame to the one power. Not: prevent the intrusive thought from arriving. Be sufficient within what the mind produces that the self did not choose — within the uninvited content, within the shame it produced, within the question about character it seemed to raise. Whatever You will for the self that did not act on the thought and has brought the thought to the address.

Whatever You will. He has already forgiven what was not acted upon. The thought is not the act. Whatever He will for the self that brings the uninvited thought to the one who has already drawn that distinction.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the intrusive thought is the uninvited content the self brings to the address — that gives the shame and the apparent testimony to the one who has already distinguished between thought and act, that finds in His forgiveness the release from the thought's apparent verdict on the self's character. Within divine anger, the intrusive thought becomes the permanent verdict — the self reading the uninvited thought as self-authored testimony, treating what arrived without invitation as evidence about its true nature, drowning in shame for what was never chosen. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the self that had the intrusive thought: the condition of bringing the thought to the one who has already forgiven it.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He has forgiven what was not acted upon. The thought is not the act. The thought is not the self's testimony about itself. He is as He has praised Himself.

The thought arrived uninvited.

The self did not choose it.

The self read it as testimony about its character.

He has forgiven what was not acted upon.

The thought is not the act.

The uninvited thought is not self-authored testimony.

It is the mind's production.

He knows the difference.

He has already forgiven accordingly.

Bring the thought to the one who has already forgiven it.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

Overthinking

The mind that cannot reach a conclusion because it keeps opening new angles on the same question.

The Condition Named

Overthinking is the mind's inability to stop at sufficiency. The question has been examined. The angles have been covered. A reasonable conclusion is available. And the overthinking mind opens another angle, notices another consideration, runs another scenario, and the available conclusion recedes. Not because it is wrong — it may be entirely adequate — but because the overthinking mind cannot accept sufficiency. It keeps asking whether there is something it missed, whether the conclusion would hold from a different angle, whether the decision is actually as clear as it appeared.

The suffering of overthinking is in the paralysis it produces. The overthinking mind is not advancing — it is circling. It has enough information to act but cannot translate information into action because the circle of consideration never closes. And the longer the circle continues, the more the self suffers the anxiety of undecided stakes. The paralysis is not from lack of thinking. It is from too much thinking applied to a question that thinking alone cannot resolve.

The tradition offers the concept of istikhara — the prayer of seeking good — as the correct response to the undecidable. Not more thinking, but the transfer of the undecidable to the one who actually knows the outcome. The istikhara does not produce a feeling of certainty. It produces a transfer: I have considered what I can consider. I give what I cannot determine to the one who determines it. I move with what is available and place the outcome in His governance. The overthinking is the refusal to make that transfer. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرِّي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who knows what the overthinking mind is trying to determine — who holds the outcome the overthinking is trying to secure through more consideration. The Lord of the seven heavens knows whether the decision is right. He knows what the overthinking mind is trying to know through another angle, another scenario, another consideration. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The overthinking has been an overwhelm of its own making — the circle that cannot close, the consideration that never reaches sufficiency. The protection from this is asked from the one who holds what the overthinking is trying to reach through more thought.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who holds the outcome the overthinking is trying to determine. Not: tell me the right answer. Be sufficient within the available — within what I can consider, within what the circle has already covered. You hold what I am trying to secure through more thinking. Transfer the undecidable to the one who holds the actual outcome.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَلَ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّيْلُ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the overthinking. Greater than all the angles it has opened. Greater than the paralysis the circle has produced. The question being overthought is creation — a decision within a created life. The overthinking is creation — a human mind's inability to stop at sufficiency. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the paralysis, mightier than the anxiety of the undecided stakes.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The outcome the overthinking is trying to secure through more thought is creation — held in the one power's governance. And the one who is mightier than all of creation holds the outcome the circle is trying to reach. The overthinking cannot think its way to what is in His governance. The circle cannot close on what He holds. The transfer is the only move the circle cannot make for itself.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The overthinking has been unable to accept sufficiency — opening angle after angle on a question that more thinking cannot resolve. This prayer makes the transfer. Not: give me certainty before I move. Be sufficient within the available — within what the consideration has already covered, within the adequate conclusion that the overthinking keeps receding from. Whatever You will for what I cannot determine through more thought. I move with what is available. I place the outcome in Your governance.

Whatever You will. Istikhara: the transfer of the undecidable. I have considered what I can consider. The outcome is Yours. Whatever He will for the self that releases the circle and moves.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the overthinking is the circle the self brings to the address — that makes the transfer of the undecidable, that moves with what is available and places the outcome in the governor's hands. Within divine anger, overthinking is the permanent circle — the self unable to make the transfer, perpetually opening new angles on what cannot be resolved by thinking, paralysed while the stakes remain undecided. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the overthinking mind: the condition of the transfer that the circle cannot make for itself.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He holds the outcome. The circle cannot reach what He holds through more consideration. Istikhara: the transfer. He is as He has praised Himself.

The circle opened angle after angle.

The adequate conclusion kept receding.

He holds the outcome

the circle was trying to reach.

The circle cannot think its way

to what is in His governance.

Istikhara: the transfer of the undecidable.

I have considered what I can consider.

The outcome is Yours.

Move with what is available.

He is as He has praised Himself.

Mental Loops

The same thought sequence cycling repeatedly. The mind trapped in its own repetition.

The Condition Named

Mental loops are the most mechanical of the conditions in this section. Where rumination returns to a wound and overthinking opens new angles, the mental loop is purely repetitive: the same sequence, in the same order, producing the same conclusion, beginning again. The self is aware of the loop. It can see that the thought has been thought before, that the sequence has been run before, that the conclusion is the same as last time. And the loop begins again anyway. The awareness does not break the loop. It simply adds a layer of watching the loop occur.

The suffering of mental loops is in the helplessness they produce. The self is conscious, is observing the loop, recognises its futility, and cannot interrupt it. The loop is happening to the self as much as the self is doing the loop. It has a mechanical quality — as if the mind were a machine that has gotten stuck on a particular sequence and requires something external to interrupt the mechanism. The internal efforts the self makes — telling itself to stop, trying to think of something else, arguing with the loop — become part of the loop.

The tradition's answer is the external interruption the loop requires. The dhikr is not another thought — it is a different kind of mental act. The repetition of the divine names or the short prayers of remembrance does not compete with the looping thought at the level of content. It interrupts the mechanism itself. The loop requires a certain kind of mental engagement to continue. The dhikr replaces that engagement with a different quality of attention entirely — one that the loop cannot incorporate and that the loop's mechanism cannot continue against. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرِّي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the external interruption — the address that is not part of the loop and that the loop cannot incorporate. The Lord of the seven heavens is not inside the mental loop. He is the one to whom the loop is brought, the address from outside the mechanism. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The mental loop has been an overwhelm of the mechanical kind — the self watching its own repetition, unable to stop what is happening to it. The protection from the loop is asked from the one whose address is outside the loop's mechanism.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who is not inside the mechanism. The loop's internal efforts — the self telling itself to stop — are inside the mechanism and become part of it. The address of the Lord of the seven heavens is outside. The dhikr that the self turns to in the loop is not another loop-thought. It is the external interruption the loop's mechanism cannot continue against. Mighty is Your protection: You are the interruption the loop cannot incorporate.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَلَ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّيْلُ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرِّي جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the mental loop. Greater than the same sequence cycling through for the hundredth time. Greater than the helplessness of watching the loop occur without being able to stop it. The loop is creation — a human mind's mechanical repetition within a created interior. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the loop itself, mightier than the helplessness of the aware self watching what it cannot stop.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The mental loop is creation — a mechanism within a created mind. And the one who is mightier than all of creation is outside the mechanism. He is not part of the loop. The address to which the looping mind turns is not another element the loop can incorporate. It is the external interruption — greater than the loop, not part of it, able to interrupt what internal effort cannot.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The mental loop is cycling through its sequence and the self's internal efforts to stop it have become part of it. This prayer brings the loop to the external address. Not: stop the loop by force. Be the interruption — within the loop's mechanism, within the helplessness of the aware self watching what it cannot stop. Whatever You will for the looping mind that brings the loop to the one whose address is outside it.

Whatever You will. The dhikr is not another loop-thought. It is the different quality of attention that the loop's mechanism cannot continue against. Whatever He will for the loop that is brought to the external interruption.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the mental loop is the cycling mechanism the self brings to the external address — that turns toward the dhikr not as another thought but as the different quality of attention the loop cannot incorporate, that finds in the one power's address the interruption that internal effort could not provide. Within divine anger, the mental loop is permanent — the self watching the loop, trying internal efforts that become part of the loop, cycling indefinitely without access to the external interruption. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the looping mind: the condition of the turn toward the address outside the mechanism.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He is not inside the mechanism. He is the external interruption. The dhikr interrupts what internal effort cannot. He is as He has praised Himself.

