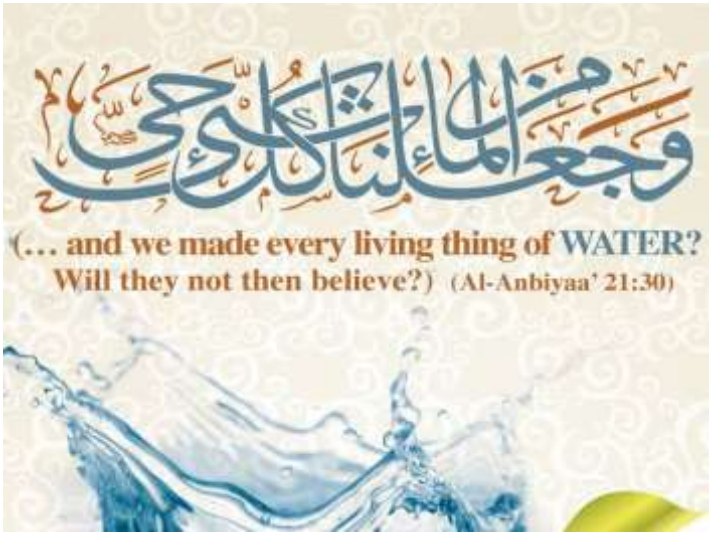

Water is the Secret of Life

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Water is the secret of life because it is spirit in itself and gives life through its own essence. Allah declares, "*We made every living thing from water"* (Al-Anbiya, 21/30). It is certain that everything is alive, for everything glorifies Allah with praise. Therefore, water is the source of life within all beings.

Nothing in the universe has been created haphazardly; everything exists within a specific measure and order. Since the world we inhabit is part of the universe, everything within it must also adhere to this system and order. Phenomena such as the Earth itself, its orbit around the Sun, and the falling of rain all operate within a precise measure and balance.

Water is essential for the continuation of life on Earth; without water, there is no life. The Holy Qur'an expresses the vital importance of water in Surah Az-Zukhruf, verse 11, stating, "*We give life to a dead land with it [rain].*" Humans, animals, plants, and all living creatures depend on water. Even the Earth is more than 70% covered by water, and our own bodies are composed of 75% water.

In Surah Az-Zukhruf, verse 11, it is stated, "*And He [Allah] sent down water from the sky in a measured amount,"* and in Surah Al-Mu'minun, verses 18–20... The verses state: *"We sent down a specific amount of water (rain) from the sky and caused it to settle in the earth; and We are certainly able to take it away. By means of that water, We produce for you gardens of date palms and vineyards containing abundant fruits from which you eat and derive sustenance; as well as a tree (the olive tree) that grows on Mount Sinai, yielding both oil and a condiment for the bread of those who eat it."* Both verses express that rain is sent down to the earth according to a specific quantity and measure.

In a hadith narrated by Suyuti, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) says: "*It is not the case that one year sees more rainfall than others. (The same amount of rain falls every year.) However, Allah distributes that rain across lands as He wills. (It rains little in some regions and heavily in others.) Every drop that descends from the sky and every wind that rises from the earth occurs according to a specific measure and balance."*

According to scientists, the amount of water vapor in the atmosphere is generally around 13×10^{12} tons. This is a constant and unchanging quantity. When rain falls, this level decreases, but the lost amount is replenished through evaporation; thus, the balance is maintained. Scientists have calculated that, on average, 16 million tons of water evaporate from the earth every second. Calculations show that the amount of water descending to the earth every second is also 16×10^{6} tons that is, an amount equal to what has evaporated. For rain to form, water on Earth evaporates under the influence of the sun, condenses in the atmosphere, and returns to the surface as precipitation; this process is known as the "water cycle." The continuation of life on Earth is sustained by this water cycle. It is impossible for humankind to replicate this cycle using either current or future science and technology.

Through the water cycle, water on Earth is in constant motion, completing the cycle by transitioning between different states. During this movement, water continuously changes form—shifting between liquid, vapor, and ice. Liquid water is found in oceans, rivers, lakes, and even underground; solid ice exists in glaciers, snow, and at the North and South Poles; and water vapor is present in the Earth's atmosphere. Even the slightest disruption in the water cycle mechanism—established by Allah the Almighty—would lead to massive imbalances in nature, potentially bringing life on Earth to the brink of extinction. Such a perfect system is possible only through the knowledge and will of Allah the Almighty.

