

BOOK THREE

The Book of Sadness

كِتَابُ الْحُزْنِ

On fear that has arrived. On the past that is still present. On the one who governs what has already occurred.

لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

No fear upon them. And they shall not grieve.

This is where the book ends. It is also where it begins.

Introduction

What Sadness Is

Book Two named sixty-two fears. It named them precisely because the self needed to see its specific fear before it could bring it to the prayers. The fear of illness is not the same experience as the fear of poverty, and each one required its own address before it could be placed in the hands of the one power.

Book Three has one subject. Not sixty-two variations. One.

Sadness is fear that has arrived.

Every fear in Book Two had the same structure: something the self dreaded might happen. The might was the fear's opening. It gave the self a foothold — if it has not arrived yet, perhaps it will not arrive. Perhaps it can be averted. Perhaps the dread is more than the reality will turn out to be. Fear lives in the might. It is oriented toward the possible future and nourished by uncertainty.

Sadness closes that door. The thing feared has now occurred. The job is gone. The person has left. The diagnosis has been confirmed. The life that was hoped for has been replaced by the life that arrived instead. The closing of the door is what sadness is. Not the dread of the possible. The weight of the actual.

In this way every sadness has a fear inside it — the specific fear that preceded it and then actualised. The grief of losing someone is the fear of losing them, arrived. The sadness of a disappointed hope is the fear that the hope would not be met, arrived. Even grief over a person deeply loved — a grief that did not feel like fear while the love was present because the love was too full to leave room for it — contained the fear latently, inseparably woven into the loving. And then the loss arrived, and the latent fear became actual weight all at once.

This is why the same four prayers that addressed the fears of Book Two address the sadnesses of Book Three. Not different prayers for a different condition. The same prayers. Because the condition is the same condition — only the tense has changed.

The Tense Has Changed

The shift from fear to sadness is a shift from future to past. And the shift in tense is where the specific difficulty of sadness lives.

Fear, for all its power, leaves something open. The feared future has not yet closed. The self can still act, still hope, still ask the one power to avert what has not yet arrived. The prayer within fear has a clear direction: prevent this. Change what is coming. Make it otherwise.

Sadness faces the closed. What has happened has happened. The past is the one thing in creation that appears absolutely fixed — not subject to revision, not open to prevention, not available to be changed by any subsequent act. The person is gone. The moment passed. The choice was made. The life went the way it went. The self can do nothing with the past except carry it.

This is where the deepest test of the claim made in Book Two arrives. Book Two said: every feared thing is within the one power's governance. His governance covers what has not yet arrived. But does His governance cover what has already occurred? Is the past within His hands as completely as the future?

The answer the tradition gives is yes — and more than yes. The Quran's most repeated statement about the one power's knowledge is not about the future. It is: He knows what is in the heavens and the earth. He knows what you conceal and what you reveal. He knows what you have done. The past is not outside His governance. The past is what He already knows completely — which means it is what He already held completely when it

was occurring. The door that has closed was within His governance when it closed. It did not close outside of Him.

This does not undo the sadness. The tradition does not ask the self to feel nothing about what has been lost. The Prophet, upon him be peace, wept for his son Ibrahim when Ibrahim died. He said: the eyes weep and the heart grieves, and we do not say except what pleases our Lord. Three things together: the weeping, the grief, and the turning toward the one power within the weeping and the grief. Not: stop feeling. Feel, and bring the feeling to the one who governs what produced it.

The Same Four Prayers

The four prayers of Book Two are repeated here unchanged. They were not chosen for their relationship to the future. They were chosen because they address the one power directly — because they place whatever the self is carrying in the hands of the one who governs all of it. The tense of what is being carried does not change the address.

What changes is the direction of the bringing. In Book Two the self brought its dread of what might arrive. In Book Three the self brings the weight of what has arrived. The weight is heavier in one sense — because the door has closed, because the might has become the actual. But it is lighter in another sense: the uncertainty is over. The self knows what it is carrying. It does not have to imagine the worst possible version of the thing feared. The thing has its actual shape now. And the actual shape, however painful, is what can be placed directly in the hands of the one power without the distortion of catastrophic anticipation.

The prayer begins as it always begins: O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Magnificent Throne. The Lord of the seven heavens is the Lord of what has already occurred. He was present when the door closed. He was present at every moment the self is now grieving. His governance of the past is not less than His governance of the future. Ask the one who was present within the loss to be the protection from the weight of the

loss. The neighbour-protector who is asked is the one who already knows what happened because He was there.

And بِمَا شِئْتُمْ — whatever You will — applied to the past becomes something more radical than it was in Book Two. In Book Two it was: whatever You will for what is coming. In Book Three it is: whatever You will for what has already occurred. Not: revise it. Not: undo it. Whatever You will for what this already-occurred thing means, for what it becomes in the self's life from this point forward, for how the one power's governance moves within it and through it and beyond it. The closed door is within His hands. Whatever You will.

How This Book Is Arranged

Book Three does not enumerate sadnesses the way Book Two enumerated fears. Sadness converges. All of it is the same structure — something was, now it is not, or something was hoped and something else arrived instead. The specific forms are not sixty-two distinct things requiring sixty-two separate addresses. They are variations in depth and texture of one condition.

The book moves through six conditions, each one a different way of inhabiting the sadness rather than a different sadness entirely.

Section One is the fresh loss — when it has just happened and the weight is new and the self does not yet know how to hold it.

Section Two is the carried grief — when the sadness has been present long enough that the self can no longer clearly remember what it was before it. When the grief has become a part of the self's identity rather than an experience the self is passing through.

Section Three is regret — the sadness that faces the self's own choices. The grief that has a different quality because what is mourned is something the self did or did not do. The past that the self did not just receive but in some sense made.

Section Four is the disappointed hope — what was longed for meeting what arrived instead. The dua that seemed unanswered. The life that was supposed to be and the life that is.

Section Five is the sadness with no name — the huzn that sits in the self without a clear object. The weight that cannot be pointed at, that has no story the self can tell about it, that simply arrives and does not explain itself.

Section Six is the end of sadness — not because the grief is over but because the self has found the ground on which the grief can be held without crushing it. لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ. No fear upon them and they shall not grieve. This is where the book ends. It is also what it was always pointing toward.

The eyes weep.

The heart grieves.

And we do not say except what pleases our Lord.

Three things together.

Not: stop feeling.

Feel — and bring the feeling

to the one who governs what produced it.

He was present when the door closed.

Ask Him.

SECTION I

The Fresh Loss

When it has just happened. When the weight is new and the self does not yet know how to hold it.

وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ • الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

And give glad tidings to the patient — those who, when a calamity strikes them, say: truly we belong to Allah and truly to Him we return.

They do not say: this should not have happened. They say: to Him we return.

CHAPTER ONE

Before the Weight Fully Arrives

The first hours. The shock that has not yet become grief. The self that has received news it has not yet processed.

The Condition Named

There is a period, in the first hours and sometimes the first days after a loss, when the full weight has not yet arrived. The news has been received. The fact is known. And yet the self is not in grief yet — it is in something that precedes grief. A numbness. A disorientation. The sense of moving through familiar surroundings that have become slightly unreal. The mind keeps touching the fact and moving away from it, touching it and moving away, not because the self is in denial but because the fact is too large to be taken in all at once.

This state is sometimes mistaken for absence of feeling. It is not absence of feeling. It is the self's protective interval before the feeling arrives in full. The body and the mind need a moment before the door's having closed becomes the full weight of the closed door. This interval is not a failure to grieve properly. It is the natural preparation for what is coming.

The prayer begins here — not when the grief has arrived in its full weight but in this interval, in this first disoriented state. Because the one power is present in the interval before grief as completely as He is present within the grief itself. The shock is within His governance. The numbness is within His governance. The fact that has just arrived and not yet been processed is something He already knew, already held, already governed when it was occurring.

Hold the specific fact that has just arrived. The specific loss in its first rawness. 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 was present when the thing occurred that has just arrived as news. The Lord of the seven heavens did not receive this news. He knew it before the self knew it. He was within it when it was happening. Whatever the self is sitting with in this first interval — the death, the ending, the diagnosis, the departure, the door that closed — the Lord of the seven heavens was not absent from it. It occurred within His governance, within His knowledge, within the frame of a universe He holds completely.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The loss is from within divine permission. The first hours of it, before the self knows how to hold it, are within divine governance. The protection from the weight that is coming is asked from the one who permitted what produced the weight and who holds the self that will have to carry it. عَرْجَ جَارِكَ: mighty is the protection of the one who was present before the self arrived at its news, who is present in the interval, who will be present when the weight arrives fully. The one who holds the seven heavens is the protector within this first disoriented state.

The Prophet, upon him be peace, when his son Ibrahim died, wept. He said: the eyes weep and the heart grieves, and we do not say except what pleases our Lord. *إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ*. The saying of *inna lillahi* is not a formula for suppressing the grief. It is the naming of what is true within the grief. We belong to Allah. To Him we return. The specific person or thing that has been lost — and the self that has lost it — both belong to Allah. The return is the acknowledgment that He was never not holding 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 اللَّهْمَّ كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْ شَرِّكَ جَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ وَعَزَّ جَاوِزُكَ، 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 loss. Greater than the shock that has not yet become grief. Greater than the specific door that has closed and the specific weight that is coming. The loss is creation — a created event within a created life, held within the governance of the Creator who is greater than all of it. اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ was written for fears. In Book Three it faces the arrived thing. Mightier than what has arrived. Mightier than the closed door.

اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — Allah is mightier than all of His creation. The loss that the self is still absorbing is part of His creation. The grief that is coming is a human experience within a created life. The one who holds the seven heavens lest they fall is greater than all of it — greater than the specific loss, greater than the weight that is building, greater than the disorientation the self is inhabiting in these first hours. Ask the one who is mightier than all of His creation to be the protection within what His creation has just brought.

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. This is the prayer that faces the closed door directly. The loss has occurred. It is within His will. The prayer does not ask for the door to be reopened. It asks the one power to be sufficient — sufficient against the grief that His permission produced, sufficient against the weight that is coming, sufficient within the interval of shock and within everything that follows.

Whatever You will: the self places the loss and its aftermath entirely in the hands of the one who willed it. اَكْفُنِيكَ — suffice me. Not: explain it to me. Not: undo it. Be sufficient within it, for me, against whatever You have willed for this life.

The Prophet Yaqub, upon him be peace, upon receiving the news of what he believed was Yusuf's death, said: فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ — beautiful patience. Not the suppression of grief. The patience that holds the grief within the recognition of the one power's governance. The same patience that said: maybe Allah will bring them all back to me. Whatever You will: the loss is Yours. Be sufficient within 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.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ — I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger. The tradition's promise to the one who receives a calamity within divine pleasure is specific and extraordinary. The Quran says: those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy, and it is those who are rightly guided. The grief received within divine pleasure — the grief that says inna lillahi within the shock, that brings the raw first hours to this prayer, that does not say what displeases the one power within the numbness — is the grief that receives the blessings and mercy. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the loss is within Your permission. The first hours are within Your governance. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ. — Al-Qayyum: the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining. The one who does not fall. The self in its first hours of grief is held by the one who cannot be destabilised by what has destabilised the self.