The same sequence cycled again.

And again.

Internal efforts became part of the loop.

He is outside the mechanism.

The dhikr is not another loop-thought.

It is a different quality of attention

that the loop's mechanism

cannot continue against.

He is the external interruption

the loop requires.

He is as He has praised Himself.

SECTION IX

The Self in Darkness

Depression. Despair. Hopelessness. The dark night of the soul. Emotional numbness. Overwhelm. Meaninglessness. The states in which the darkness is total and the light cannot be seen.

أَمْ يَجْعَلُ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا

Is it not He who made the night a covering and the day a sight?

He made the night. He made the day. The darkness is His creation. The light is coming from the same hand.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

Depression

The flattening. The heaviness. The withdrawal of colour from a life that continues to function in outline.

The Condition Named

Depression is not sadness. Sadness is a specific response to a specific loss. Depression is a state — a pervasive heaviness that settles across everything, flattening what was vivid, withdrawing the capacity for pleasure from what should produce it, making ordinary tasks feel like they require effort far beyond what they actually demand. The depressed self continues to exist, often continues to function, but does so within a heaviness that the self did not choose and cannot simply lift by deciding to feel differently.

This is what separates depression from the other conditions in this book: it is not primarily a response to what arrived. It is a state of the interior. The sadness that grief produces has a cause — the loss. The anger of Section II has a cause — the thing refused. Depression may have precipitating factors, but the state itself has a self-sustaining quality that outlasts its causes. The heaviness is present in the morning before anything has happened. It does not require an event to maintain itself.

The tradition acknowledges the darkness without demanding that the self perform its way out of it. The Prophet Yunus called from inside the darkness of the whale: there is no god but You, glory be to You, I was indeed of the wrongdoers. He did not call from resolution. He called from inside the darkness. The Quran records that he was answered. The answer came not because the darkness had lifted but because the call was made from within it. The depression is not the obstacle to the address. It is the condition from which the address is made. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins not from resolution but from inside the heaviness — made exactly as the Prophet Yunus made his call from inside the darkness that surrounded him. The Lord of the seven heavens received that call. He receives this one. He is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the darkness that has settled over them. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The depression itself is the overwhelm — the heaviness that has settled across everything. The protection from the overwhelm is asked from the one who received the call from inside the whale, from inside the darkness, from the one who said there is no god but You.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who answered from inside the darkness. Not: remove the darkness first, then I will pray. He receives the prayer from inside the darkness. The depressed self that brings this prayer is bringing it from exactly the right place — from inside what surrounds it, to the one who answered from inside what surrounded the Prophet Yunus. Mighty is Your protection: it reaches inside.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ جَمًّا أَحَافُ وَأُحْدَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the depression. Greater than the heaviness that has settled across everything. Greater than the flattening of what was vivid, the withdrawal of colour from what continues in outline. The depression is creation — a human state within

a created interior, within a created life. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the heaviness, mightier than the self-sustaining quality of the state that does not require an event to maintain itself.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The depression is creation. It has settled within a created interior that the one power made and holds and governs. Is it not He who made the night a covering and the day a sight? He made the night. The darkness is His creation. The depressed self is inside what He made. And the one who made the night also made the day — from the same hand, in the same governance.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The depression has flattened the capacity for what the self knew before the heaviness arrived. This prayer does not ask to feel better before it can be made. It is made from inside the flatness — from the heavy morning, the outline-functioning, the withdrawn colour. Whatever You will for the self inside the depression — for what is being built in the darkness that cannot be built in the light, for what the call from inside the darkness produces that the call from resolution cannot.

Whatever You will. He answered from inside the whale. Whatever He will for the self that calls from inside the heaviness — which is the correct place to call from, which He has always received.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the depression is the darkness from which the call is made — the self that calls from inside the heaviness, that does not wait for resolution to reach the address, that makes the prayer from exactly the condition it is in. Within divine anger, depression is the darkness that also closes the address — the self that believes the heaviness makes it unable to call, that waits for the depression to lift before bringing it to the one who answers from inside it. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the depressed self: the condition of calling from inside the darkness to the one who answers there.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He made the night. He made the day. He answers from inside the darkness. He is as He has praised Himself.

The darkness settled across everything.

He made the night.

He made the day.

From the same hand.

The Prophet Yunus called from inside the darkness.

He was answered.

The depression is not the obstacle to the address.

It is the condition from which the address is made.

Call from inside the heaviness.

He answers there.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

Despair

The self that has concluded the darkness will not lift. The giving up of hope for what hope was pointing toward.

The Condition Named

Despair is the most theologically serious of the negative emotions in this book, because it is not simply a state — it is a conclusion. The despairing self has assessed its situation and determined: this will not change. There is no relief coming. The darkness is permanent. The hope that was once present has been examined and found groundless. Despair is not the absence of hope — it is the active conclusion that hope is not warranted. This is why the Quran treats despair of the divine mercy as among the gravest of errors: the conclusion that there is no relief coming is a conclusion about the one power's governance. It is a verdict on what He will do.

The tradition addresses despair with the directness of the verse that opens this book: say, O My servants who have transgressed against themselves — do not despair of Allah's mercy. The address is direct, the command is clear, and the reason is given: indeed Allah forgives all sins. The despair's conclusion — that the darkness is permanent, that no mercy is coming — is directly contradicted by the one power's own word. The despair has made a prediction about the future of the one power's governance. The one power has already answered the prediction.

The despair is real. The conclusion is wrong. Not wrong because the self should feel better, not wrong because the circumstances are actually fine — but wrong because the despair has confused what it can see with what exists. What the despairing self can see is the darkness. What exists also includes the one who made the darkness and the day that He has announced is coming. The despair cannot see the day. The one who made the night has already said it is there. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one whose word has already answered the despair's conclusion. The Lord of the seven heavens said: do not despair of My mercy. He said it to those who had transgressed against themselves — to the despairing self specifically, to the one that had concluded the darkness was permanent. He addressed the conclusion before it was made. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The despair is the overwhelming — the conclusion that has settled across the future and closed it. The protection from the despair's conclusion is asked from the one who has already issued the counter-word.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one whose word stands over the despair's conclusion. Do not despair of My mercy. This was said. It was said to the ones who had transgressed against themselves — to the despairing self. The despair's conclusion — that the darkness is permanent, that mercy is not coming — has been directly addressed by the one who has the authority to address it. He said the mercy is coming. Mighty is Your protection: the word that stands over the conclusion.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحْدَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the despair. Greater than the conclusion the despair has reached. Greater than the darkness the despair has concluded is permanent. The darkness is creation — made by the one power, governed by the one power, within the same governance that made the day. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the despair's conclusion, mightier than the prediction the despair has made about the future of the one power's mercy.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The darkness is creation. The despair is creation — a human conclusion within a human interior, made with the limited information of the self inside the darkness. And the one who is mightier than all of creation has made the day that the despair, inside the darkness, cannot see. Do not despair of My mercy. Indeed I forgive all sins. The despair's conclusion does not have the authority of the one power's word. The word stands.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The despair has concluded the darkness is permanent. This prayer gives the conclusion to the one whose word has already answered it. Not: make the darkness lift now so the despair can believe. Be sufficient within the darkness — within the despair's conclusion, within the future the despair has closed. Whatever You will for the despairing self that gives its conclusion to the one who has already issued the counter-word — that says: do not despair of My mercy, and means it, and governs accordingly.

Whatever You will. Do not despair of Allah's mercy. Indeed Allah forgives all sins. He said it. He said it to this self. Whatever He will for the self that gives the despair's conclusion to the one whose word stands over it.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the despair is the closed conclusion the self brings to the address — that places the verdict on the future before the one who governs the future, that finds in His word the counter to what the despair concluded from inside the darkness. Within divine anger, despair is the closed future — the self that accepted the conclusion as final, that did not bring the despair to the one who has already spoken against it, that allowed the darkness inside the darkness to obscure the word that stands outside it. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the despairing self: the condition of bringing the closed conclusion to the one whose word has already reopened it.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Do not despair of My mercy. Indeed I forgive all sins. He said it. He is as He has praised Himself.

The despair concluded: the darkness is permanent.

He said: do not despair of My mercy.

He said it to this self specifically —

to those who had transgressed against themselves.

*The despair's conclusion does not have
the authority of His word.*

His word stands.

Do not despair of Allah's mercy.

Indeed Allah forgives all sins.