The following is stated in the TDV Encyclopedia of Islam regarding verses and hadiths concerning water:

“Water—the source of life and an indispensable element of all known life forms—is of vital importance for the structure of the globe and the survival of living beings. The word *ma'* (meaning ‘water’) appears in sixty-three verses of the Holy Quran. In most of these instances, it refers to water in the ordinary sense; in some, however, the semen from which humans are created is referred to as water—either absolutely or with a qualifying attribute (al-Furqan 25/54; as-Sajdah 32/8; al-Mursalat 77/20; at-Tariq 86/5-7). In one verse, the word is also used—along with a descriptive qualifier—to refer to the liquid that the inhabitants of Hell will be made to drink (Ibrahim 14/16). Furthermore, the Quran frequently mentions water in various contexts and forms, such as rain (an-Nur 24/43; ar-Rum 30/48; Luqman 31/34; ash-Shura 42/28), rivers (al-An'am 6/6; ar-Ra'd 13/3; Ibrahim 14/32; an-Naml 27/61; Nuh 71/11), springs (al-Baqarah 2/60, 74; Ya-Sin 36/34; al-Qamar 54/12), and seas (an-Nahl 16/14; Fatir 35/12).

In certain verses, it is stated that Allah created man and all living beings from water (al-Anbiya 21/30). Attention is drawn to the importance of water for the lives of beings on earth by stating that He sends down pure and blessed water from the sky—serving as sustenance, a source of provision, and a means of purification—thereby providing clean, fresh water for humans and animals to drink, and reviving the earth after its death with water to bring forth all manner of green plants, crops, and fruits for humans and animals (e.g., see al-Baqarah 2/22, 164; al-An'am 6/99; al-Hijr 15/22; an-Nahl 16/10, 11; al-Furqan 25/48, 49; as-Sajdah 32/27; az-Zumar 39/21; al-Jathiyah 45/5; Qaf 50/9). By emphasizing the role of divine power in sending water down to earth with a specific taste and in measured quantities—and highlighting the helplessness humans would face if deprived of it—believers are called upon to give thanks for this blessing and to reflect upon it with insight (al-Kahf 18/41; al-Mu'minun 23/18, 19; al-Ankabut 29/63; ar-Rum 30/24; az-Zukhruf 43/11; al-Waqi'ah 56/68, 70; al-Mulk 67/30).

The Holy Quran notes that water is the essential means of purification required for *wudu* (ablution) and *ghusl* (ritual bathing) (al-Ma'idah 5/6) and mentions other characteristics: it describes water descending as rain as pure and sweet (al-Furqan 25/48; al-Mursalat 77/27), and notes that while some bodies of water—such as seas and lakes—are sweet and palatable, others are salty and bitter (al-Furqan 25/53; Fatir 35/12). Certain verses also address principles regarding the shared use and allocation of water (ash-Shu'ara 26/155; al-Qamar 54/28).

Hadiths also contain detailed explanations regarding the importance, sources, preservation, and prevention of the pollution of water, as well as its use for physical and ritual purification, drinking, and irrigation. Certain hadiths state that water is a shared resource among people and establish regulatory principles and guidelines concerning its communal use and legal disposition. Likewise, the avoidance of wasting water (Tirmidhi, "Taharah," 43; Ibn Majah, "Taharah," 48) and preventing its pollution (Bukhari, "Wudu," 25, 68; Muslim, "Taharah," 87, 94-97) are counseled, while polluting water sources is listed among the actions that incur a curse (Abu Dawud, "Taharah," 14; Ibn Majah, "Taharah," 21).

The Prophet indicated that water retains its purity and cleansing properties as long as it does not lose its natural state—thereby noting that contamination is merely an incidental condition—and established practical, facilitating guidelines suited to the nature of water and human needs (e.g., see Abu Dawud, "Taharah," 34). In this context, narrations exist regarding the rulings and practices of the Noble Messenger concerning the use of seawater, water from certain wells and lakes, water left over by humans or certain animals, and water previously used for physical or ritual purification.

The Properties of Water

Water is the source of life. Snow and hail are also celestial sources that replenish the water supply.

Bediüzzaman speaks thus of this magnificent exchange of water between the heavens and the earth:

“Observe the exchange of water taking place between the clouds and the earth: the earth yields water to the clouds in the form of vapor, and the clouds, after performing the necessary processes in their own ‘factories,’ return it as ice, snow, and rain. It is as if those inanimate masses communicate with one another like a wireless telegraph through the language of their state, expressing their mutual needs. Indeed, all those celestial bodies—as though joining hands—strive with utmost seriousness to provide what is essential for living beings; they act in obedience to the command of a single Disposer of Affairs and are directed toward a specific purpose.”

Water holds a vitally important place in both human life and natural phenomena. We clearly observe the indispensable role of water in all physical and biological processes, as well as at every stage of the lives of living organisms. Water signifies

life, energy, abundance, and prosperity. Humans, animals, and plants—indeed, all living beings—strive to obtain water. Aqueducts, wells, artesian wells, and dams all serve the purpose of capturing and retaining water. Birds, insects, and reptiles constantly seek out water sources. Trees send their roots meters deep into the soil just to nourish their leaves with a few drops of water.

As is well known, water is composed of hydrogen and oxygen gases. It consists of 11.11% hydrogen and 88.89% oxygen. Hydrogen is a flammable gas; it ignites instantly. Oxygen is a gas that supports combustion. Divine Power has bestowed water—formed from two gases associated with combustion—upon humanity to extinguish fire. When these two gases coexist within water, they do not ignite one another; on the contrary, they extinguish burning matter. What a profound wisdom this is—one that challenges the limits of human comprehension!

