



Futuwwa / Chivalry

In our previous letter we started to reveal some elements of the sciences of Imam Mahdi which are indicated according to Sheikh Muhhyî Din Ibn arabi in the chapter of the Qur'an: *Al-Kahf* (the Cave). We have spoken about the great 'Arif bi Allah (Gnostic), Imam Ja'far aq-çâdiq, grandson of Abu Bakr çiddîq by his mother and grandson of Zein al 'âbidîn by his father, himself a son of Imam Hussein. Imam Ja'far had given a picture about the sciences of Imam al-Mahdi to come.

He said that if one were to consider an alphabet using 72 letters, only two letters would represent all the sciences that had been revealed in his time while the Imam would reveal the remaining 70. This can be understood more easily by thinking of the theory of cosmic cycles where the Iron Age in which we are in has no comparison with the Golden Age that the Imam will restore (*Saheb az-zamân*).

The Divine Name *Mâlik al-Mulk*, the Possessor of the Kingdom in the sense of "King of the Kingdom", was emphasized in connection with this mission of Imam al-Mahdi. Our harmonization with this name can decide our relationship with the Imam, especially if we understand that our personal soul is also our *Mulk* and that therefore to master one's soul is to "know one's Lord".

We had alluded to its geometrical expression as the triangle or the original sacred mountain called in India, Axis of the world, and *jabal Qaf* in the world of Islam. Its apex is the point from which all cosmic cycles manifest. This point can be seen in the dot under the Ba-ب of the *basmallah* but also as the dot in the center of the letter NÛN-ن. This therefore allows us to consider the letter NÛN-ن in its full presentation as an image of the Meru. Recall that in our book *La genèse de la Sagesse*, we had already talked about these two parts of the letter NÛN-ن in relation to Imam al-Mahdi for the "earthly" part represented by the NÛN that is visible in the scripture while the heavenly part that "will descend" is identified with *Sayyidina 'Îssa*, Jesus in his second coming.



The two parts of the *NŪN* coming together (manifested in history by the meeting between Imam al-Mahdi and Sayyidina 'Īssa) represents the return of Islam to its original state, the return to the Golden Age. We have spoken about the science of "*Nuzul*". The "operative" science of the descent of graces that are given as coordinated consciousness and power. This descent of graces does not seem to require asceticism to receive it, but it does require a great purity of soul according to the prophetic model, which must not be forgotten in order to avoid an inappropriate "letting go".

The conditions of space and time have already been surpassed in the case of the Prophet's nocturnal ascent, which opens up possibilities for a man specially missioned to transform the world. We should remember that meditating on these verses of *Al-Kahf* (the cave) is to follow the prophetic injunction advising us to learn the "first ten verses of Surah Al-kahf to protect us from the trials in the time of the *dajjāl*, the Antichrist.

Whoever does this will receive countless inspirations to the point of being able to write a book on each verse. The Qur'an is not just a text to be understood, it is the support of a descent of *Tajjali* theophany, a "rain of stars" in the heart, far beyond what our mind grasps.

"*Fala uqussimu bi mawqī'i nujum*" (I swear by the setting of the stars), Qur'an 56, 75.

We are therefore obliged to choose just a little of this rain that could fill oceans, offering it in the name of God's glory to those who want to drink from this nectar.

We'll pick up in verse 8, with a little frustration for all that we won't have shared. "Do you consider the companions of the Cave to be an extraordinary thing among our Signs? This is a question that God asks his Messenger and through him to us. Indeed, when we consider the fact that these people have been asleep in a cave for 309 years and they wake up after only one day, we can be surprised and find it extraordinary.

This question is therefore an allusion to the fact that what may seem '*ajīb*, extraordinary, to men, is nothing to God. In fact, it prepares us for the time of the imam al-Mahdi, who is so close, whose condition is even more extraordinary.

The Qur'an gives us many extraordinary examples, such as the longevity of Noah, who reached "a thousand years minus fifty". This point becomes important if we know that regarding Imam



al-Mahdi, all Sunni and Shiite Muslims believe in his coming by following the hundred of hadiths on the Sunni side and several hundred on the Shiite side.