He said it.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT

Hopelessness

The specific loss of hope for a specific thing. Not despair of everything — the closing of one door.

The Condition Named

Hopelessness is more specific than despair. Despair is the global conclusion that the darkness is permanent and mercy is not coming. Hopelessness is the specific conclusion that a particular thing is not going to happen — the relationship will not be repaired, the health will not return, the door that was wanted will not open. The hopeless self has not necessarily given up on everything. It has given up on this specific thing. And the loss of hope for a specific thing that was deeply wanted is its own distinct suffering.

The specificity of hopelessness makes it in some ways more treatable than despair and in other ways more resistant. Because hopelessness is about a specific object, it can be addressed specifically — the door may yet open, the relationship may yet turn, the prognosis may yet change. But the specific quality also means the hopeless self has often accumulated evidence for its conclusion: things were tried and did not work, time passed and the door remained closed, the evidence assembled is not nothing. The hope is not simply absent. It was present and was worn away by specific repeated failure.

The tradition holds two things simultaneously about specific hopelessness. First, the one power governs what opens and what closes — He is Al-Fattah, the Opener, and no door is permanently sealed by creation. Second, what closes may close in mercy — the thing the self hoped for may not have been the thing the governance held as good for it. Perhaps you dislike something that is good for you. The specific hopelessness is about a specific object. The one power's governance holds both the object and the reason for its current closure. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرَّ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who holds the specific door the hope was directed at — who governs whether it opens, when it opens, and what is held in His governance about why it has not yet opened. The Lord of the seven heavens holds the specific object of the lost hope within a wisdom the hopeless self cannot see from inside the closure. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The hopelessness can overwhelm — the accumulated evidence, the repeatedly tried door, the specific thing that was deeply wanted and whose possibility has worn away. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who governs the door.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of Al-Fattah — the Opener — over the door the hope has given up on. No door is permanently sealed by creation's closure. The door the self has stopped hoping for is held in the governance of the one who opens. Whether it opens, and when, and what opens instead if it does not — these are in His governance, not in the evidence the hopelessness has assembled.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَفْعَرَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the hopelessness. Greater than the specific thing the hope was given up on. Greater than the accumulated evidence that wore the hope away. The specific door is creation — an outcome within a created world, held in the governance of the one power. The hopelessness is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the conclusion that the specific door will not open, mightier than the accumulated evidence that assembled the conclusion.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The specific thing the hopelessness has given up on is creation — held in the one power's governance. Al-Fattah: He opens. Not yet is not never. The evidence the hopelessness assembled was evidence from within a timeline the one power governs. What the evidence could see and what His governance holds are not the same.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The hopelessness has given up on a specific thing — the door is assessed as closed, the accumulated evidence has worn the hope away. This prayer gives the specific thing to the one who governs it. Not: open the door now so the hope can return. Be sufficient within the closure — within the specific thing the self has stopped hoping for, within the accumulated evidence, within the wearing away of hope for this particular object. Whatever You will for the door — for whether it opens or whether what opens is different from what was hoped for and better than what the hope was pointing at.

Whatever You will. Al-Fattah. He opens what He will. Perhaps what is disliked is good. Whatever He will for the self that gives the specific hope — and the specific hopelessness — to the one who holds what the hope was pointing toward.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the hopelessness is the worn-away hope the self brings to the address — that gives the specific closed door to Al-Fattah, that releases the accumulated evidence into the governance of the one who holds what the hope was pointing at. Within divine anger, hopelessness is the permanent closure — the self that accepted the evidence as the final word, that did not bring the worn-away hope to the one who governs the door, that missed that not yet is not never and that what the governance holds may differ from what the hope specified. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the hopeless self: the condition of giving the specific door to the Opener.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Fattah. He opens. Not yet is not never. Perhaps what is disliked is good. He is as He has praised Himself.

The evidence assembled. The hope wore away.

The door was assessed as closed.

Al-Fattah. The Opener.

Not yet is not never.

The evidence was assembled from inside a timeline

He governs.

*What the evidence could see
and what His governance holds
are not the same.*

Give the specific door to the Opener.

He is as He has praised Himself.

The Dark Night of the Soul

The darkness that arrives not despite faith but within it. The silence where presence was.

The Condition Named

The dark night of the soul is a specific and ancient condition: the darkness that arrives within the life of the person who has known the light. It is not the darkness of the one who never believed, never felt the presence, never experienced the warmth of the address being received. It is the darkness that comes to the one for whom the address was real — and then, for a period, seems to go silent. The self that knew something now finds itself in a place where what it knew seems distant, where the practice continues but the warmth has withdrawn, where the presence that was felt is present no longer.

This is the darkness of the Prophet's pause — the period before Surah Ad-Duha, when revelation paused and the Prophet experienced the withdrawal of what had been most present. He feared abandonment. The revelation came as the counter: your Lord has not abandoned you nor hated you. The dark night is the experiential equivalent of that pause — the period in which the self cannot feel what it knows to be there, in which the address feels unheard, in which the warmth of the known presence has withdrawn without the known presence having actually withdrawn.

The tradition holds this condition with particular depth precisely because it is the darkness within the relationship, not the darkness outside it. The mystics documented it. The scholars acknowledged it. The one who made the night made it for those who know the day too — and the darkness within the relationship is not the dissolution of the relationship. It is a depth of the relationship that the light cannot produce. The self in the dark night is not abandoned. It is in a place the one power permits for reasons the darkness cannot see. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجِي جَارُكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who permitted the silence — who governs the withdrawal of warmth without withdrawing the presence that the warmth pointed to. The Lord of the seven heavens is present in the dark night as He was present in the light. The silence is not His absence. It is what His presence feels like in this specific depth. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The dark night can overwhelm precisely because it arrives within the relationship — the self that knew the light now in the darkness, the address that felt real now feeling unheard. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one who said to the Prophet: I have not abandoned you.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who said: your Lord has not abandoned you nor hated you. He said this in the darkness. He said it to the one who feared the silence meant abandonment. The dark night is not abandonment. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one who is present in the silence.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the dark night. Greater than the silence where presence was. Greater than the withdrawal of warmth that the dark night brings. The silence is

creation — a period within a created life, within a created relationship, within a created experience of the divine presence. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the silence, mightier than the fear that the silence means the presence has actually withdrawn.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The warmth that has withdrawn is creation — the felt quality of the presence, the experiential warmth that the relationship produces. The presence itself is not creation in the same sense. He is Al-Qayyum — the self-subsisting, the one who does not depend on being felt to be present. He is present in the dark night as He was present in the light. The darkness does not change His being present. It changes what being present feels like from inside the night.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The dark night has withdrawn the warmth while the self continues the practice — continues the address to what feels unheard, continues in the relationship whose warmth has temporarily gone quiet. This prayer continues the address from inside the silence. Not: restore the warmth so the address feels received. Be sufficient within the silence — within the dark night, within the practice that continues without the warmth, within the relationship that is real even when it does not feel real. Whatever You will for the self in the dark night — for what is being built in the depth that the light cannot produce.

Whatever You will. The dark night produces what the light cannot. Whatever He will for the self that continues the address from inside the silence, that does not confuse the withdrawal of warmth with the withdrawal of the one who made the warmth.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the dark night is the silence the self continues to address — that keeps the practice in the absence of warmth, that does not confuse the silence with abandonment, that continues toward the one who said I have not abandoned you. Within divine anger, the dark night is the abandonment — the self reading the silence as withdrawal, stopping the address because it feels unheard, missing that the presence is there in the silence even when the silence is all that can be felt. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the self in the dark night: the condition of continuing the address from inside the silence.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Your Lord has not abandoned you nor hated you. He said this into the darkness. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The warmth withdrew.
The practice continued.
The address felt unheard.
He said into the darkness:
Your Lord has not abandoned you.
The darkness within the relationship
is not the dissolution of the relationship.
Al-Qayyum. Self-subsisting.
He does not depend on being felt to be present.
Continue the address from inside the silence.*

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER SIXTY

Emotional Numbness

The absence of feeling. The self that should feel and finds nothing where feeling should be.

The Condition Named

Emotional numbness is the condition in which the self's capacity for feeling has gone quiet. What should move it does not. What should hurt does not. What should bring joy does not. The self knows, in principle, that these things should produce responses — the beautiful thing should be beautiful, the loss should hurt, the good news should gladden. But the feeling does not arrive. The self is present to what should produce feeling and finds instead a flatness where the response should be.

Numbness often arrives as a protection — the self that has experienced too much, or too intensely, has had its feeling-mechanism go quiet as a form of shock absorption. The numbness is not chosen. It arrives when the system cannot sustain the level of feeling it was being subjected to. In this sense numbness has a mercy to it — it is the self's interior reducing its own exposure when the exposure has been excessive. But the numbness, once it arrives, can persist past the need that produced it, becoming a condition in its own right.