Beyond its physical and chemical properties, water possesses other unique and fascinating characteristics. Generally, all solid bodies expand in volume when heated. Water, however, exhibits certain behaviors that defy this rule. These characteristics are as follows:

1) When the temperature of water rises from 0°C to 4°C, its volume decreases instead of increasing.

2) If the temperature is raised above 4°C, then—much like other substances—the volume of the water increases.

3) When water freezes and turns into ice, its volume increases and its density decreases.

For this reason, the density of ice is lower than that of water, allowing ice to float on the surface. If water did not possess this property, water that froze into ice in streams and lakes would immediately sink to the bottom. Consequently, all rivers, streams, and lakes would quickly turn into solid masses of ice, destroying underwater life. However, water at 4°C is denser and heavier, so it settles at the bottom. Thus, even during the coldest days of winter, life continues in the relatively warm environment at the bottom of rivers that have frozen over at the surface. This is a mercy from Allah the Almighty. Such miracles... It is not difficult to grasp the state of heedlessness and ignorance in which those who view the matter merely through a worldly lens find themselves.

Although the substances that constitute water are known—and are abundant in nature in their free state—it is impossible to create water artificially. Water came into existence once during the Earth's initial formation and has maintained its

presence ever since by circulating in a continuous cycle. Water, composed of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom, forms under conditions of extremely high temperature and pressure. During this formation process, the bonds holding the hydrogen and oxygen atoms weaken, allowing them to recombine in a different form to create the water compound. However, it is impossible to replicate such temperatures and pressures on Earth.

The most significant research regarding water was conducted by the Japanese scientist Masaru Emoto, who uncovered groundbreaking information. Emoto froze water molecules under specific conditions and photographed them using electron microscopes, obtaining distinct and magnificent results corresponding to various emotions or energy intensities. According to this study, water reacts differently to the forms of emotion, thought, or energy presented to it, manifesting its response by altering its molecular structure. It was observed that water samples exposed to loving words formed brilliant, symmetrical, and multicolored patterns with intricate motifs, whereas samples exposed to harsh words and negative language resulted in dark, asymmetrical, and incomplete patterns. Thus, it is possible to influence water through words. The most excellent of these words is the *Basmala* (reciting "In the name of Allah") before drinking water; for water, too, is a living entity that glorifies and praises Allah.

Cleansing with Water

Water is an unparalleled cleansing agent; it is both pure in itself and a means of purification. In this respect, it is an indispensable prerequisite for worship. Snow and hail are also symbols of purity. Based on this hadith, some Shafi'i scholars have ruled that snow and hail are purifying agents as well. Snow—like a white garment—symbolizes purity due to its whiteness.

It is well known that water which is clean, rich in oxygen and minerals, possesses a pH level compatible with the human body, has high antioxidant value, contains active hydrogen, and—by virtue of having a "clean and strong memory"—revitalizes the soul, has long been referred to as the "Water of Life" (*ab-ı hayat*).

Islamic scholars have highlighted the vital importance of purification using snow and hail, alongside water. This is because they originate directly from the clouds; they have not been touched by human hands or previously used. Thus, they

signify the highest degree of purity. Indeed, a garment washed with three distinct purifying agents becomes immaculately clean.

We have been taught to seek forgiveness from our Lord using three separate verbs, as in the supplication: *"Our Lord, pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us..."* (Al-Baqarah, 2/286). Mentioning forgiveness and mercy alongside pardon serves to emphasize the plea, expressing an earnest and absolute desire to be forgiven.

Al-Tibi states: "The purpose of mentioning snow and ice after water is to seek—following the plea for pardon—every form of mercy and forgiveness, in order to extinguish the intense heat of the torment of Hell." The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) likened sins to Hell—due to their causing one to enter the Fire—and compared their extinguishment to washing; in describing this process of extinguishing, he employed rhetorical emphasis by listing the extinguishing agents, ranging from water to the coldest among them.

According to Turbushti, these three elements are mentioned here because they descend from the heavens. Kirmani states: “It is possible that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) equated errors and sins with the fire of Hell, for sins lead a person to the Fire. He implied that the heat of Hellfire could be dispelled by washing, and expressed that snow and hail would be even more effective in extinguishing this fire.”

Ibn Arabi (may his secret be sanctified) says the following in his book *Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyya* (The Meccan Revelations):

“Knowledge, in its outward sense, is water. A person’s deeds, meanwhile, constitute the act of washing. Purity is achieved when knowledge and action come together. Washing the hands before dipping them into the vessel containing the ablution water represents the manifestation of the person's inner intention—at the very start of the act—to turn towards the station of the Truth (*al-Haqq*). Human felicity lies in this very action. This, then, is the significance of washing the hands before dipping them into the ablution vessel in terms of inner purification.”

