

## **On Receptivity and the Power to Influence**

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Receptivity is a passive and feminine quality, while exerting influence is an active and masculine one. As we shall argue, the key to utmost effectiveness is utmost receptivity. In fact, so-called feminine versus masculine traits, though commonly associated with women versus men, are not specific to them, and as this writing pursues, there is space (and necessity) for both of them within the individual.

### **The Art of Listening**

The magnificent Mathnavi-i Ma'navi ("Spiritual Couplets") by Rumi begins by the word 'listen'. He says [1]:

*Listen to this Ney as it complains  
Narrating tales of separation.*

Rumi says elsewhere [2]:

*The infant when first born, being milk-fed  
For a while remains silent, all ears  
For a while he ought to shut his lips  
From speech in order to learn speech  
If not all ears and instead soundful  
He shall make himself deaf-mute ...*

The path of enlightenment begins by hearing the call and attentively listening to it. In fact, in many languages, *to listen* and *to obey* can be equivalent. We say, "Why don't you listen to me?" As the hermeneutics philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer teaches, in the process of genuinely listening to someone or something, "we discover validity in it, something about the thing itself that would not have shown itself simply within our own limited horizon." This experience manifests the fact that "something standing over against me asserts its own rights and requires absolute recognition; and in that very process is 'understood'." [4]

Rumi, before the above couplets, says [2]:

*The bite and substantive speech are lawful for the enlightened one  
You are not enlightened, do not eat, be mute  
Since you are ear, and he speech, not of your kind  
God instructed the ears to "be silent"*

Rumi is referring to a famous verse in the Scripture, "When the Qur'an is recited, then listen to it with attention, and be silent: that you may receive mercy." [5] In this context, there are interesting historical accounts about listening (e.g. [6]). Numerous related words of wisdom have also been narrated such as: "Ask the people of knowledge what you do not know, and be careful of never asking them so to trouble (or puzzle) them or test them." [7]

In fact, we can take one step further and note that even the act of asking is an act of speech, and it is best for one to be utterly silent [8]:

*During the day, [you] saying “where is the day?”  
It gives you away, O seeker of the day  
Patience and silence absorb Divine Mercy  
[But] asking for directions shows ailment  
Accept [the command] “be silent” so that upon your soul  
From the Beloved comes the reward of silence*

A child is most proficient in learning a new language since it does not assert itself, withholding pre-conceived notions, grammatical rules, etc. from the new language. Instead, it is all eyes and ears. Asking asserts direction, whereas permitting the Beloved to prescribe and inspire the path is far wiser and more blessed. The true art of listening is that of complete surrender. It is a feminine trait, that brings about impregnation of the soul with countless blessings. We shall re-visit this notion later in this writing.

## **On Love of Women**

In a famous narration from Prophet Muhammad, we encounter love for a number of things, “I was made to love women and fragrance, and prayer was made the light of my eye.” [9] There have been numerous commentaries on this narration. It was noted that the statement is in the passive tense, not active: he was made to love (instead of saying I love). This was not his choosing, but a divine will and blessing for him to be such. This narration also appears quite distinct from other ones on how to act towards women, such as “The most complete of the believers in faith are those with the most excellent character, and the best of you are the best of you to their women, in character.” [10] By contrast, this saying is about a genuine love for (and not a particular behavior towards) women.

The renowned Muslim mystic, Sheikh Ibn Arabi, in his important compendium of mystical teachings, *Fusus al-Hikam* (each chapter of which is devoted to a divine quality embodied by a prophet), concentrates the last chapter (which is about Prophet Muhammad) on this narration. He comments that women were made beloved to him as they are “venues of receptivity”, reminiscent of “how nature is to God, Who brought forth in it worldly shapes with [His] willful attentiveness.” As such, “one who loves women according to this meaning, then that [love] is divine love, and one who loves them solely in the direction of material desire, has fallen short in the knowledge of this desire, so that it is a face without a spirit for him, even if this face in reality has a spirit; but it is not witnessed by one who goes [to her] ... for the mere sake of pleasure ... some [people of depth] say (poem:) ‘It is true as people say that I’m in love; Except they do not know my love is for Whom!’ ” [11]

He continues to say about the Prophet, “And since [the time] he was created a servant in essence and origin, he never raised his head to master-hood; in fact, he never ceased to be in prostration [and] stillness while being receptive, until God made from him what he made, so He gave him the rank of active-ness [power to create and influence] ...” [12] Thus, he never ceased to be utmost receptive, and as a result, actively manifested the Divine will.