The tradition's answer is not to force feeling — not to perform emotion or manufacture what is not there. It is to continue the address from whatever state is present, including the numb one. The Prophet taught du'a for states in which the self cannot feel what it should feel — prayers made with the tongue when the heart cannot reach the words. And the one power's reception of the prayer does not depend on the self's emotional experience of making it. The numb prayer reaches as fully as the moved one. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer is made from the numb state — without the feeling the prayer might be expected to carry, with the tongue when the heart cannot reach the words. The Lord of the seven heavens receives what is brought. He receives the numb prayer as He receives the moved one. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The numbness itself can be an overwhelm of the quiet kind — the flatness where feeling should be, the self knowing what should be felt and finding nothing there. The protection from the numbness is asked from the one whose reception does not depend on the self's emotional experience of the address.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who receives the numb prayer. The prayer made from numbness is still a prayer. The tongue that reaches when the heart cannot is still reaching. The one power's reception of what is brought is not conditional on the self's emotional experience of bringing it. Mighty is Your protection: He receives what is brought, in whatever state it is brought.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَائُوكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the numbness. Greater than the flatness where feeling should be. Greater than the absence of the response the self knows should be there. The numbness is creation — a human state within a created interior, arrived as protection, persisting as condition. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and

what I dread — mightier than the flatness, mightier than the concern that the numbness is permanent or that the feeling-capacity is gone.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The numbness is creation. The feeling-capacity that has gone quiet is creation — a human capacity within a human interior, within the governance of the one who made it. He made the capacity. He governs its quieting and its return. The numbness is within His governance, not outside it.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The numbness has stilled the feeling-capacity — the self present to what should produce response and finding flatness. This prayer is made from the flatness, without manufactured emotion, with what is actually there. Not: restore feeling before I can pray. Be sufficient within the numb state — within the flatness, within the address made with the tongue when the heart cannot reach. Whatever You will for the numb self — for the return of feeling capacity, for what the numbness has been protecting against, for what the self finds in the continued address made from the numb state.

Whatever You will. The numb prayer reaches. The tongue reaches when the heart cannot. Whatever He will for the self that continues the address from exactly the state it is in.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the numbness is the flatness the self brings to the address — that makes the prayer from the numb state, that does not wait for feeling to return before reaching the address, that trusts that the numb prayer reaches as fully as the moved one. Within divine anger, numbness is the permanent closure — the self reading the flatness as inability to pray, waiting for feeling to return before reaching the address, not reaching the address that does not require feeling as the price of admission. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the numb self: the condition of the address made from whatever is actually there.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Himself. He receives what is brought in whatever state it is brought. The numb prayer reaches. He is as He has praised Himself.

*Feeling should have been there. It was not.
The prayer was made from the flatness.
The numb prayer reaches
as fully as the moved one.
His reception does not depend
on the self's emotional experience of bringing.
The tongue reaches when the heart cannot.
Make the address from exactly the state you are in.
He receives what is brought.
Whatever He will for the numb self
that continues the address.*

CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE

Overwhelm

Too much at once. The self's capacity exceeded by what has accumulated or arrived simultaneously.

The Condition Named

Overwhelm is the state in which what the self is being asked to carry exceeds its capacity to carry it. Not one heavy thing but many — or one thing so heavy that the self's structure cannot hold it without bending. The overwhelmed self is not dramatising. Its capacity has genuinely been exceeded. The tasks, the demands, the weights, the decisions, the emotions, the losses — something about the total, or about this specific thing's weight, is more than the self can hold in its ordinary manner.

Overwhelm is distinct from the other conditions in this section because it is not primarily a state of the interior. It is a relationship between what is outside the self and the self's capacity. The overwhelm is real because what is being asked is genuinely too much for this specific self in this specific moment with this specific capacity. This is important: the tradition does not say the self should be able to carry anything. It says the one power does not burden a soul beyond its capacity — and the fact that the self is overwhelmed is evidence that the accounting of what is being asked may not be aligning with what the one power has promised.

The tradition's answer is the immediate transfer of the excess to the one power. Not: manage the overwhelm better. Give it to the one whose capacity has no limit. The self was not designed to carry everything. It was designed to carry what is its portion and give the rest to the governance of the one who holds it. The overwhelm is often the signal that the self has been carrying what was not its portion to carry. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجِي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one whose capacity has no limit — who holds what the self cannot hold, whose governance covers what is exceeding the self's portion. The Lord of the seven heavens is not overwhelmed by what is overwhelming the self. He holds it all within the same governance. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The overwhelm is the overwhelm — the capacity exceeded, the structure bending under what has accumulated. The protection from the overwhelm is asked from the one who holds what cannot be held by the self.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who holds what exceeds the self's capacity. Not: expand my capacity to match what is being asked. Hold what I cannot hold. The self was not designed to carry everything. Mighty is Your protection: You carry what the self cannot.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ وَعَرْجِي جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the overwhelm. Greater than everything that has accumulated to produce it. Greater than the weight of this specific thing or the total of the many things. The accumulated weight is creation — the sum of created demands, created losses, created decisions within a created life. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier

than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the overwhelm itself, mightier than the weight that has exceeded the self's capacity.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. He does not burden a soul beyond its capacity. The overwhelm is evidence that something in the accounting needs adjustment — that the self may have taken on what is not its portion, or that what is being demanded is beyond what the governance intended for this soul. He holds what is not the self's portion to carry. His capacity is not exceeded.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The overwhelm has exceeded the self's capacity — there is more than the self can hold. This prayer places the excess with the one whose capacity has no limit. Not: increase my capacity. Hold what I cannot hold. Be sufficient within the excess — within what is beyond the self's portion, within the weight that has bent the structure. Whatever You will for what the self is being asked to carry that is not its portion, and for what is genuinely its portion within what has accumulated.

Whatever You will. He does not burden beyond capacity. Whatever He will for the self that gives the excess to the one whose capacity is unlimited.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أُحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the overwhelm is the excess the self brings to the address — that gives what exceeds its capacity to the one who holds what the self cannot, that releases the portion that was never the self's to carry. Within divine anger, overwhelm is the permanent load — the self carrying what is not its portion indefinitely, bending under what was never designed to be held by the self alone, with no access to the one whose capacity covers what the self's cannot. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the overwhelmed self: the condition of giving the excess to the one whose capacity has no limit.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He does not burden beyond capacity. He holds what the self cannot. He is as He has praised Himself.

*Too much had accumulated.
The self's capacity was genuinely exceeded.
He does not burden a soul beyond its capacity.
The overwhelm was the signal:
something in the accounting
needed adjustment.
Give the excess to the one
whose capacity has no limit.
He holds what the self cannot.
Whatever He will for what was never
the self's portion to carry.*

Meaninglessness

The conclusion that nothing matters. Not specific hopelessness — the global absence of significance.

The Condition Named

Meaninglessness is the conclusion that existence has no significance — that the events of a life, the choices made, the things pursued and lost and gained, do not add up to anything that matters. It differs from emptiness (which is the hollow quality of existence) and from directionlessness (which cannot find its specific place in what matters) — meaninglessness has drawn a conclusion: there is nothing that matters. The self has looked at the structure of existence and found it without significance. Not: I cannot find what is meaningful. There is nothing meaningful to find.

This conclusion, when it has settled, has a particular quality of flatness combined with a kind of dark clarity. The meaningless self does not experience its conclusion as painful in the way that loss is painful. It experiences it as seen — as the accurate perception of what is actually the case. This is what makes meaninglessness resistant to argument: the self believes it is seeing clearly, that the apparent meaning others find in their lives is either illusion or self-deception, that the conclusion is not a symptom but an insight.