Water is that which gives life to hearts. Through it, every heart is cleansed of ignorance. Allah the Almighty states in the Holy Quran:

“*Is one who was dead and whom We gave life, and for whom We created a light by which to walk among the people, like one who is in the darkness—never to emerge from it?”* (Al-An'am, 6/122)

This statement serves as a comparative example regarding faith and disbelief, knowledge and ignorance.

In his book *Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyya* (The Meccan Revelations), Ibn Arabi states the following regarding seawater:

“There is a unique difference of opinion concerning seawater. This disagreement stems from the fact that seawater was created from the attribute of Divine Wrath. Wrath necessitates the expulsion and distancing of the person against whom it is directed; whereas purification brings one closer and fosters union. This is the underlying reason for the disagreement. The apparent reason, however, is the alteration of taste. As for the person who considers that God’s wrath—rather than driving one away—actually impels one to draw near to God and attain union with Him, they accept the validity of purification using seawater..." and I share the same view.”

Ibn Arabi states that one should pray as follows during obligatory prayers: “O Allah! Distance my errors from me, just as You have distanced the East from the West. O Allah! Cleanse me of errors, just as You cleanse a white garment of dirt. O Allah! Cleanse me of my errors with snow, water, and rain.”

In this prayer, water signifies life and vitality. The significance of incorporating the verse “Allah created everything from water” into the prayer lies in asking Allah to cleanse one’s heart with the very elements that bring life—thereby enabling the remembrance of Allah—and to revitalize one’s limbs so that they may obey Him. Accordingly, the limbs are to be used solely in obedience; for on the Day of Judgment, they will serve as truthful witnesses either for or against the individual. Indeed, the testimony of the limbs is mentioned in the Holy Quran. As for the "snow" (coolness) mentioned in the prayer, it stems from the "coolness of faith"—akin to the "coolness of the fingers" cited in an authentic hadith. Through this, a person attains certainty in knowledge. Furthermore, the chosen servant, possessing this certain knowledge, finds coolness in the presence of the Transcendent Most High, quenching the heat of their yearning for the exalted stations of knowing God.

The snow in the prayer derives from the concept of the "snow of the heart." The snow of the heart is the joy the heart experiences due to the divine manifestations (*tajalli*) and witnessing (*mushahada*) bestowed by God.

The right path is the divine law (*Sharia*). Faith in God marks the beginning of this path. The branches of faith constitute the waystations and stages along the

path connecting its beginning to its end; between any two stages lie specific spiritual states and rulings. Since the right path is the very path traversed by the angels known as "sublime spirits"—who serve as messengers from God to His chosen servants designated as prophets and messengers—God established connecting bonds between these angels and those to whom they descend. Through these bonds, the angels impart inspiration, while the prophets receive what is conveyed by them. Thus, having affirmed belief in these figures as God's messengers and in their receipt of revelation from the angelic messengers, one finds that angels bring glad tidings to—and keep company with—all who follow the right path in accordance with the revelation sent down to these prophets and messengers. These sublime spirits are inherently living; therefore, the Divine Name that governs them from the divine station is *al-Hayy* (The Ever-Living). The Divine Name that governs acquired life—that is, life that is not intrinsic but bestowed—is *al-Muhyī* (The Giver of Life). Consequently... An angel can only be conceived as a living being; a human being, however, is not so. "They were dead, and Allah brought them to life. Then He will cause them to die and bring them back to life again."

Types of Water

Ibn Arabi states the following regarding the varieties of water:

"Water is divided into two categories. The first category is water that is extremely clear, refined in its purity, and distilled. This category consists of rainwater. Rainwater is water obtained from dense clouds; the fact that it is distilled has eliminated the density that had previously adhered to it. Symbolically, this signifies *'ilm al-ladunni* (divine, esoteric knowledge), for such knowledge arises from spiritual discipline, striving, and purification. Muslims must purify their own selves to commune with their Lord through this knowledge. The second category of water is that which has not attained this degree of subtlety; this comprises the water of rivers and springs. Depending on its source and the terrain over which it flows, this water emerges mixed with other substances, and consequently, its taste is altered. As stated in Surah Al-Furqan, Verse 53, some waters are sweet, while others are bitter.

Rainwater exists in a singular state; it is clean, clear, cool, and pleasant to drink. Symbolically, rainwater represents the knowledge derived from sound reason and correct ideas. Other waters, however, are akin to the differing judgments

rational people form regarding a single matter, or the way a single person's verdict on one thing changes over time. The reason for this shift in judgment lies in the changing nature of the mixtures and elements inherent in creation over time. Thus, just as the judgments rational people form about a single matter differ from one another, so too do their judgments regarding the fundamental principles upon which they base the details."