However, a discussion has arisen among different groups of scholars as to whether this Imam announced in the hadiths is: either a man whom God will raise up in due course or the son of Hassan al-'Askari, the latter being the fifth grandson of Imam Ja'far aq-çâdiq whom we have already mentioned. In this case, he would have entered occultation and would have been alive for about 1300 years.

The group of scholars who believe that the hadiths give indications that Imam Mahdi is the son of Imam Hasan al-'Askari, elaborate on the fact that science itself does not "technically" forbid such a longevity even though it is more than rare. This group demonstrates that the conditions of space and time have already been surpassed in the case of the Prophet's nocturnal ascent, thus opening up possibilities for a man specially missioned to transform the world. We are not going to take a position here that would fuel controversy, however, like all those who are concerned about this subject, we have asked our *Murchid* and *Mujtahid* Mawlana Sheikh Nazim and we believe that everyone should ask the men of God about this subject.



Let us continue to receive our nourishment from the Qur'an with verse 9:

"When the *fityatu*, the young knightly heroes, took refuge in the cave, they said, 'Our Lord grant us Mercy from Thee and dispose of our matter according to righteousness.'

Let us notice here several key words: God calls these "companions" of the cave here *Fityatu*, which designates those who are on the path of *futuwwa* term which includes, nobility, generosity, fidelity to the pact, virtue, courage, eternal youth.

This term is mentioned about ten times in the Qur'an and many more times in the hadiths. Those who practice it are the *fityan*, the "heroic knights". This expression is confirmed by their demand for "righteousness", *rashad*, in the same *ayat*. This noble quest for knowledge that characterizes the *fityan* is universal and of all times, it represents the universal path whose Islamic expression is clearly formulated here.



We must insist here on the presence of this path: the *Futuwwa*, because we affirm (with many gnostics of this era), that it constitutes the new form of spiritual commitment in our era, according to a model that we will develop and that justifies all that we write here.

Understanding the spirit of this path becomes fundamental at a time when the brotherhoods can no longer assume the function of training in schools as before and even less lead to Knowledge (see the statement of Mawlana Sheikh Nazim: "Let us be *rabbaniyyîn*" that we developed in the letter n° 1).

Sheikh Najm din Kubra (whose initiatory pact is included in the naqshbandi transmission) commenting on this passage of the Koran says: "If God named them *Fitya* it is because they believed in HIM by the way of realization (*Tahqîq*) and not by imitation (*taqlîd*) and it is to Allah that they asked for the right guidance" (Haqqi, Ruh p. 468). It is a question of acting In Allah, by Allah, which is in line with the expression "*Nâçir al Haqq bi-l-Haqq*" of the *al-fatihi* prayer.

This being said, precisely to denounce the ridiculousness and the imposture of *taqlîd*, this "plastic imitation" according to the expression of Mawlana Sheikh Nazim who often makes fun of it.

Sheikh al-Alawi already, in his book: *Les substances célestes* (see edition Entrelacs), commenting on the aphorisms of Sidi Abu Madyan spoke about the danger of frequenting an ignorant Sufi. Quoting the hadith: "The worst punishment on the day of resurrection will be inflicted on the one whom people thought had nothing good in him" (Hindi, Kanz). He says that this "is aimed at the so-called 'Sheikh' who has only received the rite of attachment, the use of the rosary, the cane and the wearing of the turban from the chosen community (*qawm*)."
(p128)

"The company of an ignorant Sufi is equally harmful, and even more harmful than that of the careless scholar..." Further on, he insists on the appearance of "religious impostors": "They are the worst of the impostors because they convince people by using religion and manage to deceive the weakest of them. They are the liars, those who seek to appropriate the goods of this world by using religion; they patch up their material life with pieces of religious life and finally everything ends up disappearing..." (p. 132).