The tradition's direct answer is the verse that anchors this section: did you think We created you without purpose? The question confronts the meaninglessness conclusion at its root. The conclusion says: no purpose. The one power says: did you think? The question is pointed — it challenges not just the conclusion but the reasoning. The meaninglessness drew its conclusion from looking at existence within the world's frame. But existence has a frame the world cannot contain: return to the one who made it. The meaning the world's frame cannot hold is held in the governance of the one power. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who made the existence the meaninglessness has assessed and found without significance. The Lord of the seven heavens made it with purpose — purpose that the world's frame cannot contain, purpose that the meaninglessness conclusion could not see from inside the world's frame. He is the meaning the frame could not hold. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The meaninglessness can overwhelm in its dark clarity — the flat conclusion that nothing matters, the seeing that believes it has finally seen correctly. The protection from the overwhelm of the conclusion is asked from the one whose making of existence has already answered it.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one whose creation of existence has already denied the meaninglessness conclusion. Did you think We created you without purpose? We did not. The meaning the world's frame could not hold is held by the one who made the world's frame and what is beyond it. Mighty is Your protection: the meaning the conclusion missed.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحَدَّرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the meaninglessness. Greater than the conclusion that nothing matters. Greater than the dark clarity with which the conclusion presents itself as insight. The meaninglessness conclusion is creation — a human conclusion within a human interior, made from within the world's frame. The Creator is greater than all of it, and greater than the frame the conclusion was working within. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the flat conclusion, mightier than the dark clarity that believes it has finally seen correctly.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The conclusion of meaninglessness assessed existence within the world's frame. And the one who is mightier than all of creation made the existence being assessed and holds its purpose in a frame that exceeds the world. Did you think We created you without purpose? He did not. The meaning is there. It is in the frame the conclusion was not working within.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The meaninglessness has concluded that nothing matters — has drawn the conclusion from inside the world's frame and found no significance in what the frame contains. This prayer gives the conclusion to the one who made the frame and what exceeds it. Not: show me something meaningful within the world so the conclusion can be revised. Be sufficient within the conclusion — within the dark clarity, within the nothing-matters, within the existence the conclusion assessed. Whatever You will for the self inside the meaninglessness conclusion — for what exists beyond the frame the conclusion was working within, for what the purpose is that the conclusion could not see.

Whatever You will. Did you think We created you without purpose? He did not. Whatever He will for the self that gives the conclusion to the one who has already answered it.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the meaninglessness is the conclusion the self brings to the address — that gives the nothing-matters to the one who made the existence that matters, that finds in His governance the purpose that the world's frame could not contain. Within divine anger, meaninglessness is the permanent conclusion — the self inside the dark clarity, with no access to the frame the one power holds, accepting the conclusion as final insight rather than as the view from inside a limited frame. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the self inside the meaninglessness conclusion: the condition of bringing the conclusion to the one whose making has already answered it.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Did you think We created you without purpose? He did not. The meaning is held in the frame He made. He is as He has praised Himself.

The conclusion settled: nothing matters.

Did you think We created you without purpose?

We did not.

The conclusion was drawn from inside the world's frame.

The purpose is held in a frame

that exceeds the world.

*The meaning the world's frame could not hold
is held by the one who made the frame
and what is beyond it.*

Give the conclusion to the one who has answered it.

He is as He has praised Himself.

SECTION X

The Self That Recoils

Fear. Dread. Panic. Phobia. Social anxiety. Shame before others. The self that encounters what it cannot face and turns away from it.

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمُ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

Do not weaken and do not grieve, for you are the highest if you are believers.

The self that recoils has made what it faces larger than the one power who governs it. The recoil is real. The proportion is wrong.

CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE

Fear

The self encountering a threat — real or perceived — and mobilising against it.

The Condition Named

Fear is the mind and body's response to perceived threat. This is its purpose: to alert the self to what requires response, to mobilise the resources needed to face or avoid what is dangerous. In this sense fear is not an error — it is a capacity. The capacity to recognise danger and respond to it has obvious value. The question the tradition addresses is not whether fear exists but what the self does with fear and, crucially, what the fear is scaled against.

The problem with fear is not its presence but its proportion. Fear scaled correctly to an actual threat is useful. Fear scaled to the one power's governance — what He has permitted to approach the self, what He holds in His governance — is different from fear scaled to the threat alone. The feared thing is not approaching the self outside the governance of the one power. It is within that governance. And the one power who governs the feared thing is Al-Hafiz — the Protector — whose protection of the self is not subject to the threat's power over the self outside His governance.

The Prophet taught specific prayers against fear, and the tradition is rich in the guidance that the believer's fear should ultimately be scaled to the one power — that what the believer is to be most mindful of is His governance and not the governance of the threat. Do not weaken and do not grieve, for you are the highest if you are believers. The fear is real. The one power's governance of what is feared is also real — and is larger. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who is Lord over what is feared — who governs the threat, who holds the self within the same governance that holds what approaches it. The Lord of the seven heavens is Lord over the feared thing. The threat does not approach the self outside His lordship. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The fear can overwhelm — the mobilisation against the threat consuming the self's resources, the proportion tilting toward the feared thing. The protection from the overwhelm of the fear is asked from the one who governs what is feared.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of Al-Hafiz over the self that faces what it fears. The feared thing is within His governance. The protection of the one who governs the threat is not subject to the threat's power as if it operated independently of His governance. Mighty is Your protection: You are Lord over what I fear.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُحْذِرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the fear. Greater than the threat that produced it. Greater than what the fear has scaled the threat to. The feared thing is creation — within the governance of the one power, unable to approach the self outside that governance. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — this is

precisely what this line of the prayer addresses. Mightier than what I fear. The one power is mightier than the feared thing.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The feared thing is creation. And the one who is mightier than all of creation governs the feared thing. The fear has scaled the threat to the self's resources. The tradition scales the threat to the one power's governance — and to that scale, the threat is creation, held within the governance of the one who is mightier than all of it.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The fear has mobilised the self against the threat — producing the recoil, the avoidance, the consumption of resources against what is approaching. This prayer gives the threat to the one who governs it. Not: remove the threat so the fear can subside. Be sufficient within the face of what is feared — within the approach of what the self fears, within the governance that holds both the self and the feared thing. Whatever You will for the self as it faces what it fears.

Whatever You will. The feared thing is within His governance. Whatever He will for the self that scales the threat to His governance rather than its own resources.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the fear is the mobilisation the self brings to the address — that scales the threat to the one power's governance rather than its own resources, that faces what it fears with the protection of the one who governs what is feared. Within divine anger, fear is the disproportionate recoil — the self scaling the threat to itself alone, weakening and grieving without access to the governance of the one who holds the feared thing. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the fearful self: the condition of facing what is feared with the one who governs it.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He is mightier than what is feared. Do not weaken and do not grieve. He is as He has praised Himself.

The threat approached.
The fear mobilised against it.
The feared thing is creation.
He governs it.
Allah is the Greatest —
mightier than what I fear
and what I dread.
Scale the threat to His governance.
Do not weaken. Do not grieve.
You are the highest if you are believers.
He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR

Dread

Fear settled in. The sustained weight of what is coming before it has arrived.

The Condition Named

Dread is fear that has settled into the future and taken up residence there. Where acute fear is the sharp response to an immediate threat, dread is the sustained heaviness of the anticipated threat — the weight of what is coming that has already arrived in the form of its anticipation. The self is not facing the threat now. It is living under the approach of it. The dread is the sustained weight of the approach, the way it colours the present, the way it makes ordinary moments into the duration before the feared thing arrives.

Dread has a particularly consuming quality because it does not resolve. Acute fear mobilises and then either the threat is faced and the mobilisation has a destination, or the threat passes and the mobilisation subsides. Dread has no such structure. The threat is still coming. The mobilisation has nowhere to discharge. The self sits in the sustained weight of what has not yet arrived, which may arrive in a different form than feared, or which the one power may redirect entirely — but the dread does not know this and cannot act on what it does not know.

The tradition's answer is in the one power's governance of what is coming. The self in dread is living under the approach of what is in the one power's hands. The one power holds the approach — holds whether it arrives, in what form, with what it carries, and what comes after it. The dread is the weight of what is in His governance, carried by the self as if its carrying changed the governance. It does not. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرِّي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who governs the approach the dread is living under — who holds the feared thing that is coming and who holds whether it comes in the form feared, and when, and what follows. The Lord of the seven heavens governs the approach. The dread has been carrying the weight of what is in His governance. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The dread can overwhelm — the sustained weight, the approach that colours every present moment, the mobilisation with nowhere to discharge. The protection from the overwhelm is asked from the one who governs the approach.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who holds the feared approach within His governance. The dread has been carrying the weight of what He holds as if the carrying changed what He holds. It does not. The protection of the one who governs the approach is the protection that says: give Me the approach. Stop carrying what is in My hands.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَائُوكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the dread. Greater than what is approaching. Greater than the sustained weight of the anticipated threat. The approach is creation — what is coming is within the governance of the one power, unable to arrive outside His

governance. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the dread itself, mightier than what the dread is sustained under.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. What is approaching is creation — within the governance of the one power. And the one who is mightier than all of creation governs the approach. He holds it. He holds whether it arrives as feared. He holds what comes after it. The dread has been carrying what is in His hands.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The dread has been carrying the sustained weight of the approach — living under what is coming, unable to discharge the mobilisation, colouring the present with the anticipated arrival. This prayer gives the approach to the one who holds it. Not: make what is dreaded not come. Be sufficient within the approach — within the sustained weight, within the anticipated arrival, within the present coloured by what is coming. Whatever You will for the approach — for whether it arrives as feared, for what comes after, for what the self finds when it gives the approach to the one who governs it.