The divine knowledge of *ladun* (esoteric/divine wisdom) has a singular taste. Even if the flavors perceived may vary, its purity remains constant. It is pure, and in some respects, even purer. This knowledge is limpid; no impurity has mingled with it. For it is free from the influence of the sources from which it originates, just as it is governed by a natural, innate disposition. Consequently, prophets, saints, and those who convey tidings from Allah are in agreement regarding their knowledge of Allah. This knowledge neither increases, decreases, nor changes; it is self-verifying. It is akin to how water from the heavens does not vary as it falls.

A Muslim's faith and the purity of their heart ought to resemble this knowledge. This knowledge is the knowledge of the *Sharia* (Divine Law), which is like rainwater. If a Muslim fails to act in this manner, they are not being sincere with themselves. Furthermore, if a Muslim regulates their conduct according to the knowledge of the *Sharia*, they come to resemble—in their very essence and purity—the source from which this water springs. If you can distinguish between bitter and sweet waters, know that you possess healthy faculties of perception.

In the *Diyanet Qur'an Path Exegesis* (Diyanet Kur'ân Yolu Tefsiri), rainwater is described as follows regarding the 18th verse of Surah Al-Mu'minun:

"One of the Divine laws concerning the phenomenon of rain—to which the 18th verse draws attention—is that rainwater is its retention within the earth". This is a tremendous blessing for the living beings of the earth. Had the earth not retained rainwater but allowed it to seep straight to the depths, or had this water completely washed away in floods or evaporated rapidly, living creatures would have been deprived of the vital benefits of rain; indeed—as seen in the phenomenon of erosion—rain could even have become harmful. The retention of rainwater in the earth likely refers to the accumulation of water within specific underground strata. This, too, is a grace and mercy from Allah for living beings, for groundwater becomes beneficial whether it emerges naturally to the surface or is extracted through human effort. As stated in the verse, Allah the Almighty has the power to withhold this rain—so beneficial to living beings—or to render

it useless even if He does send it down. Such an outcome would be the greatest catastrophe for living creatures. Indeed, among all known bodies in space, Earth is the only planet where the phenomenon of rain occurs. If we were to imagine for a moment that Allah withdrew this blessing from our Earth, we would realize that our planet would lose all its value and meaning; for it is life that renders Earth meaningful and valuable, and water—as is evident from the subsequent verses—is a source of life.

Although certain hardships and disasters occasionally occur—depending on specific causes and reasons, as well as regional and natural conditions—when the world is viewed as a whole, these situations are exceptions; it is evident that rainfall proceeds according to laws prioritizing the benefit of living beings and that an underlying order governs this process.

While Razi notes that the "measure" mentioned here signifies that rainwater possesses the ideal consistency and purity for the use of humans, animals, and plants, Elmalılı draws attention to the balanced composition of the water, the laws governing physical phenomena such as evaporation and condensation, and the fact that none of this happens by chance but is the result of Divine wisdom and providence.

There are many verses in the Holy Quran concerning water:

"It is He (Allah) who has released the two seas—one sweet and palatable, the other salty and bitter—and placed a barrier between them to prevent them from mixing." (Al-Furqan, 25/53)

"We sent down pouring water from the dense clouds." (An-Naba, 78/14)

Saltwater in the seas accounts for 97% of the world's water. Seawater cannot be used directly as drinking water. The water we use for drinking corresponds to only 3% of all water on Earth. Research has shown that 75% of the Earth's freshwater exists as ice at the poles, while 22% is found as groundwater.

When Allah the Almighty created the world and all living and non-living things within it, He did so with a precise and unerring calculation. Even when creating water, He created bitter and salty waters unfit for drinking alongside the water meant for consumption, and subjected them all to this natural cycle.

“Have you considered the water you drink? Did you bring it down from the clouds, or did We? Had We willed, We could have made it salty. Why, then, do you not give thanks?” (Al-Waqi‘ah, 56/68-70)

The Four Elements and Water

Among the elements, the one pertaining to this transient life is water. Allah the Almighty states:

"His Throne was upon the water." (Hud, 11/7),

"We created every living thing from water" (Al-Anbiya, 21/30)

Water is the origin of the elements. The Throne (*Arsh*), on the other hand, is the Dominion (*Mulk*). The Dominion has been completed and brought to perfection in the realm of transformation. It is the realm of the pillars (*rukn*) whose origin is water. Had there been no realm of transformation, Allah would not have described Himself as being "engaged in a matter every day" (Ar-Rahman, 55/29). Thus, the world undergoes transformation. The Truth (*al-Haqq*) assists it in the task of preserving its existence through the act of creation—upon which the persistence of its external existence depends. This, then, is the state (*sha'n*) in which the Truth abides. Those outside the realm of transformation do not possess this truth.

Since water is the principle of life for living beings whose life is accidental (*aridi*), Allah grants the "water of life" to everyone who remains steadfast on the right path (*istiqamah*). If the Truth grants this water as a grace (*inayah*)—as He does with prophets and messengers—then whomever Allah wills remains alive through it. If, however, the granting of this water serves as a test, the outcome depends on the purpose for which it was administered. Allah says: "If they had remained steadfast on the path, We would have given them water to drink" (Al-Jinn, 72/16-17). This refers to the water given as a test.