The way of *Futuwwa*, on the contrary, calls us to the realization of noble virtues which is the remedy against these hypocritical attitudes. Sheikh Muhyî din Ibn arabi says: "The Fata is the one who undertakes conquests (*sahib al-Futuh*)" - Fut. IV p°357. It is a question of conquests in the great holy war, that against the multiple forms of the ego, and then to clothe oneself with the noble virtues that trace in the noble man the divine Name. This path leads to Sakina, the Great Presence of Peace always in accord with Victory. Clearly identifying the *Fitya* of the cave with the companions of the Mahdi (see chapter 366 of the *Futuh*), Sheikh Muhyî din reminds us again by following the Koranic data that the founding father of the *Futuwwa* is Sayyidina Ibrahim (saw): "*Abu-l-Fityan*", the one who in his jihad broke the idols and taught us hospitality. A verse says: "We once gave Abraham, whom we know well, his righteousness" - Quran 21,51. Sheikh Muhyî din, in the *Futuh*, takes up precisely this ayat to explain the divine name *Ar-Rashid*.

The Sheikh in the same spirit calls the Prophet *Khayru-l-Fata*, as *Sayyid al Murssalin* and *Fata al Fityan*, -Fut. IV, p° 140. In a hadith, the Prophet said:

"I am *Fata* son of *Fata* (allusion to *Sayyidina* Ibrahim named so, Chapter 21 of the Qur'an) brother of *Fata* (allusion to Imam 'Ali)".

We proudly add that he is also *Jaddu-l-Fata*, the grandfather of the famous and magnificent *Fata*, Imam Hussein (peace be upon them all). We all still know the famous hadith: "*La fata illa 'Ali*", which recalls this brotherhood of the Imam, in the same original light (see *Sirat*, Ibn Hicham).

The *Fata* as it should be is, for Sheikh al-akbar, par excellence the free man (*Hurr*) (Fut. II p.105) the one who frees himself from the slavery of his time. We begin to see how these *fitya* represent "the knights of Imam al-Mahdi", his true companions.

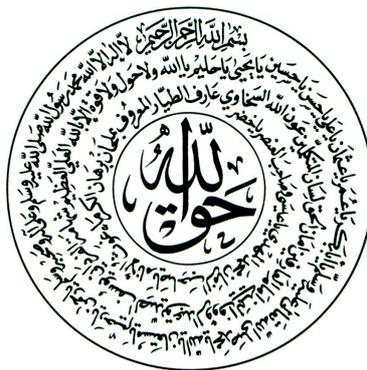
This way is also the way of discretion and self-sacrifice, a very feminine aspect of *futuwwa*, which introduces the fact that women have access to all the stations of sanctity, including the degree of beings of spiritual virility and even that of pole (Fut. Chap. 324). The Sheikh speaks about the divine Name *al-Latîf* (the Subtle) which acts precisely in a hidden way -Fut. II p. 467- and he insists on the feminine power by saying: "There is no creature in the created world which is stronger than the woman". The most noble and pure Fatima *al-kobra* is the very example of



the *futuwwa* by her self-sacrifice, her fidelity to the pact and her purity, we hope to devote an entire letter to her.

Are the knights not on a quest towards the "virgin khalifa", *al-'azra al khalifa* (Fut. I p. 5), as *Sheikh al-Akbar* calls the *ka'abat al hasna* (the sublime Ka'ba) also called the tender Hourai (Fut. I, p. 7). All the difficulties and trials that the knight will encounter are considered as the dowry to be paid in order to achieve the union, *al wissâl*, with the *ka'aba*, *Sheikh al-Akbar* teaches us. He specifies the union with her, has conditions mentioned in the book written *al Kitâb al-mastûr*, on the "unfolded scroll" (*al-riqq al-manshûr*) just like the *hasna'* (the beautiful lady) which requires a dowry. *Sheikh al-akbar*, states that he saw her as "the beautiful lady without mercy" (like that of the troubadours). The quest thus leads *al-Fata* to the *Ka'aba*, the seat of the Presence, and *Fatâ* in turn transmits the knowledge he receives from it. This corresponds to the experience of *Sheikh al-akbar* and his inspired book: the *futuhat al Makkiya*.

As for the *Fityan*, let us recall that Sultân al awliya *Sheikh 'Abdallah al Fa'iz ad-Daghestani*, received directly from the Prophet (saw) names that characterize these *fityan* companions in a very subtle way as they can be 5, 7 or 9 as it is said (in the hadith) for the number of the people of the cave. We may come back to this immense treasure, if we are allowed to reveal some of its secrets.