## The Indian Sword

Unlimited strength may lie within one appearing as meek and frail. Shams of Tabriz (spiritual guide of Rumi) relates an interesting story:

A person brought an Indian sword to another and said, "This sword is Indian." The man asked, "What is an Indian sword?" He replied, "It is such that whatever you strike it with, shall split." He said, "... we will try it on this upright stone." He brought the sword, striking the stone. The sword was split! [The man, having seen this failure] said, "You mentioned that an Indian sword is one that splits anything that it strikes!?" He replied, "Yes, but even though this sword was Indian, the stone was more Indian!" [Shams continues] Moses was more Pharaoh than the Pharaoh! He was *wali*, but this [Moses] was more *wali* than him! [13]

The important word '*wali*' in the Islamic literature is a difficult one to translate. It is sometimes rendered as guardian, connoting a sort of authority and power. The root actually indicated proximity. One who is a true *wali* finds authority over others because he is in proximity to the higher realm. He is fully receptive. To the people, he is kind and gentle (sometimes even mistreated and oppressed), projecting no authority over them by himself. Yet, a world is hidden within him, and he has become the venue in which Majesty and Glory are manifested. Subsequently, he overpowers the people, and pulls them under his influence.

Rumi says in another place [14]:

*There is an old man drunken with Truth  
Within him is Life most pure  
Outwardly old, inwardly child  
What is he truly, that wali or prophet?  
He smiles at you [but] do not see him as such  
A hundred resurrections are concealed within him  
Heaven and hell are all parts within him  
He transcends whatever you imagine him to be  
The mosque inside those who are wali  
That is the place for all of prostration; God is there  
Up until the heart of a man of heart became hurt  
God did not disgrace any nation of the past.*

Such an individual, if hurt and broken-hearted by a people, can bring down an entire nation!

## Facing the Wind

The magnificent mystical poet, Hafez of Shiraz, constantly invokes a Breeze that he yearns for and communicates with; for instance, he says [15]:

*In the early pre-dawn hours, I was conveying my dreams to the Wind.  
The address [then] came: Be content and certain of Divine Favors;  
The morning supplication and longing of the night are keys to the Desired Treasure;*

*Traverse in this path and manner, so as to reach the Beloved.*

In a narration, Prophet Muhammad said, “Indeed, there belongs to your Lord, in the days of your lives, breaths (of wind). Beware; face them!” [16]

These may be very unique events in our lives (e.g. when we lose someone dear to us, when we first meet our newly born, or when we get married), or more common occurrences, that we miss out on. We ought to *face the wind* in this sense. This entails surrendering our being, wholly scenting the fragrance that is in the air, and acutely listening to the message of the wind. In turn, this submission would bring about an active will.

### **The Pontifical Man**

It is apt to see how the *Wali* of God acts as a bridge, transmitting divine purity and wholeness to different realms:

The concept of man as the pontiff, pontifex, or bridge between Heaven and earth, which is the traditional view of the *anthrōpos*, lies at the antipode of the modern conception of man which envisages him as the Promethean earthly creature who has rebelled against Heaven and tried to misappropriate the role of the Divinity for himself. Pontifical man ... lives in a world which has both an Origin and a Center. He lives in full awareness of the Origin which contains his own perfection and whose primordial purity and wholeness he seeks to emulate, recapture, and transmit. He also lives on a circle of whose Center he is always aware and which he seeks to reach in his life, thought, and actions. Pontifical man is the reflection of the Center on the periphery and the echo of the Origin in later cycles of time and generations of history. He is the vicegerent of God (*khalīfatallāh*) on earth, to use the Islamic term, responsible to God for his actions, and the custodian and protector of the earth of which he is given dominion on the condition that he remain faithful to himself as the central terrestrial figure created in the “form of God,” a theomorphic being living in this world but created for eternity. Pontifical man is aware of his role as intermediary between Heaven and earth and his entelechy as lying beyond the terrestrial domain over which he is allowed to rule provided he remains aware of the transient nature of his own journey on earth. Such a man lives in awareness of a spiritual reality which transcends him and which yet is none other than his own inner nature and against which he cannot rebel, save by paying the price of separation from all that he is and all that he should wish to be. For such a man, life is impregnated with meaning and the universe peopled with creatures whom he can address as thou. [17]