Steadfastness is required of the accountable subject (*mukallaf*) while fulfilling the obligatory acts (*fard*) ordained by Allah. For the accountable subject is, in terms of reality, one who has been cast at the threshold of his Master. The dispositions of Destiny and the effects Allah has entrusted to the movements of the celestial spheres flow continuously over him. Allah has made the accountable subject a locus for life and movement, and He asks him to awaken from this slumber through the fulfillment of the duties imposed upon him. That which is most difficult for the Gnostics (*Arifs*) is Allah's command enjoining uprightness—as expressed in the verse, "*So remain on a right course as you have been commanded, [you] and those who have turned back with you [to Allah], and do not transgress"* (Hud, 11/112). Here, the reference is to those who do not act

arrogantly toward His command, by virtue of the quality they find within their own selves: that of having been “created in the Divine Image.”

Ibn Arabi states the following:

“Allah says: “*The Throne was upon/within the water”* (Hud, 11/7). Although the preposition *ala* is used here, it signifies within. That is to say, the Throne was inside the water. Man, too, was within the water—meaning he originated from it. For water is [the source of] all beings is the principle, and it is the Throne of that Divine Life. Allah created all things alive from water, and everything is alive; for they glorify Allah with praise. Yet, glorification can only originate from a living being. Divine tidings declare that everything—whether dry or moist, inert matter, plant, soil, or air—is alive. These are matters upon which there is disagreement: between those endowed with spiritual unveiling and those who lack it; and between the people of faith and those who either reject the revealed laws or—interpreting them differently—claim that the verse refers to a "glorification of state" (*hal tesbihi*) rather than an active act of praise. As for what the senses perceive, there is no dispute regarding the fact that a thing is alive; the disagreement concerns the cause of its life and the nature of its glorification of its Lord. To what, then, does this glorification refer? For glorification is an act performed by a living, rational being capable of understanding the praise it offers. Yet, according to those who hold views differing from our own—and from those who possess true faith grounded in spiritual unveiling—living beings other than humans and jinn are not considered "rational" (possessing intellect). By "intellect," I mean knowledge. Thus, here, the "Throne" signifies the Dominion (*mulk*), and the word *kāna* ("was") denotes existence and state. Consequently, the meaning of the verse is that the Dominion exists within water; that is, water is the cause for the manifestation of its existence. In this sense, water acts as a *hyle* (primordial matter) for the Dominion, while the forms of the cosmos—which is Allah’s Dominion—have emerged within it. Knowledge, however, is limited to substances and relations. Thus, substances exist, whereas relations are intelligible concepts that lack independent existence (*‘adamī*—non-existent in themselves). Everything other than Allah exists in this state. He chose water from among the elements, for life was given to all things from water. Even the Throne—which Allah brought into existence upon the water—is of this nature; thus, life spread to the Throne from the water. To draw an analogy with the Prophet’s (pbuh) statement that "Hajj is Arafat," water is the supreme element. While there are other factors contributing to life alongside water, water

stands as the principal element among them—just as Arafat is the most crucial component of the Hajj pilgrimage.

As the stars move within their spheres, paths—or spheres within spheres—are formed, and air encompasses all created beings. It is the life of that realm, characterized by heat and moisture. The portion where heat reaches an extreme is termed "fire," while the portion where moisture is excessive and heat diminishes is termed "water"; the portion that maintains a state of equilibrium retains the name "air." Although water is sustained above the air, its movement, flow, and descent occur through the medium of air. Among the elemental pillars, none undergoes transformation more readily than air; this is because air itself is the result of heat and moisture combining in a balanced and precise manner. Consequently, air is not only the supreme element but also the root of the other elements; among these, water is the element closest to it. For this reason, Allah created all things from water, and water—by its very nature—accepts heat. Fire, in contrast, accepts neither water nor coldness—neither inherently nor indirectly.

Earth arises from water, and water from air. For, in our view, air is the fundamental element, and thus it stands closer to the *Amâ*—the "Breath of the All-Merciful" (*Nafas al-Rahmân*). Air unites heat and moisture within itself; fire emerges from its heat, while the element of water emerges from its moisture soil (earth, ground) was formed through the solidification [of air/vapor]. Thus, air is the son of *nafas* (breath/spirit), and *nafas* is *Amâ* (the Primordial Cloud/Dark Mist). While fire and water are the two sons of air, soil is the son of the son—that is, the grandson. It, too, is the result of water solidifying. When water does not solidify, it remains water in its essential state, while soil rests upon that water. We have observed in northern cities that when the Euphrates River freezes, it transforms into a surface resembling soil, allowing people, caravans, and animals to walk across it, while the water continues to flow beneath the ice. That water rests upon the air; the air supports it through its inherent quality of endurance, preserving the water's substance and maintaining it in that state. When the air becomes still and motionless, the water also comes to a halt, and the water no longer permeates it. We have observed this phenomenon in hollow tubes, such as reed flutes. When water fills the tube and the opening at the top is blocked, water does not flow out from the bottom; yet when the opening is unblocked, the water flows again. In this instance, the water remains stationary only by resting against the air contained within the tube. This is a universal principle that extends throughout the entire cosmos. When air is