In the center of the *dâira*, *tawiz* transmitted by *Sheikh Abdallah* who mentions them according to a count of 7 or 9 possible, is written : *ALLAH HAQQ* (God is the Real Truth), symbol of the supreme center identified also with the *Meru*, the ultimate spiritual center. Now, what is to be



noticed is that if according to the abjad, we just count the 4 letters of ALLAH's name: Alif, (1) lâm (30) ha (5), the total is 66. Moreover, the total of the letters of HAQ is: HA 8+QAF 100 = 108.

Now, 108 is also the total of the name of Allah, if we count the name of Allah differently. Indeed, according to *Sheikh al Akbar*, the *lâm* is in fact in the writing an *alif* (vertical bar) followed by a *Nûn* (circular part). In this last case, we have : *Alif* (1) + *Alif* (1) + *Nûn* (50) + *alif* (1) + *Nûn* (50) + *HA* (5) which makes a total of 108 (See on this subject the treatise of Michel Valsan, Skeikh Moustapha on the isolated letters in the Qur'an of which the Imam will make key use according to the tradition). This indication of the *Haqq* included in the Name Allah according to this perception is a strong indication telling us : *Al-Haqq bi l-Haqq*, the Real or the True is known by the Real, the True. Now this characterizes the *fitya*, the companions of the Imam. Let us also note that *Sheikh al akbar* says that the *ahl Haqq* are those who look at the *Nûn*, *al Naziran fil Nun*, because the *Nûn* is "the master of the *Futuwwa*" (Fut. II, p.173). As for the supreme virtue of the *Fata*, it is generosity. In a hadith, it is said: "After the generosity of the most Generous of the Generous (God) comes the generosity of the noblest of the children of Adam, (the Prophet). Third is the generosity of the Man who receives a science and passes it on. He will be resurrected as a full-fledged *Ummah*. Then comes the generosity of the one who offers his life on the way of Allah".

So is it not a current issue to circulate these sciences even if it requires an effort of understanding and an asceticism of purity to retain the *madad*, the spiritual flow?

The second virtue of a *Fata* is even connected to generosity, it is the ability to praise, *al Hamd*, which includes, recognition and thanks. In a hadith, it is said: "Anything that does not begin with *al hamd* is doomed to failure" (ibn Maja, sunnan I, p. 610). Note that the Qur'an begins with *al hamd* and this particular chapter of the cave as well. We can already begin to sense that this transparency and purity necessary to be present before God, as well as this act of praise which guarantees its permanence, is related to the spiritual retreat for a new birth, which the cave represents. Obviously this cave is also in coordination with the heart and this one also has its "guardian" like the *Raquim* of the people of the cave. Nevertheless, there are precise and delicate laws for visiting the depths of the heart and that is why we need effective supports.

The one who says: "I can withdraw into my heart, it is enough for me as a retreat." We can ask him "how long" do you stay in the silence of the heart? Is it really a silence, is it the ecstasy of



the people of the cave that lasts 309 years? Don't we need to understand and live this Quranic model given for our essential orientation?

Verse II of the chapter of the cave will open up a new field of consciousness for us in this regard. "We have struck their ears in the cave for many years. What does this expression "*fadharabna 'ala uzhunihim*" (striking their ears) mean?

What is this act that will make them stay 309 years without aging in this place? Is it enough to speak of simple sleep, as too many commentators express it? Are we not meditating on a fact that is extraordinary for us, but normal for God? He says to us: "Do you think that the case of the people of the cave and of *Raquim* is one of our extraordinary signs? It is a question of seeing both aspects: on the one hand for the common people this is extraordinary, especially in our time (the Iron Age), but from the point of view of the people of God (in the Golden Age) it is a known phenomenon. This divine action of "knocking on the ears" for those who experience it, characterizes well the beginnings of ecstatic states, which suspend the breathing and the heart, itself, as a kind of hibernation, which follows a technically very precise process and well known to those who practice it. We have the example near us of Sheikh Abdallah ad-Daghestani who could routinely remain as if dead, without pulse, without heartbeat, for weeks, and then come to as if nothing had happened and hit the floor to ask for tea. One of our friends who is still alive, Sheikh Nour Mohammad from India, stayed in a sealed tomb for 92 days without eating, drinking or breathing, as thousands of people have witnessed, and then came out completely normal, a few years earlier. There are degrees and stages, but the first phases, those of ecstasy, are quite normal in the path.