The eyes weep.

The heart grieves.

And we do not say except what pleases our Lord.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

He was present when the door closed.

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

Suffice me within whatever You have willed.

Al-Qayyum.

The one who does not fall

holds the self that has.

CHAPTER TWO

When the Weight Arrives

When the numbness ends and the loss becomes fully real. The full weight of the closed door.

The Condition Named

After the interval of shock, the weight arrives. Not gradually, often, but suddenly — in an ordinary moment, doing an ordinary thing, and then the full reality of the loss is present all at once. The person is not here. The thing is over. The life that was hoped for is not the life that is. The full weight, which the first hours protected the self from by means of numbness, is now present without protection.

This is the moment that the word grief names most accurately. Not the first news but the arrival of the full weight of what the news means. It is the moment when the self understands, not just as information but as felt reality, that the door is closed. The weight of grief, when it arrives fully, has a physical quality. It sits in the chest. It makes ordinary movement effortful. Food loses its taste. Sleep loses its depth. The body registers the loss as an actual weight that was not there before. The tradition does not ask the self to pretend this weight is not present. The Prophet said: the heart grieves. The weeping is real. The weight is real.

The question is not whether to feel the weight. The question is where to stand while feeling it.

Hold the specific grief in its full weight. Do not reduce it. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَنِي عَزَّ 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 governance includes the weight of grief. The Lord of the seven heavens did not place the capacity for love in the human self and then remain absent when the love meets loss. He is present within the weight as He is present within everything else He created. The grief is within His governance. The weight in the chest is within His knowledge. The specific texture of this specific loss — what this person meant, what this ending costs, what this life that did not arrive would have been — is known to the one power in full, more completely than the self knows it.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The grief is from within divine permission. The weight has arrived because the one power permitted what produced the weight. The protection from being crushed by the weight is asked from the one who permitted it. This is the prayer's paradox and its only real logic: there is no protection from the weight except from the one who allowed the weight. He is the only one who knows the full measure of what the self is carrying, and He is the only one who can be the ground under the self while it carries it. عَزَّ جَارُكَ: the self with the weight of grief stands on the protection of the one who holds the seven heavens. That is a ground that can hold the weight.

The Prophet Yaqub, upon him be peace, grieved for his son Yusuf for decades. He wept until his eyes turned white. And he said: *إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بِنِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ* — I direct my complaint of my anguish and my grief to Allah. Not: I have no grief. I direct the grief to Allah. The full weight of the grief, acknowledged completely and then directed to the one power. That is the model.

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 تَبَاؤُكَ 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 grief in its full weight. Greater than the specific loss and the weight it has produced. The grief is real. The weight is real. And the one power is greater. Not: the grief is small — it is not small. Greater than the grief means the one who holds the seven heavens is larger than what the grief is doing to the self. He is larger than the weight in the chest, larger than the tears, larger than the specific name or face or hope that has been lost. اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأُحْذَرُ: mightier than the weight that has arrived. The self with its grief is held within a governance larger than the grief.

اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation. The grief is creation. The loss is creation. The weight in the chest is a created experience within a created life. The Creator is mightier than all of it — which means the self carrying the weight is held within a governance that cannot be overwhelmed by the weight it holds. Ask the one who is mightier than all of His creation to be the protection within the specific grief that His creation has produced.

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. This is the prayer that faces the full weight directly. The weight has arrived. It is within His will. The prayer does not attempt to negotiate with the weight or find a way around it. It asks the one power to be sufficient — sufficient against the weight that His permission produced, sufficient within the grief as it is being felt, sufficient for whatever duration this weight is carried. اكْفِنِيكَ: suffice me. The self's own resources are not sufficient for what it is carrying.

It asks the one power Himself to be the sufficiency. Whatever You will: the weight is Yours. Be sufficient within it, for me.

The Quran says of the patient that they are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. The patience is not the absence of weight. It is the carrying of the weight toward the right address. The self under the weight of grief, bringing the weight to this prayer, is already in the condition the Quran describes as receiving the blessings and mercy. The weight does not have to be gone for the blessing to be present. Whatever You will.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ 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.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ — I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger. The grief received within divine pleasure is the grief of Yaqub — the grief that says I direct my complaint of my anguish and my grief to Allah. Not the grief that turns away from the one power, that becomes bitterness or the sense that the one power was absent when the loss occurred. The grief within divine pleasure is the grief that brings the full weight to this address. It does not pretend the weight is not there. It brings the weight. And the tradition's promise is: those upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. Within divine pleasure, the weight is held within mercy. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the loss is within Your permission. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ. — Al-Jabbar: the Restorer of what is broken. You are as You have praised Yourself.

*I direct my complaint
of my anguish and my grief*

to Allah.

Not: I have no grief.

I direct the grief

to the only address that can hold it.

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

Suffice me within it.

Al-Jabbar.

The Restorer of what is broken.

CHAPTER THREE

The Question the Grief Asks

Why. The first demand the loss makes. The question that has no answer and yet will not stop being asked.

The Condition Named

Every fresh grief eventually asks it. Why. Why this person and not another. Why this timing. Why this particular loss in this particular life. Why did the dua not prevent it. Why did the one power, whose governance is complete, govern the thing toward this outcome rather than toward another. The question is not a logical inquiry expecting a logical answer. It is what the grief does when the weight has fully arrived and the self is standing in it.

The tradition does not shame the question. The Prophets asked it. Musa argued with the one power directly, pressed the questions his grief produced with a directness that would shock those who assume proximity to the one power produces only quiet submission. The intimacy of the relationship is what makes the question possible. The person who asks why to the one power is not doubting the one power. They are bringing the question to the only one who can hold it.

The tradition also does not promise an answer. Not in this life, not in the terms the grief is asking for. What the one power promises is not an explanation. He promises presence. **وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَمَا كُنْتُمْ** — He is with you wherever you are. The why is asked in a place the one power is already present within. The answer to the why is not a reason. It is the presence of the one to whom the why is addressed.

Hold the specific why. The question the grief is producing. Do not suppress it. Bring it to 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 brings the why directly to the one to whom the why belongs. Not: suppress the question. Bring the question to the address. The Lord of the seven heavens is the only one who holds the actual answer to every why that grief produces — the complete answer, the answer that would satisfy the question if the self could receive it in full. The tradition says: you will know, on the day when you see what was being constructed, why each thing occurred as it occurred. The full answer exists. It is held by the one power. The self in its grief cannot receive it yet. But it can bring the question to the one who holds the answer.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The loss that produced the why is from within divine permission. The protection from being destroyed by the unanswered why is asked from the same source. Not: give me the answer. Be present with me within the question. The one who holds the answer is asked to be the protection within the not-yet-knowing. عَرَّ جَارِكَ: the protection of the one who holds the answer is the presence within the question. The Prophet Yaqub did not receive the answer to his grief for decades, and yet he remained within the protection of the one who knew. I know from Allah what you do not know.

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.

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the why. Greater than the unanswered question and the space the unanswered question leaves in the self. Greater than the specific gap between what the self was given and what it expected or hoped or felt it deserved. The why is a human question within a human grief within a created life. The Creator is greater than all of His creation, including the question His creation produces when it meets the losses He permitted. اللهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأَحْذَرُ: mightier than the grief the why is riding on.

اللهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation. The question why is born within a created mind encountering a created event. The one power is mightier than both. He holds the answer the created mind cannot access yet. The second prayer places the unanswered why within the governance of the one who is mightier than all of creation — which means mightier than the question, mightier than the grief beneath the question, mightier than the gap between what occurred and what the self can understand. Ask the one who holds the answer to hold the self within the question.

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. This is the prayer that is hardest to say from inside the why. Because بِمَا شِئْتَ is the acknowledgment that what You willed was this — this specific loss, this specific timing, this specific unanswered question. It is not the suppression of the why. It is the placing of the why alongside the اللهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ — bringing both to the one power simultaneously. The question and the trust. The grief and the whatever You will. The self does not know why. It places the not-knowing in

the hands of the one who does know. Suffice me, O Allah, within Your will. Even within the why I cannot answer.

The Prophet Yaqub held the why for decades without receiving an answer and without abandoning the one power within the not-knowing. He said: I know from Allah what you do not know. The confidence in the one power's knowledge, held even when the self does not share in that knowledge — that is what *بِمَا شِئْت* means when the self is inside the why. Whatever You will: You know what I do not know. Suffice me within 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.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ — I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger. The why, within divine pleasure, is the why of Yaqub — the question held alongside the confidence in the one power's knowledge, the grief that does not abandon the one power within the not-knowing. The why, within divine anger, is the why that becomes bitterness — the unanswered question that turns into the conclusion that the one power was absent or unjust. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the why: the condition of bringing the question to this address and trusting the one who holds the answer even before the answer is given. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the why is within Your knowledge. Hold me within the question. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ — Al-Hakim: the Perfectly Wise. You are as You have praised Yourself. The why has a wise answer. You hold it.

*I know from Allah
what you do not know.
The why was unanswered for decades.*

*He held the confidence
in the one power's knowledge
even when he did not share in it.*

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

Suffice me within what I do not understand.

Al-Hakim.

The why has a wise answer.

He holds it.

SECTION II

The Carried Grief

When the sadness has been present so long the self can no longer clearly remember who it was before it.

إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

I only direct my complaint of my anguish and my grief to Allah — and I know from Allah what you do not know.

Yaqub said this after decades. Not at the beginning. The directing does not expire.

CHAPTER FOUR

When Grief Becomes the Self

When the loss has been present long enough that the self no longer knows who it is without it.

The Condition Named

Fresh grief has a clear shape: the self before, and the self after the loss. The before is still accessible — the self can remember what it was like when the loss had not yet occurred. The grief is an addition to the self, a weight that arrived at a known point in time and that the self is carrying alongside what it already was.

Carried grief is different. After enough time, the loss is no longer something that happened to the self. It has become part of what the self is. The person who was not there grows up into someone who has never known the parent. The one who lost the marriage becomes someone who has been alone for so long that the coupled self is a distant memory. The grief that began as a wound has become, over time, a feature of the self's interior landscape — something that was not there before but is now so thoroughly present that the self built itself around it.

This is the grief that is hardest to bring to the prayers, not because it is more painful than fresh grief but because it is less clearly named. Fresh grief has a story: this happened, and then I felt this. Carried grief has no clear story anymore. It is simply the shape of the self. To bring it to the prayers requires first identifying it as something separate from the self — as something that arrived, as something that is being carried, as something that is not the self's permanent and unalterable identity but a condition within a governance larger than the condition.