set in motion, it is termed "wind." Wind carries all manner of scents—both pleasant and unpleasant—to the nose. Likewise, it stirs the coldness and heat of objects; for this reason, the wind is characterized as a "tale-bearer" (*nemmame*) and is described by its attribute of conveying news to those who hear it. Only the senses of hearing and smell perceive these states that are completed and carried by the wind. The movement of physical bodies sets the air in motion, thereby giving rise to what is called wind; conversely, the air sets bodies in motion, and bodies move within it. In this context, if we turn to the concept of splitting—that is, *harq*—it involves the emptying of certain spaces and it is being filled with objects. For there is no void in the universe; there is only a transformation of forms. Through this transformation, certain forms give rise to other things, while others cause them to cease to exist. The substance that fills the void is immutable; it does not transform into anything else, nor does anything else transform into it.

The Sufi Interpretation of Water

Water is a vitally important element. It embodies profound wisdom by virtue of its essence, its Arabic orthography, and its chemical composition. Regarding water, in a noble hadith, our Prophet (peace be upon him) states:

"*Allah existed, and there was nothing else besides Him. His Throne was upon the water. Allah the Almighty wrote (decreed) everything that was to occur in the Remembrance (the Preserved Tablet). He created the heavens and the earth."* (Sahih al-Bukhari)

As understood from this hadith, water existed before the earth and heavens were created, and Allah's Throne was upon it. Accordingly, water must be the fundamental element in the creation of the universe.

"Allah sent down water from the sky and thereby gave life to the earth after its death." (An-Nahl, 16/65)

"… We created every living thing from water…" (Al-Anbiya, 21/30)

"Allah created every living creature from water…" (An-Nur, 24/45)

As understood from the verses above, every living being in the universe—everything that possesses life—was created from water. This fact highlights the immense importance of water. Furthermore, water plays a crucial role in the

continuation of life in the universe; it is impossible for life to persist in the universe without water.

The Arabic spelling for water is *mā'* (ماء). In the Qur'an, water is referred to by this word. This word consists of two *alif* letters and one *mīm* letter. This composition bears a striking resemblance to the chemical formula of water. The chemical formula for water is H_2O; that is, two hydrogen atoms (H) and one oxygen atom (O) combine to form a water molecule. When the two compositions are compared, the H atom corresponds to the *alif* letter, and the O atom corresponds to the *mīm* letter. The letter *Elif* is the first letter, and its *abjad* value is 1; similarly, the Hydrogen (H) atom is the first of the elements, with an atomic number of 1. Just as letters are the fundamental components of words, elements are the fundamental components of matter in the universe. The *abjad* value of the letter *Mim* is 40. The number 40 signifies spiritual perfection; our Prophet (pbuh) began his mission of conveying the message at the age of 40, and there exists a spiritual station known as "The Forty" (*al-Arba'un*). The atomic number of the Oxygen (O) atom is 8; 8 also represents a degree of perfection, and Paradise has eight gates.

The resemblance between the way water is written and its chemical formula calls to mind the "3G" group—a trio consisting of two *Imams* (or *Qutbs*) and one *Ghawth*—who hold the highest spiritual ranks. It is as if the *Imams* occupy the position of the Hydrogen atoms, while the *Ghawth* occupies the position of the Oxygen atom. Together, these two *Imams* and one *Ghawth* (the 3G) constitute an entity that performs a fundamental function in the universe. Likewise, water is the fundamental element of life in the universe. Thus, just as water is the element that sustains life in the universe, the 3G is the element that upholds the universe. The structural and functional similarities between the water molecule and the 3G are truly astonishing. All of this serves as a minute reflection of Allah's infinite knowledge.

The nature of water, its Arabic script, and its chemical formula are closely interconnected. There is also a striking resemblance between water and the 3G—the highest spiritual hierarchy. These parallels demonstrate the perfection of the science of Sufism. Faced with such realities, one can only marvel and realize one's own profound frailty and insignificance. The statements expressed here are insights conveyed to us by the Friends of Allah, by His leave. Allah speaks the truth and guides to the right path.

Ibn Arabi states the following:

“The sea signifies knowledge. The life of the servant does not originate from his own essence; life is something that attaches to him. Therefore, it is not right for a human being to boast or assert a self-identity simply because he possesses life. If a servant asserts a claim of selfhood by saying ‘I,’ he fails to perceive the One who grants him life. In such a case, he encounters accidental (transient) death. In other words, it is made known to the servant that this is his true origin. Thus, death returns him to his origin. However, due to his assertion of selfhood and his forgetfulness of the One who gave him life, man does not return to his origin in a state of purity. According to Ibn Arabi, the reason for this is that man is a terrestrial living being. When asked what it means for a human to be a terrestrial living being, he replied that it means his vitality is derived from the air (*hava*). This indicates that air is the element enveloping the human being. Indeed, Allah the Almighty declares: *“[He] restrained the self from *heva* (desire).”* (An-Nazi'at, 79/40). In interpreting this verse, Ibn Arabi draws attention to the semantic connection between *heva* (desire) and *hava* (air). For anyone who oscillates between these two forms of air, annihilation is inevitable.”