Doesn't Sheikh al 'Alawi say in his poems "*fal wajdu bihim da'i yad'uhum yat'a alayhim fi dhikri llahi*": "ecstasy for them (the *fata*) is a call that arises in *dhikr*" and he continues "*fa-in lam yajid fal yatawajad qasqan yata'ad li fadl-l-ulahi*": "And if you do not find ecstasy, put yourself in a condition to find it, because our goal (*qasdan*) is to predispose us to divine grace.

The goal of the path is thus clearly expressed in relation to this necessary ecstatic stage, even if it is not the end of the path. I remember that when I first met Sheikh Nazim 25 years ago, I was thinking exactly of these two verses, so I asked him if in the Naqshbandi brotherhood ecstasies were also performed, and he replied: "Of course!" Later he gave me the following advice which fundamentally influenced my orientation : **"Tell people that there are only two categories, those who perform *Fath* and ecstasy, and those who remain in speculation"**.



How can we do without this immersion in the great Presence where we are nothing, where everything is silence and without reference, is it not appropriate to realize this great ablution of the soul! This is exactly the orientation we take in prayer with the *sujûd* (prostration), the state of extinction, of *fana*. However, there is a return to integrate this state in the daily life. Through the regularity of these ecstatic states, the traveler in God ends up firing himself like a ceramic that bears the divine fire of love. This is in accordance with the movement of the canonical prayer, the *çalât*, which ends in *tahiyya*, the sitting position. That is why the Qur'an says in the following verse: "Then we raised them up, so that we might know which of the two groups had better calculated the duration of their stay" - (18,12). Let us note already that the word "resurrected" is very strong and indicates well the known notion of *Baqa'*, permanent stability, after the *Fana*, the extinction. But the rest of the verse seems more enigmatic "to know which of the two groups had better calculated the duration of their stay". Why should it matter which of the two groups calculated better? It is obvious that God already knows the answer, but he puts them in a situation where this "knowledge appears". Let us note already that the verb "*ahssâ*" translated here as "to calculate" also means "to count" and even to integrate, is the putting into action of a divine Name *al-Muhssî* (He who counts in the least details).

The following is magnificently instructive to enlighten this question. One of them will ask the question about how long we stayed, another one answers one day or part of a day and finally they arrive together at the right conclusion which is the answer: "*Rabukum a'lamu bimâ labithu*" ("Your Lord knows best how long they stayed here" -18,19) . This will be confirmed even further: "God knows perfectly how long they have stayed, the secret of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him, and it is through Him that you must see and hear" (18,26). It could not be clearer! It is through God that one sees and hears, it is He who knows! The state of ecstasy led them out of the normal conditions of time and space to the realization by which one is in God and by God, assisting the Real by the Real, *Nâçir a-l-Haqq bi l-Haqq*. This is the way of the *fityan*, the knights of truth supported by the Imam thus leading us back to the Golden Age, on earth as in heaven, in the kingdom of *MALIK AL-MOULK*. Let him who claims to be sincere, commit himself to the path of the "noble heroes" (the *fityan*), through the exercises of purification, through the virtues that characterize them, through the predisposition to ecstasy which is the great ablution of contemplation.



Naqshbandi-Rabbani

Article n°3

These new knights will need to be trained, too, but alas, authentic masters have become very few and far between and often withdraw from this world. There are criteria for recognizing these rare pearls who accept companionship. We are not talking about the pseudo-companionship of a club of friends, but the one that calls for a requirement of nobility, of true realization: *Tahqiq*. If the Master accepts the disciple, he will not lead him to a new form or a particular group, but to the Imam of this time, the one who teaches in the secret of hearts, in the freedom to be Itself, to be True. We will talk about the criteria of the true Master and the requirement of his companionship in NewsLetter No. 4.

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