### **The Might of the Meager**

Those who are *Wali* of God may appear frail and meager, yet they have immense might, and the key behind that is their liberation from themselves and their child-like (receptive) attachment to the divine realm. Rumi says [18]:

*They are oppressed and orphaned, as trial [for us],  
But concealed, I [the Lord] am their Friend and Companion  
Beware, beware, they are wearing My garment  
They are hundreds of thousands over thousands, while being one body  
Else, how would one perform with a cane such art  
A Moses dislodging a Pharaoh altogether?  
Else, how with a bad curse*

*Would Noah drown the east and the west?  
 Did not a single supplication of the vigorous Lot  
 Dismount their entire county in [their] loss*  
 ...  
*Begin to dance only when you break yourself  
 Rooting out the desires and passions  
 [Those who are wali] dance and move with joy upon the [battle]field  
 [Real] men dancing in their own blood  
 When liberated from themselves, then they clap their hands  
 When they spring away from their faults, then they perform a dance  
 The musicians perform songs from their within  
 Oceans performs rounds of applause in their exultation*  
 ...  
*Close your ears from jests and lies  
 So to see the [inner] city of the spirit, the luminous one  
 The ear of Mohammad would rise up to speech  
 So God said about the Prophet: He is ear  
 This Prophet is wholly ear and wholly eye  
 Anew, He consumes milk from us, [as though] he is a child of ours*

The last two couplets by Rumi refer to the following verse: “Among them are men who harass the Prophet and say, He is (all) ear. Say, He is ear to what is best for you: he believes in God and has faith in the believers, and is a Mercy to those of you who believe.” [19] The mystical Quran hermeneuticist *al-Kashani* makes the following commentary about this verse:

‘They say he is only a listener!’ They would harass him and slander him for the health of [his] heart, and [his] swiftness in acceptance and affirmation of what he heard, so [God] affirmed to them ... that he is indeed like that, though with respect to goodness. For indeed the self that is proud, and coarse and crude, and combative and unyielding, one that is inflexible on things, and is not influenced, [such a self] is not receptive to perfection, since human perfection does not occur except through acceptance, being affected, and being acted upon. Thus, the more that the self is tender in temperament, sound in heart, and effortless in acceptance, the more it is receptive of perfection and the more intensely it is prepared for it. And this tenderness does not belong to the category of weakness and naiveté, which would imply receptivity to everything that one hears even the impossible, and influenceability from everything that reaches one and that one sees even lies, evils and error. Rather, [this tenderness] is in the category of subtlety and swiftness in acceptance of the goodness and truth that corresponds to him, which is why [God Almighty] said, “Say: he is a listener to what is good.” [20]

We end this writing by the following famous and instructive saying:

Verily, he [My servant] approaches Me by the supererogatory deed to the extent that I love him; then when I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, and his seeing with which he sees, and his tongue with which he speaks, and his hand with which he strikes. If he calls me, I answer him, and if he asks me, I give him. [21]

In short, if you want to be listened to, then listen [22]. If you want to have the power to influence, then be utmost receptive.

## References:

[1] Book I of Masnavi. *Ney* is an end-blown flute used prominently in Middle Eastern music that can produce very melancholic tunes. The Persian verse reads:

بشنو این نی چون شکایت می‌کند  
از جدایی‌ها حکایت می‌کند

[2] Book I of Masnavi. The couplets reads:

لقمه و نکته‌ست کامل را حلال چون تو گوئی او زبان نی جنس تو کودک اول چون بزاید شیرنوش مدتی می‌بایدش لب دوختن ور نباشد گوش و تی‌تی می‌کند کر اصلی کش نبد ز آغاز گوش زانک اول سمع باید نطق را وادخلوا الایات من ابوابها نطق کان موقوف راه سمع نیست	تو نه‌ای کامل مخور می‌باش لال گوشها را حق بفرمود انصتوا مدتی خامش بود او جمله گوش از سخن تا او سخن آموختن خویشتن را گنگ گیتی می‌کند لال باشد کی کند در نطق جوش سوی منطق از ره سمع اندر آ واطلبوا الاغراض فی اسبابها جز که نطق خالق بی‌طمع نیست
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[3] Gadamer, Hans-Georg, 1994. *Truth and Method, Second Revised Edition*. New York: Continuum. Pp. xv.