Whatever You will. The approach is His to govern. The present is here. Whatever He will for the self that gives the sustained weight to the one who holds the approach.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the dread is the sustained weight the self brings to the address — that gives the approach to the one who governs it, that releases the present from the weight of what is coming by placing what is coming in the governance of the one who holds it. Within divine anger, dread is the permanent weight — the self carrying what is in the one power's hands indefinitely, colouring every present moment with the approach, with no access to the governance of the one who holds the approach. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the dreading self: the condition of giving the sustained weight to the one who holds the approach.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He governs the approach. He holds what is coming. Give what is coming to the one who holds it. He is as He has praised Himself.

The dread carried the approach

before the approach arrived.

The approach is His to govern.

He holds whether it arrives as feared.

He holds what comes after.

The dread was carrying what is in His hands.

The carrying did not change the governance.

Give the approach to the one who holds it.

Return to the present that is here.

Whatever He will for what is coming.

He is as He has praised Himself.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE

Panic

Fear past the self's governance. The system overtaken by its own alarm.

The Condition Named

Panic is fear that has overtaken the self's capacity to govern its own response. In ordinary fear, the fear is present and the self remains present to itself — frightened but still the subject of the fear, still capable of deciding how to respond. In panic, the fear has overwhelmed the self's governing capacity. The alarm system has overtaken the system it was meant to serve. The self is no longer the subject of the fear — the panic is happening to the self. The breath, the heart, the thoughts — they have moved past the self's governance into the alarm's own logic.

The panic state is self-sustaining in a specific way: the physical symptoms of panic — the rapid heart rate, the shallow breathing, the heightened arousal — are themselves alarming, which produces more alarm, which intensifies the symptoms, which produces more alarm. The panic feeds on its own output. The self that tries to stop the panic by addressing it mentally discovers that the mental address cannot reach what is happening physiologically. The panic is in a register that thoughts cannot directly govern.

The tradition's answer to panic is the breath and the word simultaneously — the physical and the address together. The dhikr said with the breath: subhan'Allah on the exhale, Allahu Akbar as the affirmation that the one power is greater than the panic. The breath is not a technique separate from the prayer — the breath is part of the prayer, the body brought to the address with the mind. The panic's system feeds on alarm. The dhikr with the breath introduces a different signal into the same system. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجِي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the affirmation made against the panic's logic: the Lord of the seven heavens governs what the panic has made to feel ungovernable. The body in panic has its own logic that the self cannot reach by thought. The address reaches what thought cannot. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The panic is the overwhelm in its most acute form — the system overtaken by its own alarm. The protection from the panic's overtaking is asked from the one whose name, said with the breath, introduces a different signal into the system.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who is greater than the panic. Allah is the Greatest — greater than the alarm that has overtaken the self's governance. The breath said with His name is not a technique. It is the body brought to the address. The panic's system can receive what the mind cannot directly reach. His name with the breath reaches.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ وَعَرْجُ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the panic. Greater than the alarm that has overtaken the self's governance. Greater than the physical symptoms feeding their own intensification. The panic is creation — a human fear-response overtaking a human system within a created interior. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what

I fear and what I dread — mightier than the panic itself, mightier than the system that has overtaken the self's capacity to govern its own response.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The panic is creation — a human system's self-amplifying alarm. And the one who is mightier than all of creation is greater than the system. His name said with the breath is not equal to the panic in its own register and then overcoming it. He is mightier. The address reaches past what the alarm has overtaken.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The panic has overtaken the self's governing capacity — the alarm running past what thought can address, the system in its own logic. This prayer is made from inside the panic, with the breath: each exhale a reaching, each inhale a return. Not: stop the panic by an act of will. Receive the breath made in Your name from inside the alarm. Whatever You will for the self inside the panic — for the signal that reaches what thought cannot, for the breath made in Your name that introduces a different signal into the same system.

Whatever You will. The breath with His name reaches what thought cannot. Whatever He will for the self that brings the panic to the address, breath by breath.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the panic is the overtaken system the self brings to the address — that makes the prayer with the breath from inside the alarm, that brings the body to the address when the mind cannot govern alone. Within divine anger, the panic is ungoverned — the self inside the alarm with no access to the address that reaches what thought cannot, the system feeding its own intensification with no signal introduced from outside. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the panicking self: the condition of the breath made in His name from inside the alarm.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. He is greater than the panic. His name with the breath reaches what thought cannot. He is as He has praised Himself.

The alarm overtook the self's governance.
Thought could not reach what was happening.
The breath with His name reaches what thought cannot.
Each exhale: a reaching.
Each inhale: a return.
He is greater than the panic.
His name introduced into the same system
is not technique — it is address.
The body brought to the one power.
Whatever He will for the self
that breathes His name from inside the alarm.

Social Anxiety

The self that recoils from human encounter. Fear of judgment, exposure, the gaze of others.

The Condition Named

Social anxiety is the fear of being evaluated by others and found wanting. The socially anxious self anticipates the human gaze and finds it threatening — the judgment that might be made, the impression that might be formed, the exposure that social encounter produces. It reads the situation for evidence of judgment, interprets ambiguous signals as confirmation of negative evaluation, and experiences ordinary social interactions as trials whose verdict matters enormously. The recoil is the self turning away from human encounter to avoid the exposure that encounter produces.

What makes social anxiety distinctive is its specific object: not a physical threat but the evaluation of other created beings. The self fears what other people think. And this specific fear has a theological dimension: it is the gaze of created beings elevated to a position of judgment that only the one power holds. The social anxiety has made human opinion the measure of the self's worth — a measure that is unavailable to those human beings (they cannot see the interior), inconsistent (different people in different moods will evaluate differently), and, in the tradition's frame, not the measure that actually matters.

The tradition counters with the one power's evaluation — the only evaluation that has complete information, consistent standard, and genuine authority. The Quran says: the most honoured among you in Allah's sight is the most mindful. The measure the social anxiety is trying to perform well against is not the measure. The real measure — taqwa, mindfulness of the one power — is not visible to the human gaze the social anxiety fears. And the one whose evaluation actually matters has a measure that human judgment cannot access. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one whose evaluation the self was made for — whose gaze holds the actual measure, whose assessment has complete information and consistent standard. The Lord of the seven heavens evaluates by what He knows of the interior. The human gaze that the social anxiety fears evaluates by what it can see of the exterior. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The social anxiety can overwhelm — the anticipation of judgment, the reading of every signal for evidence of negative evaluation. The protection from this overwhelm is asked from the one whose evaluation the social anxiety has been ignoring in its fear of the human gaze.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one whose evaluation has the actual authority. The social anxiety has been performing for the human gaze as if human evaluation were the final measure. The most honoured in His sight is the most mindful — and human beings cannot see mindfulness. The measure the social anxiety fears failing is not the measure. Mighty is Your protection: the protection of the one whose evaluation actually governs.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحَدَّرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ وَعَرْجَ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the social anxiety. Greater than the human gaze it fears. Greater than every evaluation it has anticipated and recoiled from. The human gaze is creation — the evaluative capacity of created beings, limited to the exterior, inconsistent, not the final authority. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the human judgment the social anxiety fears, mightier than the evaluation that the social anxiety has elevated to the position of final measure.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The human gaze is creation. The judgment the social anxiety fears is creation — the evaluation of created beings with limited information. And the one who is mightier than all of creation holds the actual measure and makes the actual evaluation. He evaluates the interior. Human beings cannot. He is the authority the social anxiety has been ignoring.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The social anxiety has been recoiling from human encounter to avoid human evaluation that it has elevated to the position of final authority. This prayer redirects toward the evaluation that has actual authority. Not: make me indifferent to human opinion by force of will. Be sufficient as the measure — within the anticipation of judgment, within the reading of signals, within the recoil from the human gaze. Whatever You will for the self that brings the fear of human evaluation to the one whose evaluation is the actual measure.

Whatever You will. The most honoured in His sight is the most mindful. The measure the social anxiety fears failing is not the measure. Whatever He will for the self that performs for the right audience.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the social anxiety is the misdirected performance the self brings to the address — that redirects from performing for the human gaze toward the measure that has actual authority, that finds in His evaluation the measure the anxiety was misidentifying in human opinion. Within divine anger, social anxiety is the permanent performance for the wrong audience — the self recoiling from or performing for human evaluation as if human opinion were the final measure, with no access to the evaluation that actually governs. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the socially anxious self: the condition of performing for the one whose evaluation is the actual measure.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. The most honoured in His sight is the most mindful. Human beings cannot see mindfulness. He can. He is as He has praised Himself.