The Quran names the self as al-nafs — the soul — and the soul is not identical with its sufferings. The soul that has been carrying grief for decades is still, in the Quran's address, the soul that can be called: O tranquil soul, return to your Lord, pleased and pleasing. The

grief has not permanently altered who the soul is in relation to the one power. Hold the grief that has become part 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 who knew this grief before it arrived and who has held the self throughout every year the grief has been present. The Lord of the seven heavens did not observe the loss and then look away as the self built its identity around it. He has been present within every year of the carrying. His governance of the grief has not diminished because time has passed. It has not weakened because the self stopped clearly identifying the grief as a separate thing. He knows the carried grief as precisely as He knew the fresh loss. He knows what the self was before and what it has become and what is grief and what is the soul beneath the grief.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The grief that has become the self's identity is within divine governance as completely as the fresh loss was. The protection from the grief's having permanently redefined the self is asked from the one who knows the difference between what the self is and what the self has been carrying. عَرْجَ جَارِكَ: the one who holds the seven heavens holds the self beneath the grief. He knows who the self is underneath what it has been carrying. He holds both: the grief and the soul that was never identical with it.

The Prophet Yaqub carried his grief for decades — long enough that his eyes turned white. And the Quran does not describe him as a broken self. It describes him as the one who said: I know from Allah what you do not know. The decades of grief did not erase his

knowledge of the one power's governance. The grief was carried within a self that was still, underneath the grief, in relationship with the one power. That relationship is what the prayer is addressing and what the prayer is asking to be protected.

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.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the grief that has become the self's identity. Greater than the years of carrying. Greater than the specific shape the self has grown into around the loss. The grief is creation — a human experience within a human life. However long it has been present, however thoroughly it has been incorporated into the self's structure, it remains creation. The Creator is greater than all of His creation, including the grief that feels indistinguishable from the self that is carrying it.

اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation. The grief is His creation. The self carrying the grief is His creation. The years of carrying are within His governance. The one who holds the seven heavens lest they fall holds the self that has been carrying this grief since before some of those years were numbered. He has not been absent from a single one of them. Ask the one who has been present within every year of the carrying to be the protection within the carrying now.

The Third Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

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

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتِ — O Allah, suffice me against You with whatever You will. The carried grief, brought to this prayer, is not only the grief itself but the years of carrying. The self is asking the one power to be sufficient not just within the loss but within everything the loss has produced — the shape the self grew into, the things that did not happen because the grief was present, the person the self might have been if the loss had not occurred. Whatever You will for all of this. The self does not ask for the years of carrying to be retroactively different. It asks the one power to be sufficient within what those years actually were, within what they produced, within what the self actually is now — grief and all. Whatever You will. Suffice me against You with it.

Yaqub did not ask for the decades of grief to have not occurred. When Yusuf was finally returned, Yaqub did not say: those years were wasted. The reunion contained the meaning of the grief. The grief was within the one power's governance of a story whose ending the self could not yet see. Whatever You will: suffice me within the carrying, and within what the carrying has been making of me, and within whatever You are moving this grief toward.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءَ 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. The carried grief within divine pleasure is the grief of Yaqub — the grief that did not cause the self to abandon the one power, that was carried alongside the knowledge that the one power's governance was present within every year of the carrying, that remained in relationship with the one power throughout the decades. The carried grief within divine anger is the grief that has become bitterness — the decades of carrying that produced a self permanently turned away from the one power. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within

the grief that has become the self's identity: not the resolution of the grief but the preservation of the relationship within the grief. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the grief and the years of carrying are within Your governance. لَا أُحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ — Al-Lateef: the Subtle, present within what cannot be seen. You are present within the grief that has become the self. You know what the self is beneath it.

*The grief has not permanently altered
who the soul is in relation to the one power.*

He knows what the self was before.

He knows what it has become.

*He knows what is grief
and what is the soul beneath the grief.*

Al-Lateef.

Present within what cannot be seen.

He holds both.

CHAPTER FIVE

When the World Has Moved On

The specific aloneness of grief that others have stopped acknowledging. Still carrying what the world has finished grieving with you.

The Condition Named

Fresh grief receives acknowledgment. People are present. The loss is known. Others carry something of it alongside the self — the condolences, the presence, the acts of care that say: I know you have been hurt and I am here within it with you. This is one of the mercies built into community: the self does not have to carry the fresh loss entirely alone.

But grief outlasts acknowledgment. The community's capacity to be present with another's grief has a shorter duration than the grief itself. People return to their lives. The loss recedes in others' awareness even as it remains the self's daily reality. And at a certain point the self finds itself in a specific aloneness: carrying something that others have finished acknowledging, grieving what the world has moved on from, present with a weight that is no longer visible to those around it.

This produces a specific kind of silence. Not the silence of isolation but the silence of the unasked question — the loss that was once the thing everyone knew about the self and that is now something the self carries without the relief of it being named and held by others. And within this silence a specific temptation: to conclude that because the world has moved on, the grief is somehow wrong to still be present. That the self should be further along. That the carrying is excessive.

The tradition does not set a duration for grief. Yaqub grieved for decades. The measure is not time. The question is where the grief is being directed. Hold the specific aloneness of the grief that has been outpaced by the world's attention. 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 whose attention to the self's grief has not moved on. The Lord of the seven heavens does not have a limited capacity for being present with grief. He does not exhaust His awareness of the self's loss after a socially appropriate period of acknowledgment. The grief the self is carrying that no one else is asking about — He knows it. The specific texture of carrying it alone after the world has moved on — He knows that too, more precisely than anyone who was present with the self at the beginning.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The aloneness of the unacknowledged grief is within divine governance. The protection from the specific wound of carrying what others have finished holding with you is asked from the one who has never finished holding it. عَرَّ جَارِكَ: the protector who does not move on is the only one whose presence can fill the specific aloneness the world's moving on produces. The self is not alone with the grief that others have stopped seeing. It is alone with it in the presence of the one power, who sees it completely.

The Quran says: وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ — We are closer to him than his jugular vein. Not closer than the people who have moved on. Closer than the jugular vein. The aloneness that the world's moving on produced is not actual aloneness. It is the self's experience of being seen by fewer human eyes — while remaining completely within the awareness of the one who is closer than the jugular vein. The grief is not unseen. It is seen from inside.

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.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the aloneness. Greater than the silence of the unasked question. Greater than the specific wound of carrying what others have moved on from. The world's moving on is a human phenomenon within human community within a created order. The Creator is greater than all of His creation, including the created community that has exhausted its capacity to be present with this grief. اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأُخْذِرُ: mightier than the grief the aloneness has added to the original loss.

اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation, including every person who has moved on. Their moving on is within His governance. The self's grief remaining is within His governance. The gap between the two — the self still carrying what others have finished with — is within His governance. He sees the self in the gap. He is present in the specific aloneness the gap produces. Ask the one who is mightier than all of creation to be the presence within the aloneness that creation has produced.

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. Whatever You will includes the duration of this grief. The self did not choose how long the grief would last. The one power governs duration as He governs everything else within the created order. Whatever You will for the length of the carrying, for the aloneness within the carrying, for what the aloneness is producing in the self. Suffice me within it. The self does

not ask for the world to come back and acknowledge the grief again. It asks the one power to be sufficient within the carrying that remains after the world has moved on. اَكْفُنِيكَ: You be sufficient. Whatever You will for this duration and this aloneness. You be the presence within what the world's absence has left.

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. Within divine pleasure, the aloneness of the unacknowledged grief is the aloneness of the self that has turned toward the one power with what the world cannot hold anymore. The grief that was too large for the community's capacity is brought to the only address that has unlimited capacity. Within divine anger, the aloneness of unacknowledged grief becomes bitterness toward those who moved on, the turning away from the one power because the people did not stay. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the carrying — the condition of the self that has turned toward the one power precisely because the world has moved on, that has found in the world's moving on the occasion to bring the grief more fully to the only one who never will. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the duration of this grief is within Your governance. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ. — Al-Qarib: the Near. Closer than the jugular vein. Closer than any human presence. You are as You have praised Yourself.

*The grief the self is carrying
that no one else is asking about —
He knows it.
We are closer to him
than his jugular vein.*

The aloneness is not actual aloneness.

*It is the self's experience
of being seen by fewer human eyes —
while remaining completely within
the awareness of the one who is closer than the jugular vein.*

CHAPTER SIX

The Ambush

When the grief returns with full force after a period of quiet. The ordinary moment that becomes the door back into the full weight.

The Condition Named

Carried grief has a particular cruelty: it does not maintain a consistent level. There are periods of relative quiet — not absence of grief, but the grief at a manageable distance, the self functioning within ordinary life without the weight dominating every moment. And then, without warning, in an ordinary moment — a smell, a song, a date on the calendar, a gesture made by a stranger that is inexplicably familiar — the full weight returns. Not as a memory of grief but as the grief itself, at its original intensity, as if the time between the loss and this moment had not occurred.

This is the ambush. The return of the grief to its full weight from a state of relative quiet. It is disorienting precisely because the self had, without quite realizing it, adjusted to carrying the grief at a lower level. And the ambush reveals that the adjustment was not resolution. The grief was not finished. It was resting. The ordinary moment opened the door and the full weight walked through.

The ambush is also, in some ways, a testimony to the magnitude of what was lost. A grief that can ambush after years has not diminished in its acknowledgment of the loss's significance. The ambush says: this still matters this much. There is something right about that, even when it is devastating.

Hold the specific ambush. The specific ordinary moment that opened the door. 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 was not surprised by the ambush. The Lord of the seven heavens knew that this ordinary moment would open the door. He knew the smell or the song or the date on the calendar and what it would do. He was present within the quiet period before the ambush and He is present within the ambush itself. The disorientation of the return of the full weight — the self's sense that it was further along than it was — is within His governance. He holds the ambush as He held the original loss.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The ambush is from within divine permission. The ordinary moment that became the door was within His governance. The protection from being overwhelmed by the return of the full weight is asked from the one who permitted the door to open. عَرَّ جَارِكَ: the protector who permitted the ambush is the only one who can be the protection within it. The self in the ambush is not in a place the one power has not already been. He was there when the door opened. He is within the return of the full weight.

The Prophet, upon him be peace, said: whenever the matter distresses you, say: حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ — Allah is sufficient for us and He is the best of trustees. This is the prayer of the moment of being overwhelmed. Not a long prayer. Not a structured reflection. The immediate turning: Allah is sufficient. Say it in the ambush. In the ordinary moment that has become the door. Allah is sufficient for us. He is the best of trustees.

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 يَغْفَرَ عَلَيَّ 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.

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the ambush. Greater than the return of the full weight. Greater than the disorientation of finding the grief at its original intensity after a period of relative quiet. The ambush is creation — a created moment opening a created wound within a created life. The Creator is greater than all of it. اللهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأَحْذَرُ: mightier than the grief that has just returned at its full weight. The one who holds the seven heavens is mightier than the ordinary moment that opened the door, mightier than what walked through it, mightier than the disorientation the self is currently inside.

اللهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation, including the smell, the song, the date, the gesture — whatever ordinary thing became the door. That thing is creation. The door is creation. The grief that walked through it is creation. The Creator is mightier than all of it and He is the protection within all of it. The self in the ambush is held within the governance of the one who is mightier than everything that has just overwhelmed it. Ask the one who is mightier.