[4] *Ibid*. pp. xxxi.

[5] Verse 7:204

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

[6] The leaders of polytheists at the time of Prophet Muhammad began to prevent people from listening to him and his recitation of the Qur'an. Ibn Hisham narrates that subsequent to this, when somebody wished to listen to him and to the revealed verses, he'd do so secretly, fleeing when someone became aware of this. And sometimes, the Prophet would lower his voice and some would get close to him to listen to his recitation. Ibn Abbas was narrated as saying that the following verse was revealed in this regard, "Neither speak your Prayer aloud, nor speak it in a low tone, but seek a middle course between (17:110)." Meaning, neither raise your voice such that they scatter away, nor recite in such a low voice that those who wish to hear are not able to.

[7] We have translated this amazingly beautiful and instructive narration of Unwan Basi from Imam Ja'far al-Saadiq in another work. He recommends nine things to Unwan and to those who seek the path to God; three in meditation of the self, three in forbearance, and three in knowledge one of which is what we mentioned here:

قَالَ: أَوْصِيكَ بِتِسْعَةِ أَشْيَاءَ، فَأَلِّهَا وَصِيَّتِي لِمُرِيدِي الطَّرِيقِ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَ اللَّهُ أَسْأَلُ أَنْ يُؤَفِّقَكَ لِاسْتِعْمَالِهِ...  
ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنْهَا فِي رِيَاضَةِ النَّفْسِ، وَ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنْهَا فِي الْجِلْمِ، وَ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنْهَا فِي الْعِلْمِ. فَاحْفَظْهَا، وَ إِيَّاكَ وَ النَّهْأُونَ بِهَا!.....  
وَ أَمَّا اللّوَاتِي فِي الْعِلْمِ: فَاسْأَلِ الْعُلَمَاءَ مَا جَهِلْتِ، وَ إِيَّاكَ أَنْ تَسْأَلَهُمْ تَعَنَّأً وَ تَجْرِبَةً...

[8] Book III of Masnavi. The couplets read:

در میان روز گفتن روز کو صبر و خاموشی جذوب رحمت است انصتوا بپذیر تا بر جان تو	خویش رسوا کردنت ای روز جو وین نشان جستن نشان علت است آید از جانان جزای انصتوا
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[9] *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal; *Sunan* of al-Nisa'I; *Mustadrak* of al-Hakim. The narration reads:

حَبَّبَ إِلَى النِّسَاءِ وَالطَّيِّبِ، وَجَعَلَتْ قِرَةَ عَيْنِي فِي الصَّلَاةِ

There are other closely related (and famous) variations, though the chains of narration are not as strong:

حبيب الي من دنياكم ثلاث: الطيب والنساء وجعلت قرة عيني في الصلاة  
إنما حبيب إلى من دنياكم النساء والطيب وجعلت قرة عيني في الصلاة

[10] *Sunan* of Tirmidhi. The hadith reads:

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا وَخَيْرُهُمْ خِيَارُهُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ خُلُقًا

[11] Last chapter of *Fusus al-Hikam* by Shiekh Ibn Arabi (فص حكمة فردية في كلمة محمدية). The text reads:

فما أحبهن إلا بالمرتبة و أنهن محل الانفعال فهن له كالطبيعة للحق التي فتح فيها صور العالم بالتوجه الإرادي و الأمر الإلهي الذي هو نكاح في عالم الصور العنصرية، و همة في عالم الأرواح النورية، و ترتيب مقدمات في المعاني للإنتاج. و كل ذلك نكاح الفردية الأولى في كل وجه من هذه الوجوه فمن أحب النساء على هذا الحد فهو حب إلهي، و من أحبهن على جهة الشهوة الطبيعية خاصة نقصه علم هذه

الشهوة، فكان صورة بلا روح عنده، و إن كانت تلك الصورة في نفس الأمر ذات روح و لكنها غير مشهودة لمن جاء لامرأته- أو لأنثى حيث كانت- لمجرد الالتذاد، و لكن لا يدري لمن. فجهل من نفسه ما يجهل الغير منه ما لم يسمه هو بلسانه حتى يُعلم كما قال بعضهم: صح عند الناس أني عاشق غير أن لم يعرفوا عشقي لمن

[12] *Ibid*. The text reads:

و لما خُلِقَ عبداً بالاصالة لم يرفع رأسه قط إلى السيادة، بل لم يزل ساجداً واقفاً مع كونه منفعلاً حتى كَوَّنَ الله عنه ما كَوَّنَ. فأعطاه رتبة الفاعلية في عالم الأنفاس التي هي الأعراف الطيبة.