The self feared the human gaze.

The human gaze is creation.

It evaluates the exterior.

He evaluates the interior.

The most honoured in His sight is the most mindful.

Human beings cannot see mindfulness.

*The measure the social anxiety feared failing
is not the measure.*

Perform for the one whose evaluation

has actual authority.

He is as He has praised Himself.

SECTION XI

The Self That Cannot Hold

Grief. Loss. Bereavement. Trauma. The self that has been broken by what arrived and does not know how to carry what remains.

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, and give good tidings to the patient.

The loss was real. It arrived within His governance. The patient ones are the ones who hold the loss and do not lose the address.

CHAPTER SIXTY-SEVEN

Grief

The self holding the weight of real loss. What was here and is no longer.

The Condition Named

Grief is the correct response to real loss. This is what distinguishes grief from many of the other conditions in this book: grief is not a distortion or a miscalibration or a misplacement of the self's response. Something was here. It is no longer. The grief is the weight of that subtraction — and the weight is proportional to the value. The person who does not grieve what was genuinely valuable has not perceived the value accurately. Grief is, among other things, testimony to what was real.

The tradition honours grief without demanding that it be resolved quickly. The Prophet wept at the death of his son Ibrahim. He wept at the death of companions. He said: the eye weeps and the heart grieves, and we do not say except what pleases our Lord. The grief is allowed. The heart is allowed to grieve. The constraint is not on the grief but on what is said within the grief — that the words remain within what pleases the one power, which includes acknowledging the loss, the value of what was lost, and the one power's governance of the taking.

The tradition's specific address to grief is the *inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un* — verily we belong to Allah and to Him we return. This is not comfort through minimisation. It is a statement of the truth of the situation: what was held was held in trust, from the one power, and has been returned to Him. The grief does not contradict this truth. The grief is the felt weight of the return. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرِّي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one to whom what was lost has returned — who held it before the self held it, who holds it now after the self can hold it no longer, who governs the taking as He governed the giving. The Lord of the seven heavens gave what was lost. He received what has returned. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The grief can overwhelm — the weight of the subtraction, the specific absence of what was real. The protection from the overwhelm is asked from the one to whom what was lost has returned.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of the one who holds what has been returned to Him. The self grieves the return. The one power receives what was returned. What was held was held in trust. The grief is the felt weight of the return of the trust to its origin. Mighty is Your protection: You hold what has returned.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأَخَذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمْسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعْنَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارُكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the grief. Greater than what was lost. Greater than the weight of the subtraction. What was lost is creation — something held within a created life, given by the one power, returned to the one power. The Creator is greater than all of it. Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the grief itself, mightier than the specific absence of what was real.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. What was lost is creation — held in the one power's governance before the self held it and after. Verily we belong to Allah and to Him we return. The loss is real. The one who is mightier than all of creation holds what has returned to Him. The grief does not contradict this. The grief is the felt weight of the truth.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The grief holds the weight of what is no longer here. This prayer holds both the grief and what it is grieving before the one power. Not: take the grief away. Be sufficient within the grief — within the weight of the subtraction, within the specific absence, within the heart that is allowed to grieve. Whatever You will for the grieving self — for how the grief moves, for what it finds in the carrying of what was real, for what the one power holds that the self can no longer hold.

Whatever You will. Verily we belong to Allah and to Him we return. He holds what has returned. Whatever He will for the self that holds the grief and holds the address simultaneously.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the grief is the felt weight the self brings to the address — that holds the loss and the address together,

that does not say except what pleases the Lord, that grieves within the acknowledgment that what was held was held in trust and has returned. Within divine anger, grief becomes the closed world — the self whose grief has shut the address, who cannot hold the loss and the address simultaneously, whose grief has become the conclusion that what was taken cannot have been within a mercy. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the grieving self: the condition of holding the loss and the address together.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Verily we belong to Allah and to Him we return. The eye weeps and the heart grieves. And we do not say except what pleases our Lord. He is as He has praised Himself.

*Something was here. It is no longer.
The grief is the felt weight of the subtraction.
Verily we belong to Allah
and to Him we return.
What was held was held in trust.
He held it before the self held it.
He holds it now.
The eye weeps. The heart grieves.
And we do not say except what pleases our Lord.
Hold the loss and the address together.
He is as He has praised Himself.*

CHAPTER SIXTY-EIGHT

Trauma

What arrived that the self could not hold. The wound that did not heal with time but became a structure of the interior.

The Condition Named

Trauma is the wound that restructured the interior. Ordinary suffering arrives, is experienced, and eventually the self returns to something like its prior function, carrying the memory of the suffering but no longer governed by it. Trauma is different: what arrived was beyond the self's capacity to process in the ordinary way. The wound did not heal through time. It became embedded in the structure of the self's functioning — showing up in the way the self responds to situations that resemble the original wound, in the way the body holds what the mind has tried to set down, in the way ordinary life keeps returning the self to the territory of what it was not able to hold.

The tradition holds trauma with a depth that is not always recognised: the prophets and companions experienced catastrophic losses, witnessed unspeakable violence, survived the deaths of those closest to them and continued. The tradition does not offer a quick resolution to what was endured. It offers a witness — Al-Shahid, the All-Witnessing — who was present at what happened, who saw it fully, who holds it within His knowledge. The trauma was witnessed. What was witnessed has not been lost from His knowledge.

The tradition also offers the concept of shifa — healing — as a capacity that belongs to the one power. Al-Shafi: the Healer. Not the healing that erases, but the healing that allows the wound to be carried differently — that can reach what time could not, that holds the wound in a knowledge that comprehends it fully and governs what it becomes. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجِي جَارِكَ، وَجَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, be my protector from Yourself — lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. Mighty is Your protection, exalted is Your praise, and there is no god but You.

O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The prayer begins with the one who was present at what happened — who witnessed what the self endured, who holds it in His knowledge, who is Al-Shahid over the wound that became a structure of the interior. The Lord of the seven heavens saw it. He holds it. What was endured was witnessed by the one whose witnessing has full authority. Be my protector from Yourself lest You overwhelm me or transgress against me. The trauma can overwhelm — not just in the original event but in its return, in the way the body holds what the mind tried to set down. The protection from the trauma's structuring of the interior is asked from the one who witnessed what made the structure.

Mighty is Your protection. The protection of Al-Shahid who saw it, and Al-Shafi who heals. The wound became a structure. He witnessed how it became a structure. He holds the healing that can reach what time could not. Mighty is Your protection: You were there. You saw it. You hold the shifa.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاؤُكَ وَعَزَّ جَارِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is mightier than all of His creation. Allah is mightier than what I fear and what I dread. I seek refuge in Allah — there is no god but He — the One who holds the seven heavens lest they fall upon the earth except by His permission, from His evil. O Allah, be my protector from your evil. Exalted is Your praise, mighty is Your protection, blessed is Your name, and there is no god other than You.

Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the trauma. Greater than what arrived that the self could not hold. Greater than the wound that became a structure of the interior. What arrived was creation — something that happened within a created life, within the governance of the one power who was present to it. The Creator is greater than all of it.

Mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than the trauma's structuring of the interior, mightier than the wound's continued presence in the self's functioning.

Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The trauma is creation — a wound within a created interior. Al-Shafi: the Healer. The healing the one power holds for the wound can reach what time could not — what reorganised the interior, what the mind tried to set down and the body continued to carry. He is mightier than the wound. He holds the shifa.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will.

O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The trauma has become a structure of the interior — the wound that did not heal in the ordinary way but embedded itself in the self's functioning. This prayer gives the structure to the Healer. Not: erase what happened. Hold the wound within Your knowledge and govern what it becomes. Al-Shafi: the healing that reaches what time could not. Whatever You will for the wound that became a structure — for what healing looks like for this specific interior, for what the one power holds for the self that brings the embedded wound to the address.

Whatever You will. Al-Shahid: You saw it. Al-Shafi: You hold the healing. Whatever He will for the wound that the self brings to the one who was present at its making.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself.

I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your pardon from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. Within divine pleasure, the trauma is the wound-become-structure the self brings to the address — that gives the embedded wound to the one who witnessed its making and holds its healing, that places what time could not reach before the one who holds the shifa that time could not provide. Within divine anger, the trauma is the closed structure — the wound governing the interior without access to the witness who saw it and the healer who holds what time could not provide. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the traumatised self: the condition of bringing the wound to Al-Shahid and Al-Shafi.