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 ambush was within Your will. The ordinary moment becoming the door was within Your governance. The return of the full weight after the period of quiet — within Your will. The self did not choose this moment. It was chosen. Whatever You will for what this return of the grief is producing. Whatever You will for how long the return lasts, for what it means, for what it is doing within the self's ongoing carrying. اللهُمَّ: suffice me within this return. Be

sufficient against the return of this weight. The self was resting from the full weight. You opened the door again. Whatever You will. Suffice me within what You have opened.

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. Within divine pleasure, the ambush is the grief visiting with full weight as testimony to what mattered — the self in the ordinary moment of being opened finding the one power present within the opening. The self that says اللهُ أَكْبَرُ in the ambush, that says اللهُ أَكْبَرُ in the return of the full weight, is the self within divine pleasure — the self that brings even the ambush to the right address. Within divine anger, the ambush becomes the occasion for the grief to darken into something other than grief. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the ambush: the condition of meeting the return of the full weight within the one power's governance rather than outside it. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the door was within Your governance. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ — Al-Wakil: the best of trustees. حَسْبُنَا اللهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ. You are as You have praised Yourself.

The ambush says: this still matters this much.

There is something right about that.

He was there when the door opened.

He is within the return of the full weight.

حَسْبُنَا اللهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

Allah is sufficient for us.

He is the best of trustees.

Say it in the ambush.

Al-Wakil.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Learning to Carry

When the self stops waiting for the grief to end and begins to understand that the carrying itself is the work.

The Condition Named

There is a moment in carried grief — it arrives differently for each person but it arrives — when the self stops waiting for the grief to end and begins to understand that this is not a condition to be resolved but a weight to be carried. Not indefinitely in the sense of forever unchanged. But indefinitely in the sense of: there is no fixed point at which the carrying will be finished and the self will be returned to the state it was in before the loss.

This recognition can be devastating when it first arrives. The self that has been grieving with an implicit expectation that the grief will eventually conclude — that there is a duration to be endured and then the other side to emerge into — finds that the other side is not what it expected. The loss does not unhappen. The person does not return. The door does not reopen. The self that emerges from the carrying is not the self that existed before the loss. It is the self that has been changed by the carrying.

But this recognition also carries a kind of release. When the self stops measuring the grief against an expected endpoint, the carrying becomes something different. Not a sentence with a known term but a reality to be inhabited. And the grief that is inhabited — rather than endured while waiting for it to end — can be brought to the one power without the implicit request: make this be over. The prayer changes. It becomes: be with me within this. Not: end this.

Hold the recognition of the carrying. The shift from enduring toward a resolution to inhabiting the reality of the loss. Bring the first prayer.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرِّي 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 has been with the self in every year of the carrying. The Lord of the seven heavens was not waiting for the grief to end any more than the self was. He was present within the carrying, governing within it, present within the ambushes and the quiet periods and the years that looked like nothing was happening. His presence within the carried grief is not diminished by the recognition that the grief will not end in the way the self expected. He is the Lord of the grief that is being inhabited, as He was the Lord of the grief that was being endured. The address does not change when the self's relationship to the grief changes.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The carrying that has no expected endpoint is within divine governance. The shift from enduring to inhabiting is within divine governance. The protection from the weight of the carrying that has no known term is asked from the one who governs the term. Not: tell me when it ends. Be my protector within the carrying that does not end on my schedule. عَرِّي جَارُكَ: the protector who governs the duration is the one who can be the presence within every year of the duration, however many years there are.

The Quran says: وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ • الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ — and give glad tidings to the patient, those who, when a calamity strikes them, say: truly we belong to Allah and truly to Him we return. The sabr — the patience — is not the passive waiting for the grief to end. It is the active carrying of the grief within the recognition of belonging to Allah and returning to Allah. It is the grief inhabited rather than the grief endured toward a finish line.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَحَافُ وَأَحْذَرُ، 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 grief that does not end on the self's schedule. Greater than the carrying that has no known term. Greater than the specific shape the self has grown into through the years of carrying. The carrying is creation. The years are creation. The grief within the years is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it, and His governance of all of it is complete. اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَحَافُ وَأَحْذَرُ: mightier than the grief that will not end when the self expected it to.

اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation. The grief that has become the self's companion rather than the self's visitor is still creation, still within His governance, still subject to His mightiness. The shift from enduring to carrying does not change the grief's nature as something held within the governance of the one who is mightier than all of it. Ask the one who is mightier to be the strength within the carrying. The self's own strength is not sufficient for the indefinite carrying. His mightiness is.

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 prayer's applied to the indefinitely carried grief is perhaps its fullest expression. Not: suffice me until this ends. Suffice me. Whatever You will. However long the carrying lasts, within whatever form the grief takes as the carrying continues, through whatever

ambushes and quiet periods remain, across whatever years are ahead. اَكْفِنِيكَ: You be sufficient. Not the self's own reserves of endurance. Not the strength the self accumulates through experience of carrying. You be sufficient. Whatever You will for the duration and the form and the weight and the carrying. You.

This is the prayer of learning to carry. The self stops measuring the grief against an endpoint it cannot see and stops asking the one power to end what He has not yet ended. It asks instead for Him to be sufficient within it. This is a different prayer. It is a prayer that has accepted the reality of the carrying and turned that acceptance into an address: be sufficient within what You have willed for this life. اَكْفِنِيكَ. You.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عُقُوبَتِكَ 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. The carried grief within divine pleasure is the grief that has become the occasion for the deepest proximity to the one power — the self that found, within the years of carrying what cannot be put down, a relationship to the one power that the grief itself was building. Within divine anger, the indefinite carrying becomes the occasion for the grief to close the self off entirely — to become the wall rather than the door. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the carrying: not the resolution of the grief but the carrying of the grief within the one power's presence, which transforms the carrying from a burden into the weight that keeps the self near the only address that can hold it. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the duration is within Your governance. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ — Al-Sabur: the Patient. You are as You have praised Yourself. The one who carries all of creation with patience holds the self that is learning to carry.

*The grief inhabited
rather than the grief endured toward a finish line.*

The prayer changes.

Not: end this.

Be with me within this.

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

You be sufficient.

Whatever You will.

Al-Sabur.

*The Patient holds the self
that is learning to carry.*

SECTION III

Regret

The sadness that faces the self's own choices. The past the self did not only receive — but in some sense made.

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 the mercy of Allah. Indeed Allah forgives all sins.

All. The word is jami'an. Without exception. Without a threshold of severity beyond which the word no longer applies.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Thing Done

The specific act the self committed that it now mourns. The door the self itself closed.

The Condition Named

Regret is the sadness that has a particular quality of weight because the self is not only mourning what was lost but is implicated in the losing. The loss did not arrive purely from outside. The self made a choice, or failed to make one. The self acted, or failed to act. And now the self stands in the aftermath of its own doing and mourns what the doing produced.

This is among the most difficult positions grief can place the self in. The grief of external loss — the death, the illness, the departure of another — has no self-implication at its core. It is simply loss. The grief of regret adds a layer that has a particular darkness: if I had chosen differently, this might not be. The self is not only mourning the outcome. It is mourning the version of itself that made the choice that led to the outcome.

The tradition addresses this condition directly, in what may be the most expansive statement about forgiveness in the entire Quran: *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 the mercy of Allah. Indeed Allah forgives all sins. The address is to the ones who transgressed against themselves — precisely the self in regret. And the statement is without qualification: all sins. *جَمِيعًا*. Every sin. The scope of the forgiveness is exactly as large as the scope of the regret.

Hold the specific thing done. The specific choice that the self now mourns. 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 was present when the choice was made. The Lord of the seven heavens did not look away when the self made the choice it now regrets. He was present within the choosing, within the act, within everything that followed the act. The regret the self is carrying is carried within the knowledge of the one who knew the act completely before it occurred, while it occurred, and in all its consequences since. There is no aspect of the thing done that is hidden from Him. And the address is still: O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens. The one who knows the thing done is the one to whom the prayer is brought.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The thing done and its consequences are within divine governance. The protection from the weight of having done it is asked from the one whose forgiveness is the only thing that can actually address the weight. Not: protect me from the consequences. Not: undo what I did. Be my protector from Yourself — from divine anger toward what I did — by Your forgiveness. The one whose forgiveness is being asked for is the same one being addressed as the protector. عَرْجَ جَارِكَ: mighty is the protection of the one whose forgiveness does not require the sin to have been smaller than it was.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ جَمًّا أَخَافُ وَأُخَدِّرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُؤَسِّسُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ اللَّيْلُ 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.

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the thing done. Greater than the specific act and its consequences and the regret it has produced. The act is creation — a human choice within a human life. The Creator is greater than all of His creation, including the specific thing done that the self now mourns. اللهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأَحْذَرُ: mightier than the regret and mightier than the thing that produced the regret. He is greater than the act. This means His forgiveness can be greater than the act too. The scope of what He can forgive is not limited by the scope of what was done. He is greater.

اللهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation. The thing done is creation. The regret is creation. The consequences are creation. The one power is mightier than all of it. And the Quran's promise is: He forgives all sins. The جَمِيعًا — all — applies to every created act that the self can regret. The one who is mightier than all of His creation forgives all sins of all of His creation. Ask the one who is mightier.

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 thing done was within His knowledge. Its consequences were within His governance. The regret the self is carrying is within His governance. Whatever You will: suffice me within the weight of what I did, within the consequences it produced, within the regret I am carrying. The self cannot undo the act. It cannot go back to the moment before the choice was made. Whatever You will for what comes after it — for how the consequences unfold, for what the regret produces in the self going forward, for whether the harm done can be repaired. اكْفِنِيكَ: You be sufficient within it. The self's own self-reproach is not sufficient. You be sufficient.

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.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ — I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger. The regret within divine pleasure is the regret that turned — that brought the thing done to the one power, that did not use the weight of the regret as a reason to stay away from Him, that found in the regret the occasion to draw nearer rather than further. The regret within divine anger is the regret that became despair — the weight of the thing done becoming the conclusion that the one power's forgiveness does not reach this far. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the regret: not the erasure of the regret but the regret carried within the address that can actually do something with it. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the act is within Your knowledge. Its forgiveness is within Your authority. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ — Al-Ghaffar: the Repeatedly Forgiving. Al-'Afuww: the one who erases. You are as You have praised Yourself.

*O My servants who have transgressed against themselves —
do not despair of the mercy of Allah.*

Indeed Allah forgives all sins.

جَمِيعًا

All.

Without exception.

*Without a threshold of severity
beyond which the word no longer applies.*

Al-Ghaffar. Al-'Afuww.

The act is within His knowledge.

Its forgiveness is within His authority.

CHAPTER NINE

The Thing Not Done

The words not said. The presence not given. The door the self could have opened and did not.

The Condition Named

There is a particular quality of regret that belongs not to the thing done but to the thing not done. The visit that was postponed and then became impossible. The words that were ready to be said and were not said. The person who needed presence and received absence. The forgiveness that was available and was withheld. The love that was felt and not expressed. The absence that became permanent before the self had finished deciding whether to end it.