[13] *Maqalat-i Shams*. The text reads:

آن یکی، به یکی شمشیر هندی آورد و گفت: این شمشیر هندیست. گفت که تیغ هندی چه باشد؟ گفت: چنان باشد که بر هر چیز که بزنی آن را دو نیم کند. گفت: الصوفی ابن الوقت. گفت: برین سنگ که ایستاده است بیازماییم. شمشیر را بر آورد و بر سنگ زد. شمشیر دو نیم شد. گفت که تو گفتی که شمشیر هندی آن باشد به خاصیت که بر هر چه زنی دو نیم کند؟ گفت: آری اما اگر چه شمشیر هندی بود، سنگ از او هندی تر بود! موسی از فرعون فرعونتر بود. آن ولی بود اما این از او ولی تر بود.

[14] Book II of Masnavi. The Persian couplets read:

جز مگر پیری که از حق است مست در درون او حیاتِ طیبه است  
از برون پیر است و در باطن صبی خود چه چیز است آن؟ ولی و آن نبی

...  
بر تو می‌خندد مبین او را چنان صد قیامت در درون استنش نهران  
دوزخ و جنت همه اجزای اوست هر چه اندیشی تو او بالای اوست

...  
مسجدی کان اندرون اولیاست سجدمگاه جمله است آنجا خداست  
تا دل اهل دلی نامد به درد هیچ قرنی را خدا رسوا نکرد

تا دل مرد خدا نامد به درد  
هیچ قومی را خدا رسوا نکرد

[15] The Persian reads:

سحر با باد می‌گفتم حدیث آرزومندی خطاب آمد که واثق شو به الطاف خداوندی  
دعای صبح و آه شب کلید گنج مقصود است بدین راه و روش می‌رو که با دلدار پیوندی

[16] The text reads:

قال رسول الله ان لربکم فی ایام دهرکم نفحات الا فتعرضوا لها

[17] Chapter 5 in the important book, 'Knowledge and the Sacred' by Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

[18] Book III of Mathnavi. The Persian couplets read as follows:

اولیا اطفال حق‌اند ای پسر \*\* غایبی و حاضری بس با خبر  
غایبی مندیش از نقصانشان \*\* کو کشد کین از برای جانشان  
گفت اطفال من‌اند این اولیا \*\* در غریبی فرد از کار و کیا  
از برای امتحان خوار و یتیم \*\* لیک اندر سر منم یار و ندیم  
پشت‌دار جمله عصمت‌های من \*\* گویا هستند خود اجزای من  
هان و هان این دل‌پوشان من‌اند \*\* صد هزار اندر هزار و یک تن‌اند  
ورنه کی کردی به یک چوبی هنر \*\* موسیقی فرعون را زیر و زبر  
ورنه کی کردی به یک نفرین بد \*\* نوح شرق و غرب را غرقاب خود  
بر نكندی یک دعای لوط راد \*\* جمله شهرستانان را بی مراد  
گشت شهرستان چون فردوسشان \*\* دجله‌ی آب سیه رو بین نشان  
سوی شامست این نشان و این خبر \*\* در ره قدسش ببینی در گذر  
صد هزاران ز انبیای حق‌پرست \*\* خود بهر قرنی سیاستها بدست  
گر بگویم وین بیان افزون شود \*\* خود جگر چه بود که کهها خون شود  
خون شود کهها و باز آن بفسرد \*\* تو نبینی خون شدن کوری و رد  
طرفه کوری دوربین تیز چشم \*\* لیک از اشتر نبیند غیر چشم  
مو بمو ببند ز صرفه حرص انس \*\* رقص بی مقصود دارد همچو خرس  
رقص آنجا کن که خود را بشکنی \*\* پنبه را از ریش شهوت بر کنی  
رقص و جولان بر سر میدان کنند \*\* رقص اندر خون خود مردان کنند