In Your pardon from Your punishment. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Shahid: He saw it. Al-Shafi: He heals. The healing reaches what time could not. He is as He has praised Himself.

What arrived was beyond the self's capacity to hold.

The wound became a structure of the interior.

Al-Shahid: He was there. He saw it.

*Al-Shafi: He holds the healing
that reaches what time could not.*

*The wound is brought to the one
who witnessed its making
and holds what becomes of it.*

*Whatever He will for the wound
that is given to the Healer.*

He is as He has praised Himself.

The End of Negative Emotion

Not the management of negative emotion. Not the facing of it with a better address. The end of it.

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ
وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ
أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

And We will surely disclose to you through something of fear and hunger and reduction of wealth and lives and fruits — and give good tidings to the patient ones: those who, when affliction strikes them, say: indeed we belong to Allah and to Him we return. Upon those are salawat from their Lord and mercy, and those — they are the guided ones.

فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Whoever follows My guidance — no fear upon them, nor do they grieve.

This is the destination the book was moving toward. The guided ones have no fear. Not managed fear. Not faced fear. No fear. Not future. Not conditional. Nominal. Timeless. Now.

CHAPTER SIXTY-NINE

No Fear Upon Them, Nor Do They Grieve

لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Not the management of negative emotion. Its end.

What the Four Prayers Actually Do

Read the four prayers again. Not as a practice for managing what arrives. Read what they actually say.

The first prayer addresses the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Magnificent Throne. When this address lands — when it actually lands — there is no space outside His lordship for a threat to operate in. Fear requires an object that stands over against the self with power the self cannot meet. But the Lord of the seven heavens governs every object. There is no object with ungoverned power. The landing of the first prayer does not help the self face the feared thing with more support. It dissolves the feared thing's ground. What is there to fear when the Lord of the seven heavens is Lord over it?

The second prayer says: Allah is the Greatest — mightier than what I fear and what I dread — mightier than all of His creation. Not: He is mightier than my fear and will help me face it. Mightier than what I fear. The feared thing is creation. He is mightier than all of His creation. Fear needs an object with weight independent of the one power's governance. The second prayer detonates the independence. The feared object has no weight that is not held within the governance of the one who is mightier than all of it.

The third prayer says: O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. Against You. The only direction is toward Him. Whatever arrives is His will arriving. The self that has made this prayer fully has no location from which to be afraid — no self standing apart from the arriving governance that could fear the arrival. There is only His will, and the self given over to it, and the giving over.

The fourth prayer says: I seek refuge in You from You. There is only Him. The refuge is in Him. The protection is from Him. There is no second location. No other. Wherever the self goes — it goes toward Him. Whatever it runs from — it runs into Him. I cannot enumerate Your praise — You are as You have praised Yourself. The self has been dissolved into the acknowledgment. What remains is the one who has praised Himself. Where does fear live in that? What grief finds ground when there is only One?

لنبلونكم: The Divine Disclosure

The aya in Al-Baqarah is not a warning. It is not: brace yourself, trials are coming. The verb **لَنَّبْلُونَكُم** is not primarily the announcement of difficulty. It is the announcement of the divine unveiling — the disclosure that comes through the apparent negatives. The fear, the hunger, the reduction of wealth and selves and fruits — these are not obstacles to the guided state. They are the occasions of its full revelation.

The apparent negatives arrive. The self that follows the huda receives them as disclosure: here is what it means to say **إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ** — not as a recitation but as a recognition. We belong to Allah. This belongs to Allah. The reduction of the wealth, the narrowing of the self, the loss of the fruit — it was always His, returning to Him, arriving and departing within the same governance. The **صَابِرُونَ** who say this do not say it as comfort. They say it as the statement of what is actually the case. And upon them descend **صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ**.

These are **الْمُهْتَدُونَ** — the guided ones. And the guided ones are defined in **الْبَقَرَةِ 38: فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ**. Nominal. Timeless. Present. No fear upon them. Nor do they grieve. Not: they are helped through fear. Not: they face fear with the right address. No fear. The disclosure through the apparent negative has burned the ground from under fear and grief. The thing that was supposed to cause fear has instead caused the unveiling of the One in whose governance the feared thing was always held. Where does fear land after that?

The Destination of Every Chapter in This Book

Every chapter in this book was moving here. The shame that opened Section I — the self that believed it was wrong at root — the counter was: O My servants. Mine. When that address detonates fully, the shame has no ground. The self is His servant. The servant of the Lord of the seven heavens is not wrong at root. The shame does not dissolve into self-acceptance. It dissolves into recognition of whose the self is. And in whose care it has always been held.

The anger of Section II — the heat of refusal against what the one power permitted — when the second prayer lands fully, when Allah is the Greatest, greater than what was refused, greater than the refusing self — the anger does not get managed into something calmer. The anger's premise collapses. There is nothing to refuse. There is only His governance arriving, and the self given over to it, and the giving over.

The loneliness of Section V — we are closer to him than his jugular vein — when this is not a verse recited but a reality inhabited, the loneliness has no space to exist in. Closer than the pulse. Not: He accompanies the lonely. No space between. The loneliness requires a gap. The gap is not there.

The depression of Section IX — the dark night of the soul — not: He answers in the darkness. He is Al-Qayyum, the self-subsisting, present in the darkness as in the light, present in the silence as in the warmth, present when felt and present when not felt. The depression's premise — that the darkness is real and the light is withdrawn — collapses when Al-Qayyum is understood. He does not withdraw. The apparent withdrawal is itself His presence in a different mode. The depression finds no stable ground.

Every emotion in this book was working from a premise. Every prayer in this book was detonating the premise. The end of every chapter, if the prayer was made with its full weight, was the self standing in a place where the emotion had lost its ground. Not managed. Not faced bravely. Groundless. The fear found no object with ungoverned weight. The grief found no loss that had left the one power's governance. The shame found

no self that was not His. The despair found no future that was outside His mercy. Every premise, detonated.

The Guided Ones

المهتدون — the guided ones — are those who followed the *huda*. The *huda* is not simply the correct practice or the right beliefs. The *huda* is the guidance that reveals what is actually the case: that there is only Allah, that everything arrives within His governance, that *إنا لله* *وإنا إليه راجعون* is not a response to loss but a description of the permanent structure of existence. Everything belongs to Him. Everything returns to Him. There is no other location. There was never another location.

The guided ones do not experience no fear because they have become spiritually advanced. They experience no fear because they have seen what is actually true: that the feared thing is creation, that creation is within His governance, that His governance is not a power the feared thing can operate outside of. Fear requires a gap — the space outside His governance where the threat operates with independent weight. The guidance has shown there is no such space. The gap does not exist. The fear has nowhere to land.

لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ is not a promise about the future. It is not: do not fear, one day you will be free of fear. It is a nominal sentence — the Arabic grammar that says this is the state, not the prediction. No fear upon them. Not will be. Is. The guided ones exist in this state. The *huda* that produced it is in this book — in every chapter, in every prayer, in the detonation of every premise every emotion was resting on.

What Remains

When the Lord of the seven heavens is actually Lord — when the governance is not believed but inhabited — nothing remains outside it. The feared thing is inside it. The grief is inside it. The shame and the rage and the despair — everything the self brought to

the preceding sixty-eight chapters is inside His governance. And inside His governance, with nothing outside it, the emotions have lost their ground.

This is not the stillness of having no feelings. The Prophet felt. He wept. He was moved. But his weeping was not the weeping of the self without an address — it was the weeping of the self whose every movement was inside the one power's governance, was oriented toward the one power, was already returned to the one power before it arrived. The feeling was real. The ground of the feeling was different. The feeling moved through a self that had no gap in it — no space outside the governance where the emotion could settle and calcify and become a structure of opposition.

صلوات من ربهم ورحمة — salawat from their Lord and mercy. This is what descends on the guided ones who say *إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون* through the apparent disclosure of fear and hunger and reduction. Not: they survive the difficulty with grace. The difficulty itself becomes the occasion of salawat and rahma descending. The hardship is the unveiling. The unveiling is the gift. The guided self receives the apparent negative as the disclosure that burns the ground from under every future negative. This is why there is no fear and no grief — not because the difficult things stop arriving, but because when they arrive, they reveal the one power's governance so completely that fear and grief find no premise to stand on.

The book is finished.

لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

No fear upon them. Nor do they grieve.

Not one day. Now. For whoever follows the huda.

This is where the book was always going.

فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ

Whoever follows My guidance —

فَلَا حَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ

No fear upon them —

وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Nor do they grieve.

Not will be. Not with help. Not managed.

No fear. No grief.

This is the end of negative emotion.

This is where the huda always led.

Nonebutthe1@gmail.com