The regret of the thing not done has a specific torture: the self cannot point to an act it committed. It can only point to the absence where an act should have been. And absences are harder to bring to forgiveness than acts, because forgiveness requires something to forgive — an act, a transgression, a specific thing done. The thing not done seems to slip beneath the net. What is there to forgive? The self did not do anything. It simply did not do the thing it should have done.

But the tradition treats omission with the same seriousness as commission. The Prophet, upon him be peace, said: it is enough for a person to be considered evil if he neglects those who are under his care. The thing not done, when it was the thing that was owed, is itself an act — an act of withholding. And the one power's forgiveness reaches omission as it reaches commission. The door that the self did not open — the one power's forgiveness can reach the self that stood in front of it without opening it.

Hold the specific thing not done. The specific absence where a presence was owed. 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 was present in the absence — who knows not only what the self did but what the self did not do, not only the acts but the withheld acts, not only the words said but the words that were never said. The Lord of the seven heavens knows the thing not done as completely as He knows the thing done. He was present when the self stood at the door and did not open it. He knows the reason the door was not opened. He knows what was on the other side of it. And He is still the address. The one who knows the thing not done is the one to whom the prayer for the thing not done is brought.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The thing not done and its consequences are within divine governance. The opportunity that was present and not taken was within His governance. The protection from the weight of the absence is asked from the one who was present within the absence. Not: give me the opportunity back. Be my protector within the weight of its having passed. عَرْجَ جَارِكَ: the one who was present when the door was not opened holds the self that did not open it. He governs the consequences. He governs what is still possible and what is not.

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 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.

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the thing not done. Greater than the specific absence where a presence was owed. Greater than the weight of standing at a door that cannot now be opened. The omission is creation — a human failing within a human life. The Creator is greater than all of His creation, including the failing. اللهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأَحْذَرُ: mightier than the regret of the thing not done, which often cuts more deeply than the regret of the thing done because it cannot be undone even by confession.

اللهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation. The door that was not opened is creation. The moment that passed is creation. The consequences of the absence are creation. And the one power's forgiveness reaches all of His creation. The جَمِيعًا of His forgiveness covers commission and omission both. Ask the one who is mightier than all of it to be the forgiveness within the specific weight of what was withheld.

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 door did not open. The moment passed. The thing not done is now unchangeably not done. Whatever You will for what remains after it — for what is still possible within the relationship or the situation that was not served, for what repair is available, for how the self carries the weight of the omission going forward. The self cannot go back to the moment of the unopened door. Whatever You will for what comes after it. اكْفِنِيكَ: suffice me within the weight of what was not done and within whatever remains possible now. You govern what is still open. Whatever You will.

The Prophet taught that when a person dies, three things continue: ongoing charity, knowledge that others benefit from, and a righteous child who prays for them. The thing not done before a death does not close all doors. The one power governs what remains

possible. The dua for the one the self did not give enough to while they were present — that door is still open. Whatever You will for what can still be done within what was not done.

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.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ — I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger. The regret of the thing not done, within divine pleasure, is the regret that turned what was withheld into what is now given — the self that did not say the words finding the prayer that says them now, the self that was not present finding presence in the dua for the one it was absent from. The regret, within divine pleasure, becomes the occasion for the self to give what it withheld, in whatever form is still possible. Within divine anger, the regret of omission becomes paralysis — the weight of what was not done becoming the reason nothing further can be done either. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the unopened door is within Your knowledge. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ — Al-‘Afuww: the one who erases. The omission is within Your authority to erase. You are as You have praised Yourself.

*He was present in the absence.
He knows not only what the self did
but what the self did not do.
The door that was not opened —
He governs what is still possible
and what is not.
The dua for the one the self was absent from —
that door is still open.*

Al-'Afuww.

The omission is within His authority to erase.

CHAPTER TEN

The Loop

When the regret replays without resolution. The mind returning to the moment of the choice, again and again.

The Condition Named

Regret has a particular form of suffering that is distinct from its initial weight: the loop. The mind returns to the moment of the choice — the moment before the thing was done or not done — and replays it. Sees the choice again. Feels again what was felt then. Arrives again at the same outcome. Returns to the beginning and replays it again. The loop is not processing or resolving. It is repetition without movement. The self watching its own past without being able to alter it, returning to the moment where the different choice was still possible and then watching again as the same choice is made.

The loop is the mind's attempt to find the moment where the thing could have been different. But the past is the one thing in creation that cannot be altered by subsequent attention. The loop cannot reach the moment it is looking for. Every replay arrives at the same outcome. The loop is suffering without progress, grief without movement, the mind in a room with no exit.

The tradition's answer to the loop is not analysis but turning. Not: find the right way to replay the past so that you understand it better. Turn. The tawba — the return — is not a replay. It is a direction. The self that is looping turns from the loop toward the one power. Not backward into the moment that cannot be changed but forward, toward the address that governs what comes next. The loop cannot go anywhere. The turn can.

Hold the specific loop. The specific moment the mind keeps returning to. 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 is itself the turning. The mind in the loop is turned toward the past it cannot change. The prayer turns the mind toward the address that governs the past and holds the future. The Lord of the seven heavens knows the moment the loop keeps returning to. He was present in it. He knows it more completely than the mind replaying it — He knows not only what the self did or did not do in that moment but why, and what came from it, and what it means within a governance the self cannot see from inside the loop.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The loop is within divine governance. The mind's return to the moment is within divine governance. The protection from being held in the loop without exit is asked from the one whose forgiveness is the actual exit. The loop is trying to find its way to a changed past. The one power's forgiveness offers something the loop cannot: not a changed past but a forgiven past. The moment does not have to be different. It can be forgiven. The protector who holds the exit from the loop is the one who can forgive what the loop is replaying. عَرَّ جَارِكَ: the protection of the one whose forgiveness makes the loop unnecessary.

The Prophet, upon him be peace, said: the one who repents from a sin is as one who has no sin. النَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لَا ذَنْبَ لَهُ. The loop is replaying a sin or failing. The tawba replaces what the loop replays with something else: the one who repented, who is as one who has no sin. The loop cannot produce this. Only the turning can.

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 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.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the loop. Greater than the moment the loop keeps returning to. Greater than the grip of the past on the mind that cannot stop replaying it. The moment in the loop is creation — a past event within a past life. The Creator is greater than all of His creation, including the past moment that the mind cannot release. اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ; mightier than the grip of the loop. The one who holds the seven heavens holds the past moment that the mind is circling. He is not in the loop with the mind. He holds the moment, He knows it completely, and He has the authority to forgive it and release the mind from its circling.

اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation. The loop is creation. The moment it replays is creation. The mind doing the replaying is creation. The Creator is mightier than all of it — which means He is mightier than the loop's grip on the mind, mightier than the past's hold on the present, mightier than the seeming impossibility of moving forward from a moment that cannot be undone. Ask the one who is mightier to be the exit the loop cannot find.

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 loop is searching for a sufficiency the past cannot provide. It keeps returning to the moment hoping that another replay will produce a resolution that the replaying cannot produce.

اَكْفِيكَ is the turning that the loop cannot make: suffice me, O Allah, against what You will. The moment is within Your will. Its having occurred as it occurred is within Your will. The self cannot change it. You can forgive it. Suffice me within the weight of it and within the mind's circling. Be sufficient where the loop is not. Be the exit that the replaying cannot find. Whatever You will for what comes after the moment the mind keeps returning to.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عُقُوبَتِكَ 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. Within divine pleasure, the mind that was looping is the mind that turned — that brought the moment it could not stop replaying to the address that can forgive it, that found the exit from the loop in the tawba rather than the replay. The loop ends not when the moment is understood differently but when it is forgiven. Within divine anger, the loop continues without turning — the mind circling a past it cannot change and not turning toward the one who can forgive it. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the regret: the condition of turning from the loop toward the address. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the moment is within Your knowledge. Its forgiveness is within Your authority. كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ — Al-Tawwab: the one who continuously receives the turn. The loop cannot go anywhere. The turn can. You receive it. You are as You have praised Yourself.

The loop cannot go anywhere.

The turn can.

التَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لَا ذَنْبَ لَهُ

The one who repents from a sin

is as one who has no sin.

The loop is replaying what the tawba replaces.

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

Be the exit the loop cannot find.

Al-Tawwab.

You receive the turn.

SECTION IV

Disappointed Hope

What was longed for meeting what arrived instead. The dua that seemed unanswered. The life that was supposed to be.

وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Perhaps you dislike a thing and it is good for you, and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows and you do not know.

The self's knowledge of what it wants and the one power's knowledge of what it needs are not the same knowledge.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Dua That Seemed Unanswered

When the self asked specifically, repeatedly, with presence — and the answer was not what was asked for.

The Condition Named

There is a particular shape of disappointed hope that belongs specifically to the dua — the supplication. The self brought a specific need to the one power, with specificity and persistence and sincerity, and the need was not met in the way it was asked to be met. The thing asked for did not arrive. Or it arrived in a form so different from what was asked that the self cannot recognise the answer as an answer. Or it has not arrived yet and the waiting has become its own grief.

This is among the most testing of conditions in faith precisely because it targets the relationship at its centre. The dua is not just asking. It is the acknowledgment that the one power hears, that He cares, that He governs what is being asked about, that the relationship is real enough to make requests within. And when the request is not met in the form it was made, the grief is not only about what was not received. It is about what the unanswered dua seems to say about the relationship.

But the tradition's teaching on dua is that no dua is unanswered. The Prophet, upon him be peace, said: there is no Muslim who supplicates to Allah with a supplication that does not contain sin or the cutting of family ties, except that Allah gives him one of three things: either He hastens his request, or He stores it for him in the hereafter, or He diverts from him an evil equivalent to it. The dua asked and not received in its requested form was answered — in a form the self does not know yet. The grief is real. The dua is answered.

Hold the specific dua. The specific thing asked for that did not arrive as asked. 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 heard the dua. The Lord of the seven heavens heard every repetition of it. He heard the sincerity in it and the desperation in it and the waiting in it. He heard the dua and He answered it — in one of three ways that the self does not yet know. The grief of the unanswered dua is brought to the one who answered it. Not the one who was absent from the asking. The one who received every word and who has already acted on it within a governance the self cannot see from inside the grief of not receiving what was asked for.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The dua's not arriving as asked is from within divine governance. The protection from the grief of the unanswered dua is asked from the one who answered it in a way the self cannot see. Not: explain the answer to me. Be my protector within the not-seeing. عَرَّ جَارِكَ: the protector who holds the answer the self cannot access is the only one who can be the protection within the gap between what was asked and what was received.

The Quran says: وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ — perhaps you dislike a thing and it is good for you. The gap between what the self asked for and what arrived is the gap between the self's knowledge of what it wants and the one power's knowledge of what it needs. These are not the same knowledge. The grief is within that gap. The protection is also within that gap — because the one who governs the gap is the one whose knowledge is complete.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمُتَمَسِّكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ أَنْ يَقَعَنَّ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضِ 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.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the unanswered dua. Greater than the gap between what was asked and what arrived. Greater than the grief that the gap produced. The dua and its answer are creation — a human asking within a created life meeting a divine response that moves through the created order. The Creator is greater than all of it. اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأُحْذِرُ: mightier than the grief of not receiving what was asked for.

اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation. The thing the self asked for is creation. The thing that arrived instead is creation. The grief in the gap between them is creation. The one power is mightier than all of it — which means He sees both sides of the gap simultaneously: what the self wanted and what the self needed, and why they were not the same, and what His answer to the dua actually contained. Ask the one who sees both sides to be the protection within the gap.

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 dua was brought to the one power. He heard it and He willed His answer to it. Whatever You will: the self accepts that the answer to the dua was in what arrived, even if the self cannot see how. Suffice me within the grief of not receiving what I asked for, within the not-seeing of where the answer went, within the waiting for the stored gift that may only be given in another life. اكْفِنِيكَ: You be sufficient where the unanswered dua left a gap. Whatever You will for what that gap contains. Whatever You willed when You answered the dua in the way You answered it. The self places the dua and its answer both in Your hands.

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.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ — I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger. The grief of the unanswered dua, within divine pleasure, is the grief that continues to ask — that brings the unanswered asking back to the address, that does not conclude from the gap that the one power was absent or indifferent, that finds within the grief the occasion to deepen the asking rather than abandon it. Within divine anger, the unanswered dua becomes the reason to stop asking — the grief that closes the relationship rather than pressing further into it. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the gap: the condition of remaining in the asking even after the answer was not what was asked for. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the dua is within Your hearing. Its answer is within Your governance. أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ — Al-Mujib: the One who responds. Every dua reaches You. You are as You have praised Yourself.

*There is no Muslim who supplicates to Allah
except that Allah gives him one of three things:
either He hastens his request,
or He stores it for him in the hereafter,
or He diverts from him an evil equivalent to it.
The dua asked and not received as asked
was answered.
In a form the self does not know yet.
Al-Mujib.
Every dua reaches Him.*

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Life That Was Supposed to Be

The self standing in the life it has and measuring it against the life it thought it would have.

The Condition Named

Every life contains a parallel life — the life the self expected, or hoped for, or worked toward, or was promised, and did not receive. The self that stands in its actual life and holds it alongside the imagined life is standing in a gap that is uniquely painful because one side of the gap is real and the other is not. The imagined life cannot be grieved the way a real loss can be grieved — it never existed, so nothing was taken. And yet the grief of the unlived life is as heavy as any grief in this book. Sometimes heavier, because it cannot even be named to others without sounding like ingratitude for what was given.

This is the sadness of the life that was supposed to be: the marriage that was supposed to happen, the child who was supposed to come, the health that was supposed to hold, the recognition that was supposed to arrive, the peace that was supposed to follow the effort. Each one is the shadow of a hope that met a different reality. And the self lives not only in its actual life but in the shadow of the life that did not.

The tradition's answer is not: stop wanting what you wanted. It is: the one power's knowledge of what your life was for is more complete than the imagined life. *وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ* — perhaps you dislike a thing and it is good for you. The life that arrived instead of the imagined life was not an accident or an oversight. It was governed. Its governance is complete. The self standing in the gap between the actual and the imagined is standing within the one power's governance of both.

Hold the specific imagined life. The specific life that was supposed to be and was not. 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 knows both lives — the actual life and the imagined one. The Lord of the seven heavens knew the imagined life the self was expecting. He knew it when the self was building the expectation. He knew when the actual life diverged from the imagined one. He knows the grief in the gap. He holds both lives in His knowledge simultaneously and He governs both — the actual life in its actuality, and the imagined life in its not arriving, and the gap between them in its full weight.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The actual life, with its divergence from the imagined one, is from within divine governance. The protection from the weight of the gap is asked from the one who governed the divergence. Not: give me the imagined life. Be my protector within the actual one. عَرْجَ جَارِكَ: the protector who governed the divergence is the only one who knows what the actual life contains that the imagined one did not. He holds the actual life and knows its worth, which the self standing in the gap cannot yet see.

The Prophet Musa, upon him be peace, was removed from his mother as an infant, raised in Pharaoh's palace, fled into exile, arrived in Madyan without plan or provision. The life he was living at each stage bore no resemblance to any life he could have imagined. And in the gaps between the imagined and the actual — in Madyan, at the bush, on the mountain — the one power was governing something the self could not have planned. The life that arrived was not the life that was supposed to be. It was the life that was being built toward something the self could not see from inside it.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ وَأُحْدَرْ، 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.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the imagined life. Greater than the gap between the imagined and the actual. Greater than the grief that the gap produced. The imagined life is creation — a human expectation within a human mind. The actual life is creation. The gap between them is creation. The Creator is greater than all of it. اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَحَافُ وَأُحْدَرْ: mightier than the sadness of the life that was supposed to be and was not.

اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation, including the imagined life. The imagined life never existed, but the one power is mightier than it nonetheless — mightier than the expectation and mightier than its not arriving and mightier than the grief in the gap. He holds the actual life and He knows its worth. The self measuring the actual against the imagined is using an incomplete measure. The one power's measure of the actual life is complete. Ask the one whose measure is complete to be the protection within the self's incomplete measuring.

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 actual life is what You willed. The imagined life is what the self expected. Whatever You will for the actual life — for what it contains that the self has not yet seen, for what it is building toward that the imagined life was not building toward, for what it means within a

governance the self cannot see from inside the gap. اَكْفِنِيكَ: suffice me within the actual life. Not within the imagined one. Suffice me within what You actually gave, within what You actually willed, within the life that arrived instead of the one the self was expecting. Whatever You will. Suffice me within 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.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ — I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger. Within divine pleasure, the self standing in the actual life is the self that finds within the actual life what the imagined life could not have contained. The gap between the imagined and the actual, within divine pleasure, is the space where the one power's governance is most visible — where the self that wanted one thing found another thing being built instead. Within divine anger, the gap becomes permanent dissatisfaction — the self that never fully inhabits the actual life because it is perpetually measuring it against the imagined one. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the actual life: the condition of inhabiting what was given rather than mourning what was not. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the actual life is within Your governance. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ — Al-Hakim: the Perfectly Wise. The actual life has a wise purpose. You are as You have praised Yourself.

In Madyan. At the bush. On the mountain.

The life that arrived

bore no resemblance to any life he could have imagined.

And in the gaps between the imagined and the actual —

the one power was governing something

the self could not have planned.

*Perhaps you dislike a thing
and it is good for you.*

Al-Hakim.

The actual life has a wise purpose.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

When the Hope Itself Was the Gift

The possibility that the hoping itself — the turning toward the one power with a need — was the purpose, regardless of whether it arrived.

The Condition Named

There is a recognition that can arrive within disappointed hope, after the grief of the unanswered dua and the grief of the life that was not, that reframes both. The self that brought its hope repeatedly to the one power — that prayed for the thing it longed for, that turned again and again toward the address, that stayed in the asking even as the answering was not what was asked for — was doing something during all of that hoping. It was staying near. The hope that kept the self in proximity to the one power was not a failed bid for a thing that did not arrive. It was a form of proximity that the thing's arriving might actually have ended.

This is not a consolation offered to dismiss the grief. The grief of disappointed hope is real and this chapter does not ask the self to stop feeling it. It is an observation about what the hoping itself was doing while it was happening. The person who hoped for the marriage and did not receive it prayed for decades. Those decades of prayer were not wasted time before the real life began. They were the life. The proximity to the one power that the hoping sustained was the condition the one power was keeping the self in.

The Prophet, upon him be peace, said: the dua is worship itself. *الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ*. Not: the dua is the means to receive what is worshipped for. The dua is worship itself. The hoping and asking directed toward the one power is itself the act of turning toward Him, which is the highest human act. The thing that was hoped for and did not arrive was, in one reading, the occasion that kept the self in the highest act for the duration of the hoping.

Hold the hoping. The specific turning toward the one power that the disappointed hope sustained. 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 toward whom the hoping was directed. Every dua the self made for the thing that did not arrive reached this address. Every turning was a turning toward the Lord of the seven heavens. Every repetition of the asking was an act of proximity to the one power. The one who is being addressed now received every one of those turnings. He held the self in its hoping. He was the one being turned toward during the entire duration of the hoping, and His governance of the hoping — of its not resolving in the asked-for way — was the governance that kept the self turning toward Him.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The hoping and its not being resolved was within divine governance. The protection from the grief of the hoping's not being resolved is asked from the one who governed the hoping's duration. Not: tell me why the thing did not arrive. Be my protector within the recognition of what the hoping was doing while it was not arriving. عَرْجَ جَارِكَ: the protection of the one who kept the self turning toward Him through the hoping is the protection that can hold the self now that the hoping has met its grief.

The Second Prayer

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا، اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ بِمَا أَحَافُ 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 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.

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the disappointed hope. Greater than the grief of the thing that did not arrive. And — greater than the self's understanding of what the hoping was for. The self hoped for the thing. The one power accepted the hoping itself. Both are creation — the hope and its object and its not arriving and what it produced in the self over the duration of the hoping. The Creator is greater than all of it, which means He sees what the hoping was building that the self cannot yet see. اللهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأَحْذَرُ: mightier than the grief of the disappointed hope and mightier than the self's limited view of what the hoping was for.

اللهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation. The hoping is creation. The thing hoped for is creation. The grief of its not arriving is creation. The proximity to the one power that the hoping sustained is also creation — but it is creation of a particular kind: the creation that the one power values above most others. الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ. The hoping was worship. What the hoping produced in proximity to the one power — ask the one who received it to be the measure of what it was worth.

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. Whatever You will for what the hoping produced. Whatever You will for what the proximity to You that the hoping sustained has become in this self. Whatever You will for what comes after the hoping — whether the thing still arrives or whether the hoping has concluded in its grief and something else is beginning. اكْفِنِيكَ: suffice me within the grief of the disappointed hope and within the recognition of what the hope was doing while it hoped. Suffice me within both: the grief and the gift. You received the hoping. You governed its duration. Whatever You will for what it was for.

The Fourth Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عُقُوبَتِكَ 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. Within divine pleasure, the self that hoped and did not receive is the self that was kept in proximity to the one power by the very hoping that did not resolve — the self whose dua was worship, whose grief is now also a form of turning, whose disappointed hope has become the occasion for the deepest recognition of what the hoping was actually for. Within divine anger, the disappointed hope becomes the reason to stop hoping — the grief that closes the proximity the hoping sustained. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the grief of the disappointed hope: the condition of continuing to turn toward the address even after the specific hope met its grief. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the hoping and its grief are both within Your governance. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ — Al-Wadud: the Loving. The hoping toward You was not nothing. You received it. You are as You have praised Yourself.

الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ

The dua is worship itself.

*The hoping and asking directed toward the one power
is itself the act of turning toward Him.*

*The thing that did not arrive
was the occasion that kept the self
in the highest act
for the duration of the hoping.*

Al-Wadud.

The hoping toward You was not nothing.

He received it.

SECTION V

The Sadness With No Name

The huzn that sits without an object. The weight that arrives without a story the self can tell about it.