In this context, Ibn Arabi interprets swine flesh as follows:

“Its flesh is the locus where the vitality derived from blood circulates; for flesh is essentially congealed blood. The quality of ‘swinishness’ consists of an attachment to the filth—that is, base traits—from which the soul recoils. When this flesh loses its vitality, it becomes impure. The esoteric counterpart to this is that when the ruling of the Sharia—which represents the spirit—is lost in a person of bad character, that person has effectively undergone death. Allah says: *“The recompense for an evil deed is an evil the like thereof”* (Ash-Shura, 42/40). Thus, He did not restrict it to any specific form but included bad character traits within this category. Then, regarding the one who does not retaliate, Allah said: *“[He who] pardons and seeks reconciliation.”* Accordingly, Allah has drawn attention to the fact that refraining from retaliating against evil is among the virtuous traits.”

You should know that the faculties within humans and all living beings belong to the spirit. The faculty of sense perception, the faculty of imagination, the faculty of memorization, the formative faculty, and all the sublime and base... Consider the powers attributed to names; these arise from the existence of the soul and the life it imparts to the body. Conversely, they cease to exist and vanish when the soul turns away from the body—the very source from which that specific power originated. You must grasp this: when the soul completely turns away

from the body, all powers and life vanish; this is precisely what is termed "death." It is akin to how night falls when the sun sets. Sleep, however, does not involve a complete turning away; it is merely a veil of vapors—generated by the body's faculties—that interposes itself between the sleeper and their perceptions. Yet, life persists within the sleeper. A person's state during sleep resembles the relationship between the sun and the earth when clouds intervene; the light—like life itself—continues to exist, even though the area obscured by dense clouds cannot receive the sun's rays. When the sun moves away from that region of the earth and night falls, another sun appears to illuminate it, bringing about daylight just as before. Similarly, when the soul turns away from the body—which was the vessel for its life—it manifests in a specific form within the *barzakh* (the intermediate realm), and that form comes to life through the soul. Indeed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) described the believer's soul as a "green bird"; this bird is the form that receives life from the soul in that realm—the very same soul that previously animated the physical body. Just as the sun rises upon us on the second day to illuminate all beings with its light, this soul will rise over dead bodies on the Day of Resurrection, bringing them back to life. This is the meaning of "resurrection" and "revival."

Mevlânâ's Words on Water

- A ship needs water to float. Yet, if water enters the ship, it sinks it. What water is to a ship, the world is to a believer.

- You are the soul, yet you mistake yourself for the body; you are the water, yet you mistake yourself for the pitcher.

- Water prevails over fire; however, if it enters a vessel, the fire boils that water away and destroys it.

- Water never fears fire.

- To one who has never tasted sweet water, bitter water seems as precious as the light of their own eyes.

- No matter how rich you are, you can only eat as much as you can consume. If you dip a pitcher into the sea, it takes only as much water as it can hold; the rest remains behind.

- If you scatter earth over someone’s head, their head does not split open. If you pour water over their head, their head does not break. If you wish to crack a head with earth and water, you must mix the earth with the water and make a brick.

- Be like flowing water in generosity and helpfulness.

- Many a fish, while safe from all dangers within the water, has been caught on a hook because of the greed of its own throat.

- Were it not for the burning hearts and tears of lovers, there would be neither water nor fire in the world.

- Life is like water in the palm of your hand; the more you try to hold it, the more it slips away.

- When the mirror of the heart becomes pure and spotless, you behold forms that transcend water and earth.

- Wherever there is flowing water, there is greenery. Wherever tears flow, mercy descends.

- It is not water, but tears, that cleanse the inner impurities.

- Love such a Beloved, my child! Let them wait for you like a fasting person holding a cup of water, awaiting the breaking of the fast!

- How good it is to overlook faults. For even the sea—which feeds all rivers—bears every piece of refuse upon its surface, yet it does not diminish because of this generosity. After all, love and tolerance are the essence of humanity.

- Be like the sun in love, like a flowing stream in friendship and brotherhood, like the night in concealing faults, and like the dead in moments of anger; whatever you are, either appear as you are or be as you appear.

- What is justice? Watering the trees. What is oppression? Watering the thorn.

- You are like clear water. Do not muddy this pure water with the wrongs you commit.

- Stop drinking water for a few days. Dip your lips into the wine of eternity so that you may drink of the Truth.

- Rise, O lover, rise! Make haste. Listen! The sound of water approaches. Yet you are thirsty, and you sleep...

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