چون رهند از دست خود دستی زنند \*\* چون جهند از نقص خود رقصی کنند  
 مطربانشان از درون دف میزنند \*\* بحر ها در شورشان کف میزنند  
 تو نبینی لیک بهر گوششان \*\* برگها بر شاخها هم کفزنان  
 تو نبینی برگها را کف زدن \*\* گوش دل باید نه این گوش بدن  
 گوش سر بر بند از هزل و دروغ \*\* تا ببینی شهر جان با فروغ  
 سر کشد گوش محمد در سخن \*\* کش بگوید در نبی حق هو اذن  
 سر به سر گوشست و چشم است این نبی \*\* تازه زو ما مرضعت او ما صبی

[19] Verse 9:61

وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ يُؤَدُّونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ قُلُوبِنَا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤَدُّونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

[20] Tafsir al-Kashani (also known as al-Qasani); verse 9:61. This tafsir is sometimes incorrectly attributed to Sheikh Ibn Arabi. The beautiful Arabic text reads:

{ ويقولون هو اذن } كانوا يؤذونه ويعتابونه بسلامة القلب وسرعة القبول والتصديق لما يسمع، فصَدَقَهم في ذلك وسلم وقال: هو كذلك، ولكن بالنسبة إلى الخير فإن النفس الأبية والغليظة الجافية والكرة القاسية التي تتصلب في الأمور ولا تتأثر غير مستعدة للكمال، إذ الكمال الإنساني لا يكون إلا بالقبول والتأثر والانفعال. فكما كانت النفس أليين عريكة وأسلم قلباً وأسهل قبولاً كانت أقبل للكمال وأشدَّ استعداداً له، وليس هذا اللين هو من باب الضعف والبلهه الذي يقتضي الانفعال من كل ما يسمع حتى المحال والتأثر من كل ما يرد عليه ويراها حتى الكذب والشور والضلال بل هو من باب اللطافة وسرعة القبول لما يناسبه من الخير والصدق، فلذلك قال: { قل اذن خير } إذ صفاء الاستعداد ولطف النفس يوجب قبول ما يناسبه من باب الخيرات لا ما ينافية من باب الشور، فإن الاستعداد الخيري لا يقبل الشر ولا يتأثر به ولا ينطبع فيه لمنافاته إياه وبعده عنه { لكم } أي: يسمع ما ينفعكم وما فيه صلاحكم دون غيره { يؤمن بالله } هو بيان لينه وقابليته لأن الإيمان لا يكون إلا مع سلامة القلب ولطافة النفس ولينها { ويؤمن للمؤمنين } يصدق قولهم في الخيرات ويسمع كلامهم فيها ويقبله { ورحمة للذين آمنوا منكم } يعطف عليهم ويرق لهم فينجيهم من العذاب بالتركية والتعليم، ويصلح أمر معاشهم ومعادهم بالبرّ و الصلة وتعليم الأخلاق من الحلم والشفقة، والأمر بالمعروف باتباعهم إياه فيها، ووضع الشرائع الموجبة لنظام أمرهم في الدارين، والتحريض على أبواب البرّ بالقول والفعل إلى غير ذلك.

[21] This divine saying has been related from Prophet Muhammad in numerous collections. For instance, see *al-Kaafi* by Sheikh Kulayni (vol. 2):

الكافي باسناده عن حماد بن بشير قال سمعت ابا عبدالله عليه السلام يقول: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: قال الله عزوجل من اهان لي ولياً فقد ارضد لمُحاربتي، و ما يتقرّب اليّ عبدى بشى احبّ اليّ مما افترضت عليه و إنّه ليتقرّب اليّ بالنافله حتىّ احبّه فاذا احببته كنت سمعه الذى يسمع به، و بصره الذى يبصر به ، و لسانه الذى ينطق به، ويده الذى يبطش بها، إن دعانى اجبته و ان سألنى اعطيته، و ما ترددت عن شى انا فاعله كترددى عن موت المومن، يكره الموت و اكره مساءته.

[22] This concept is also applicable in interpersonal relationships. In his great book, “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”, Steven Covey devotes Habit 5 to “Seek first to understand, then to be understood”. Nurturing the habit to listen empathetically ultimately leads to being listened to.