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

Is it not in the remembrance of Allah that hearts find rest?

The heart that is restless without explanation is the heart that has not yet found its rest in the remembrance of the one power. This is not a diagnosis. It is a direction.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Weight Without a Name

When the sadness is present but has no identifiable cause. The grief that cannot point to its own origin.

The Condition Named

All the sadnesses named so far have objects: a specific loss, a specific carried grief, a specific regret, a specific disappointed hope. The self in each of those conditions knows what it is sad about, even if it cannot always articulate the full depth of the sadness. This chapter names a different condition: the sadness that does not have an object the self can point to. The weight that arrives without a cause the self can identify. The huzn that sits in the chest without a story attached to it.

This is a real condition and it is more common than the named sadnesses. The self wakes into it or it settles over an ordinary day. Nothing specific happened. No particular loss is present. And yet the weight is present, sometimes lightly and sometimes heavily, without an explanation. The self looks for a cause and cannot find one clear enough to justify the weight. Which sometimes adds a layer: the self not only feels the weight but feels confused or ashamed by feeling it without a sufficient reason.

The Quran's statement — *أَلَا يَذْكُرُ اللَّهُ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ* — is it not in the remembrance of Allah that hearts find rest — is not addressed specifically to those with named sadnesses. It is addressed to the heart. Every heart. The heart that is restless without explanation is the heart the verse is speaking to as directly as any other. The rest that is being pointed toward is not conditioned on the sadness having a name. It is conditioned on the direction of the turning.

Hold the weight. Without needing to name its cause. 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 knows the source of the weight even when the self does not. The Lord of the seven heavens sees the weight's origin completely — its roots in the accumulated texture of the life being lived, in the things felt and not processed, in the gap between the self's exterior functioning and its interior reality, in the distance between the self and the one power that the unnamed sadness is sometimes signalling. He sees what the self cannot see. The weight without a name is not without a cause — it is without a cause the self can see. The one power sees it.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The weight is within divine governance. The unnamed sadness is within divine governance. The protection from the weight is asked from the one who knows its source. Not: name it for me. Be my protector within the weight while I cannot name it. عَرَّ جَارِكَ: the protector who sees the weight's source is the only one who can be the protection within the not-naming. The self does not need to identify the cause before it can bring the weight to this address. The weight itself — unnamed, unpointed — is enough to bring.

The Prophet, upon him be peace, taught his Companions to say upon waking: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ — praise be to Allah who gave us life after He caused us to die, and to Him is the resurrection. The unnamed weight that wakes with the self is met first with praise, before analysis, before the search for causes. The praise does not require the weight to be named. It requires only the direction: toward the one power.

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 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.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the unnamed weight. Greater than the weight's unknown source. Greater than the confusion of feeling what cannot be explained. The unnamed sadness is creation — a human experience within a human interior. The Creator is greater than all of His creation, including the experience that the self cannot explain or name. اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأَخْذَرُ: mightier than the weight the self is carrying without knowing why.

اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation. The weight without a name is His creation. Its source, wherever it is, is within His creation. Its governance — what it is doing in the self, what it is signalling, what direction it is trying to point the self toward — is within His governance. He is mightier than the weight, mightier than its source, mightier than the self's confusion about both. Ask the one who is mightier to be the clarity within the self's not-knowing.

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 unnamed weight is within Your will. Its presence in this self on this day is within Your governance. Whatever You will for what the weight is — for what it is pointing toward, for what it is waiting for the self to find, for whether it will be named or whether it will be carried without a name and met with this prayer as it is met. اكْفِنِيكَ: suffice me within the weight I

cannot name. Suffice me within the not-knowing of its source. You know the source. Suffice me against You with whatever You will regarding what the weight is and where it comes from and what it is asking the self to do. I bring it to You without being able to name it. Receive it unnamed. 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.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ — I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger. The unnamed weight, within divine pleasure, is the weight that the self brought to the address without needing to explain it first — the weight that found the direction of the remembrance of Allah before it found a name. أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ: is it not in the remembrance of Allah that hearts find rest? The unnamed weight that is brought to the one power is the weight that is already in the remembrance. The rest is available within the remembrance, not after the weight is explained. Within divine anger, the unnamed weight becomes the reason for the self to turn further inward and further away from the one power — the unexamined heaviness that accumulates without direction. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the weight: the condition of bringing what cannot be named to the address that receives it unnamed. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the weight's source is within Your knowledge. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ — Al-Khabir: the Aware of what is hidden. You know the weight's source. You are as You have praised Yourself.

*The self does not need to identify the cause
before it can bring the weight to this address.
The weight itself — unnamed, unpointed —*

is enough to bring.

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

*Is it not in the remembrance of Allah
that hearts find rest?*

*The rest is available within the remembrance,
not after the weight is explained.*

Al-Khabir.

He knows the weight's source.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Distance From the One Power

When the unnamed sadness is recognised as the weight of distance. The self that has drifted and feels the drift as a dull ache without knowing its name.

The Condition Named

Among the possible sources of the unnamed sadness, there is one that the tradition identifies specifically: the sadness that is the felt sense of distance from the one power. The self that has drifted — through distraction or busyness or gradual inattention or the slow accumulation of small turnings-away — carries a weight that it may not be able to name as distance. It only knows that something that was once present is less present. That the prayers have become more mechanical. That the quality of the interior life has changed in a way the self can sense but cannot describe.

Ibn al-Qayyim wrote: the heart has a hunger and a thirst that nothing satisfies except the proximity of the one power. When the heart is distant from that proximity it develops a pain — a specific unnamed ache — that all the world's pleasures cannot address, because they are not the thing the heart is hungry for. The unnamed sadness that sits without explanation may be the heart's signal: you are further from the source of your rest than you should be.

This is not a judgment. It is a diagnosis offered with the care of a tradition that knows the self's drift is not unusual and the return is always possible. The Prophet said: *وَمَنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ شِبْرًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا* — whoever draws near to Me by a hand's length, I draw near to him by an arm's length. The distance is not permanent and it is not symmetrical: the self moves toward the one power in small steps and He moves toward the self in large ones. The drift and the return are both within His governance.

Hold the distance if it is felt. The specific ache of the drift. 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 is itself the return. The self that brings the weight of its unnamed sadness, or the recognised weight of its distance, to this address is already moving. The Lord of the seven heavens does not observe the drift from a fixed point and wait for the self to close the full distance. *وَمَنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ شِبْرًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا*: whoever draws near by a hand's length, He draws near by an arm's length. The prayer is the hand's length. The drawing near is His.

كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ — be my protector from Yourself. The distance is within divine governance. The drift that produced it is within divine governance. The protection from the distance is asked from the one whose drawing near is what closes it. Not: I will close the distance by my own effort and then return to You. Be my protector within the drift. Draw near as I draw near. *عَزَّ جَارُكَ*: the protection of the one whose approach is larger than the self's approach is the only protection that can close the distance the drift produced.

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.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ — Allah is the Greatest. Greater than the distance. Greater than the drift that produced it. Greater than the unnamed ache of the heart that is far from its source of rest. The distance is creation — a human condition within a human interior. The Creator is

greater than all of His creation, including the specific distance between the self and the one power that the unnamed sadness may be signalling. *اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِمَّا أَخَافُ وَأَحْذَرُ*: mightier than the distance and mightier than the drift that produced it.

اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا — mightier than all of His creation. The drift is creation. The distance is creation. The unnamed ache is creation. And the one power is closer to the self in its drift than the self is to itself — *وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ*. He is not at the distance the self feels. The distance is what the self experiences. He is closer than the jugular vein, always, regardless of the drift. The unnamed sadness of distance is the self's experience of a distance that, from the one power's side, does not exist.

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 drift was within Your governance. The unnamed ache it produced is within Your governance. Whatever You will for the return — for what draws the self back toward proximity, for what closes the distance, for what restores the quality of the interior life that the drift diminished. *اكْفِنِيكَ*: suffice me within the return. Not: I will return fully and then ask You to receive me. Suffice me against You as I move. The hand's length move is mine. The arm's length draw is Yours. Whatever You will for the closing of the distance. The prayer is already the beginning.

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. Within divine pleasure, the distance is the distance of the self that is already returning — the self that felt the unnamed ache and recognised it as the heart's signal, that brought the ache to this address, that is already making the hand's length move. Within divine anger, the distance is the distance of the self that remains in the drift — that feels the unnamed ache but turns further away from the one power rather than toward Him. The prayer asks for divine pleasure within the return: the condition of the self that turns the unnamed sadness into the occasion to draw near. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ: the distance and the return are both within Your governance. لَا أُحْصِي تَنَاءَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَتَنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِيكَ. — Al-Qarib: the Near. Closer than the jugular vein. The distance is the self's experience. He is as He has praised Himself.

*The heart has a hunger and a thirst
that nothing satisfies
except the proximity of the one power.
Whoever draws near by a hand's length —
I draw near by an arm's length.
The prayer is the hand's length.
The drawing near is His.
Al-Qarib.
The distance is the self's experience.
He is closer than the jugular vein.*

SECTION VI

The End of Sadness *and the Beginning of Joy*

Not: a ground to grieve on. Not: grief better managed. The end of the condition that made grief possible.

لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

No fear upon them. Nor do they grieve.

Present tense. Nominal sentence. No “will be.” No “shall.”

This is a description of what is.

When Allah is present as He is present in these prayers — every “other” vanishes. Including grief. Including fear. What remains is not the self with its sadness on better footing. What remains is Allah.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

What the Prayers Actually Do

They do not help the self grieve better. They detonate the self's position as griever.

The Error Corrected

This book has been building toward a correction that only becomes visible at the end. Each section named a condition of sadness, brought it to the four prayers, and pointed toward the one power's governance within the sadness. That was not wrong. But it was incomplete. It was incomplete because it left something standing that the prayers, read with their full force, do not leave standing: the self in its position as the one who grieves.

The four prayers were not given to help the self carry grief more effectively. They were given to do something more total than that. They were given to dissolve the position from which grief operates. Not: here is the address to bring your sadness to, so that you can continue as a sadder self with better support. Here is the address that, when truly brought to, leaves nothing standing but the one power. And the one power is not sad. He does not grieve. And the self that has been fully received by Him has entered a condition in which the “other” that grief requires — the “other” that is the loss, the “other” that is the regret, the “other” that is the disappointed hope — has been dissolved into His governance so completely that it no longer functions as loss. It is within Him. He has it. And in Him, nothing is lost.

Read the prayers again from this place.

The First Prayer: The Collapse of Distance

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَى عَرْجَاكَ، 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 — be my protector from Yourself. Not from an external threat. From Yourself. This is the prayer that collapses the distance between the self and the one power. The protector being asked is the one power Himself. The protection is the one power Himself. The threat being protected from is the one power Himself. There is no room in this prayer for the self to stand separately, over here, asking from over there. The asking and the one asked and the protection and what is being protected from are all the same. The self that prays this prayer has entered a space in which the “other” cannot survive.

عَزَّ جَارُكَ — mighty is Your protection. Not: mighty is the protection You give me while I remain here. Mighty is Your protection, which is Yourself, which is the only place there is. The loss the self was carrying was carrying it as something separate from the one power. This prayer says: there is no separate. The Lord of the seven heavens is the protector from Himself. The grief that lived in the gap between the self and the one power cannot survive the collapse of that gap.

The Third Prayer: Allah as Replacement for Everything

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 Arabic holds what the translation can only gesture toward. اكْفِنِيكَ: the ك at the end is Allah. Not: give me sufficiency. Not: provide me with enough to carry this. Suffice me with You. Allah Himself as the sufficiency that takes the place of everything the self was holding. The prayer does not ask for help with the grief. It asks for Allah as the replacement of the grief’s object.

Consider what this means for every sadness in this book. The fresh loss: اكْفِنِيكَ — be sufficient in place of what was lost. The carried grief: اكْفِنِيكَ — be sufficient in place of what the carrying was for. The disappointed hope: اكْفِنِيكَ — be sufficient in place of what was

hoped for. The self that prays this prayer is not asking to carry the grief better. It is asking for Allah to be sufficient where the grief's object was. And when Al-Ghani — the Self-Sufficient, who needs nothing and lacks nothing — is the sufficiency, what is left to grieve?

بِمَا تَشِئْتُ — with whatever You will. This is not resignation. It is the recognition that whatever was lost was within His will, within His governance, within His hands, and therefore within Him. What is within Al-Wajid — the Finder — is not lost. The prayer is the moment of recognising that the thing grieved was never outside the one power. When this recognition lands fully, the loss is not better carried. It is found.

The Fourth Prayer: No Space Remaining

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.

أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ — I seek refuge in You from You. This is the prayer that detonates the final separation. In every other seeking of refuge, there is a self that seeks and a one power who shelters. Here the distinction collapses. Refuge in Allah from Allah. There is no outside of Allah to stand in. There is no gap between the self and the one power from which to ask. The self that prays this has entered the recognition that the one power is all there is — that seeking refuge in Him from Him means there is nowhere else, no “other” place, no external threat, no external loss, no external anything. Only Allah.

لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ — I cannot enumerate Your praise. You are as You have praised Yourself. The self at the end of this prayer has surrendered its position as the one who counts, who measures, who knows the extent of what was lost. You are as You have praised Yourself — not as the self's grief has defined You, not as the gap between the hoped-for and the arrived has painted You, not as the weight in the chest has made You seem. You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Hayy. Al-Qayyum. Al-Ghani. Al-Wajid.

When this is what remains — when the self’s position has been dissolved into this — the one power is all that is. And the one power does not grieve.

What Remains

This is not the dissolution of the self into nothingness. The tradition is not asking for the annihilation of the person. It is describing what the person discovers when the “other” that grief requires has been given fully and completely to the one power: not emptiness, but fullness. Not nothingness, but the one power’s presence filling the space that the grief occupied. Not the self hovering over an abyss where the loss used to be, but the self finding that the one power was in the loss, is in the loss, is the governance within the loss, and that the loss within Him is not the same thing as the loss experienced from outside Him.

Al-Wajid: the Finder. One of the divine names that appears almost nowhere in popular recitation but is absolute in its implication. The Finder. The one in whom nothing is lost. Every loss grieved in this book — every person departed, every hope disappointed, every thing done or not done, every unnamed weight — is within Al-Wajid. Within the Finder, the lost thing is found. Not returned to the self in its original form. Found by the one who holds everything, within the one who holds everything. When the self has given the grief fully to Al-Wajid, the grief’s premise — that something is lost — meets the one power’s reality: nothing is lost within Me.

*The prayer does not ask
to carry the grief better.
It asks for Allah to be sufficient
where the grief’s object was.*

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيكَ بِمَا شِئْتَ

Al-Wajid. The Finder.

Within the Finder,

the lost thing is found.

The grief's premise — that something is lost —

meets the one power's reality:

Nothing is lost within Me.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Nor Do They Grieve

لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

The Sentence That Cannot Be Future Tense

The aya is a nominal sentence. In Arabic, a nominal sentence without a verb describes a permanent, timeless state. Not: one day they will not fear and one day they will not grieve. لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ. No fear upon them. Nor do they grieve. The state is described as it is. Present. Real. Actual. Those who have entered this state are in it now, not waiting to enter it later.

This changes everything about what this section is. It is not the destination at the end of a journey of better grief-management. It is the description of what those who have truly brought their fear and their grief to the one power discover: the state has already arrived. It arrived when the “other” was dissolved. It arrived when Allah was all that remained. The aya is not a reward scheduled for the future. It is a description of what is true when the self’s position as the one who fears and the one who grieves has been given completely to the one power.

This is why the aya appears throughout the Quran in contexts that are not exclusively about the afterlife. It appears as a present description of the awliya — the friends of Allah. Those who believed and were mindful of the one power: no fear upon them, nor do they grieve. Not: they will not fear after death. They do not fear. They do not grieve. Now. Because the one power’s presence in their lives has dissolved the “other” that fear and grief require.

The Two Freedoms Together

Book Two named sixty-two fears — the entire range of what the self dreads in the possible future. Book Three named the sadnesses — the entire range of what the self carries from the actual past. The aya holds both freedoms in a single breath: لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ — no fear upon them, nothing from the future that can destabilise them. وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ — nor do they grieve, nothing from the past that has permanent purchase on them. Both tenses. Both directions. Both gone.

The two books were not two separate projects. They were a single movement: the dissolution of the self's claim to be the one who inhabits both tenses — the one who dreads what is coming and mourns what has passed. When the one power is all that remains, neither tense has a self to inhabit it. The future is within His governance — what is there to fear? The past is within His hands — what is there to grieve? This is not a theological position being argued. It is a state being described. Those who have given both tenses completely to the one power discover it is true.

The Beginning of Joy

The end of sadness is not neutral. It is not the mere absence of grief. The one power who is present when the grief dissolves is Al-Wadud — the Loving. Al-Fattah — the Opener. Al-Nur — the Light. Al-Wahhab — the Bestower. What fills the space that the grief occupied is not emptiness. It is the one power's presence, and the one power's presence is what it is: the source of all joy, all beauty, all sufficiency, all rest. أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ — is it not in the remembrance of Allah that hearts find rest? The heart that has given the grief completely to the one power does not rest in emptiness. It rests in the one whose remembrance is the resting itself.

This is al-farah — joy. Not the joy that is happiness because circumstances are pleasant. The joy that is the self's recognition of what is actually real when the “other” has been dissolved. The joy of Yusuf reunited with his father — but more than that: the joy that was present within Yusuf in the well, in the slave market, in the prison, before the reunion, because the one power was present. The joy that does not depend on what arrives. The joy

that is the one power's presence recognised as sufficient for everything, as containing everything, as being everything that was lost and everything that was hoped for and everything that was unnamed and weighted and carried.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ طُوبَىٰ لَهُمْ وَحُسْنُ مَآبٍ — those who believed and did righteous deeds, tooba for them and a beautiful return. Tooba: a joy so concentrated that the word has no English equivalent. A beatitude. The state of the one who has arrived. Not because everything went well. Because the one power is all there is. Because لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ is not a future reward but a present reality for those who have brought every fear and every grief to the address that dissolves them.

The Last Bringing

The four prayers are brought one final time. Not because there is sadness left to address. Because the bringing is itself what the state described in the aya looks like in practice. The one who does not fear and does not grieve is not the one who has stopped bringing. They are the one for whom the bringing has become effortless — the constant orientation toward the one power in whom there is no loss, no future threat, no past weight that is not already held. The bringing is not the means to the end. The bringing is the state itself. To bring everything to Allah is to be in the state where everything is within Allah. And when everything is within Allah, لَا خَوْفٌ — وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ.

The First Prayer

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، كُنْ لِي جَارًا مِنْكَ أَنْ تُفْرِطَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ تَطْعَىٰ 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 — be my protector from Yourself. The self that prays this from the place this book has been building toward

is not bringing a grief. It is not bringing a fear. It is bringing itself, completely, to the address that has no outside. The Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Magnificent Throne — the one whose throne encompasses everything, whose lordship has no gap, whose governance leaves nothing uncontained. Be my protector from Yourself: there is nowhere else. There is no “other” to be protected from. The protector and the one protected and what is being protected from are one. عَزَّ جَارُكَ — mighty is this protection. Mighty because it is total. وَجَلَّ تَنَائُكَ — glorious is Your praise. وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ — and there is no god but You. The last words of the first prayer: no god but You. No “other.” Nothing outside You. This is the ground — but it is not a ground to grieve on. It is the ground that dissolves the grief.

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 تَنَائُكَ 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. The last word of every adhan, repeated at the opening of every prayer, said at every moment of overwhelming. Allah is greater. Greater than every fear named in Book Two. Greater than every sadness named in Book Three. Greater than the self’s entire interior catalogue of what has been dreaded and what has been carried. Greater than the gap between the imagined and the actual. Greater than the loop. Greater than the ambush. Greater than the distance. Greater than all of it simultaneously and infinitely. And what is the self that stands inside the recognition of this greatness? Not the self with its grief on better footing. The self dissolved into the greatness. The self that has said اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ and meant it fully has no room left to grieve — because the grief requires a “this” that is bigger than the one power, and the one power is greater. اللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ جَمِيعًا:

mightier than all of His creation. The grief is His creation. He is mightier. لَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ — no god but You.

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 with You against whatever You will. Said here not from inside a grief but from inside the state the grief was always moving toward. The self that says this and has nothing specific to bring — no fresh loss, no carried weight, no named sadness — discovers that the prayer is still the truest thing it can say. Because اكْفِنِيكَ is not a prayer for when things are hard. It is the permanent orientation of the self toward the one power as sufficient in place of everything. Not: I have a grief, be sufficient within it. You. In place of everything I could possibly want or lose or fear or grieve. You. Whatever You will. The self at the end of this book prays this prayer and finds that it is not asking for anything except what is already the case: Allah is sufficient. Always. For everything. Whatever He wills.

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. The self at the end of this book asks for one thing: to be within divine pleasure. Not relief from pain. Not resolution of grief. Not the imagined life. Not the unanswered dua answered at last. Divine pleasure. The state of being within the one power's pleasure is the state in which لَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ is simply what is. Because the one whose pleasure the self is within is

Al-Wadud — and being within the love of Al-Wadud is not a condition of grief. وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ — I seek refuge in You from You. No gap. No outside. No “other.” لَا أُحْصِي ثَنَاءَ عَلَيْكَ — I cannot enumerate Your praise. Not because the praise is too difficult. Because the one being praised contains all enumeration. أَنْتَ كَمَا أَنْتُنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ — You are as You have praised Yourself. Al-Hayy. Al-Qayyum. Al-Ghani. Al-Wajid. Al-Wadud. Al-Nur. This is what remains when the grief has been given fully. Not the self on better footing. The one power. As He has praised Himself. And in His presence — لَا خَوْفٌ. وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

No fear upon them.

Nor do they grieve.

This is not where the journey ends.

This is where it was always leading.

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